



**'Gaia's Garden'  
Herbology  
eBook**

Preview



"Tu luibh ar gach leighas" - There is an herb for every ailment

*Ancient Celtic Physicians*

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## Preface

**“Phytology and Herbology are sometimes maligned as a collection of home-made remedies to be applied in a placebo fashion to one symptom or another, provided the ailment is not too serious. We often forget, however, that botanical medicine provides a complete system of healing and disease prevention. It is the oldest and most natural form of medicine. Its record of efficacy and safety spans centuries and covers every country in the world”**

Debra Stevens, Author ‘Gaia’s Garden’

## About the Author

Savvy and insightful, Debra Stevens is a Naturopathic Practitioner, Integrated Healer and Author. She brings together extensive training and expertise in wellness, both in the corporate and personal context. Over the past 20 years Debra has undertaken corporate wellness initiatives for global corporations. As a personal transformation coach she facilitates deeper consciousness, inner wisdom and empowerment workshops. Debra lives in Ramsgate on the East Coast of South Africa and with training academies, offering campus based courses in Herbology, Hypnotherapy, Meditation and Vibrational Healing Modalities including Reiki. [Info@energencia.co.za](mailto:Info@energencia.co.za) or [www.energencia.co.za](http://www.energencia.co.za)

## Introduction to Herbology - Herbs and Health

There is nothing new about the use of herbs to promote recovery, health and wellbeing. Every culture throughout the world has at some point used healing plants as the basis for its medicine and had a basic healing flora from which remedies were selected. The range of plants would vary from area to area depending on the local ecosystem, but the human problems they dealt with were the same.

The therapeutic philosophy for plant use also varies, but for thousands of years plants have demonstrated their efficiency as healing agents. From the Celtic druid priests to the traditional healers of Africa; we find plants and plant remedies within the Indian ayurvedic system and in Chinese medicine alongside acupuncture and other techniques. Further to this, plants play a very important role in the spiritual healing ecology of the Native North Americans and we see their constituents being utilised as a source of drugs in ‘orthodox’ medicine.

In fact, medicine has its roots in the use of herbs. Until about 50 years ago, nearly all the entries in pharmacopoeias describing the manufacture of drugs indicated a herbal origin. Only since the refinement of chemical technology has the use of herbs apparently diminished – though the majority of drugs still have their origin in plant material.

Today the popularity of herbalism is growing. More and more people are discovering that it is an effective and comparatively inexpensive form of health care. They appreciate the fact that it draws exclusively on natural products and they’ve learnt that it is as useful in preventing illness as it is in curing it. However, there are other factors that attract people to herbal medicine and this eBook will look at these in more detail.

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### Part I -Dietary and Nutritional Therapies

**"Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food" - Hippocrates**

What we eat is influenced by many factors including personal preference, lifestyle, culture, religion, and ethical and moral attitudes. But what we eat can also have a therapeutic effect. The most common reason for a change in diet is to lose weight, but many people also alter their diet to prevent or treat diseases such as cancer or heart disease - the main cause of diet-related premature death in the West.

#### **Dietary Therapy**

Diet as therapy has been practiced for centuries. The father of medicine, Hippocrates, wrote extensively about the therapeutic use of diet, yet until relatively recently, modern medicine has largely forgotten the overwhelming role of diet, except as related to problems such as obesity and diabetes. With the growth of nutritional science in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, particularly since World War II, specific foods have been recognised as risk factors in disease. For example, too much fat, and saturated animal fat in particular, is now widely recognised as a risk factor of heart disease and some cancers. Equally, too much refined food and too little fibre causes a range of digestive and bowel disorders, from constipation to irritable bowel syndrome – and may even be a cause of some cancers. Too much salt may exacerbate high blood pressure and reactions to food-trigger allergies.

#### **Basic Principles and Different Methods**

Most alternative therapists believe that everybody can benefit from dietary self-help for both prevention and treatment of disease. Many therapies recommend fasting, perhaps drinking only fruit and vegetable juices, or eating salads or single fruits. Fasting is probably the oldest therapy known to humankind. Primitive people, and animals, instinctively stop eating when they are ill, probably because digestion takes up energy and puts extra strain on the body. The aim of fasting and dietary therapy is to rid the body of the toxins that are said to accumulate from the wrong diet, so that it can function at its optimum level.

Self-administered fasts should not exceed two days, and returning to eating should be gradual. Start with raw fruit and salads, followed by wholegrain foods, fish, poultry, or lean meat, and then yogurt and dairy produce. Fatty, sugary and refined carbohydrate foods, coffee, cola, tea, and other stimulants, alcohol, and tobacco should be avoided completely. Some of the side effects of fasting – such as headache, bad breath, diarrhoea and vomiting

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### Flower Remedies

Flower remedies are made by floating the freshly picked blooms in bowls of spring water and leaving them in sunlight on a cloudless day. In this way, the water is “potentised” by the essence of the flower, which is believed to have entered the liquid. The potentised water is then mixed in fixed proportions with brandy, which acts as a preservative, and stored in a dark glass bottle.

Although there are now many varieties of flower remedies made around the world, most are prepared in this way. Unlike many modern herbal medicines, flower essences do not contain any artificial chemical substances, except for the brandy preservative.

#### How flower remedies work

The remedies are normally taken by dropping a few drops of the essence into a small amount of still mineral water. This mixture is then slowly sipped.

Though plant-based, flower remedies are more homeopathic than herbal in the way they are said to work. That is, they work psychologically and psychically at the energy level, rather than chemically. Supporters describe them as “liquid energy” because they believe they encapsulate the flowers’ healing energies and present them in a form that can be used therapeutically in the simplest and most effective way.

Flower remedies are said to deal with and overcome negative emotions and in this way encourage a sense of enhanced personal well-being, which is then extended to physical health through improved powers of self-healing.

There is no accepted research yet to support this idea of a psychic-psychological effect, but flower remedies remain widely popular throughout the world and a large number of people swear by them. The concept behind this therapy is often difficult to grasp, but there are several clinical studies that suggest that the therapy does work on the mental and physical health of clients. Perhaps the most successful and popular example is Bach’s Rescue Remedy, which acts as emergency treatment to reduce the effects of trauma and shock after an accident, or in stressful situations, and through that stimulates the healing powers of the body. This remedy has attracted an extra-ordinary amount of interest from other alternative practitioners and, increasingly, conventional medical doctors.

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### Practical: Make a Herbal Ointment

1. Make 500ml of the appropriate water extract (infusion or decoction), strain off the liquid for use in step 4.
2. Measure out the oils and wax for the base.
  - 60g beeswax,
  - 90ml almond oil
  - 90g cocoa butter or lanolin or 90ml olive oil or wheat germ oil
3. Pour 90ml olive or almond oil into the pan. Mix the wax and other oils together.
4. Add the strained herbal extract and stir into the base.
5. Simmer until the water has completely evaporated and the extract has become incorporated into the oil. You might find it easier to place the pan in a larger pan of water to prevent burning. Be careful not to overheat the mixture and watch particularly for the point when all the water has evaporated and the bubbling stops. If additional thickeners (such as beeswax) need to be incorporated, they can be added at this point and melted with the base, heating slowly and stirring until blended.
6. Pour the mixture into a container.

### Marigold Balm

This is a recipe for a simple *Marigold* ointment, which is excellent for cuts, sores or minor burns. Take 60g (or about a handful) of freshly picked *Marigold Flowers*, II. Crush the flowers into a paste, adding 3 Tbsp. of glycerine, Then sift it through fine gauze or strainer and press out all the liquid from the flowers, add this to 200g melted petroleum jelly or aqueous cream and heat the mixture. Simmer it very gently for about ten minutes, stirring well. Pour the liquid into a container and seal it after it has cooled.

### Poultices

The action of a poultice is very similar to that of a compress, but instead of using a liquid extract, the solid plant material is used for a poultice. Both fresh or dried herbs and vegetables can be used to make a poultice. With the fresh plant you apply the bruised leaves or root material either directly to the skin or place them between thin gauze. Dried herbs must be made into a paste by adding either hot water or apple cider vinegar until the right consistency is obtained. To keep the poultice warm, you can use the same method as for the compress and place a hot-water bottle on it. When you are applying the herb directly

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### A Therapeutic Index

The index lists herbs that can be considered as treatment for specific diseases. The diseases or conditions are listed alphabetically. The most useful herbs, or the specifics, for each category are listed first and underlined; others follow. Specifics are those herbs which are considered to be the best and most effective remedies to relieve a particular condition or disease state.

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Abscess               | <u>Echinacea</u> , <u>Garlic</u> , <u>Marshmallow</u> , <u>Myrrh</u> , <u>Wild Indigo</u> , Blue Flag, Cleavers, Coltsfoot, Fenugreek, Golden Seal, Mallow, Poke Root   |
| Acne                  | <u>Blue Flag</u> , <u>Cleavers</u> , <u>Echinacea</u> , <u>Garlic</u> , <u>Poke Root</u> , <u>Wild Indigo</u>   |
| Adenoids              | <u>Cleavers</u> , <u>Echinacea</u> , <u>Garlic</u> , <u>Golden Seal</u> , <u>Marigold</u> , <u>Poke Root</u> , <u>Wild Indigo</u>   |
| Angina Pectoris       | <u>Hawthorn</u> , Motherwort  |
| Anxiety               | <u>Californian Poppy</u> , <u>Chamomile</u> , <u>Mistletoe</u> , <u>Motherwort</u> , <u>Pasque Flower</u> , <u>St John's Wort</u> , <u>Skullcap</u> , <u>Valerian</u> , <u>Wild Lettuce</u> , Balm, Betony, Cowslip, Damiana, Hops, Hyssop, Oats, Passion Flower, Peppermint, Vervain.  |
| Appendicitis          | <u>Agrimony</u> , American Cranesbill, Golden Seal, Wild Yam  |
| Appetite Loss         | <u>Calamus</u> , <u>Centaury</u> , <u>Condurango</u> , <u>Gentian</u> , <u>Mugwort</u> , <u>Wormwood</u> , Balmony, Blessed Thistle, Calumba, Caraway, Cardamon, Chamomile, Galangal, Golden Sea, Quassia, Southernwood, Tansy, White Poplar  |
| Arteriosclerosis      | <u>Lime</u> , Hawthorn, Mistletoe   |
| Arthritis             | <u>Black Cohosh</u> , <u>Bogbean</u> , <u>Celery Seed</u> , <u>Guaiacum</u> , <u>Prickly Ash</u> , <u>Wild Yam</u> , Bittersweet, Daisy, Juniper, Meadowsweet, Scots Pine, Silver Birch, White Poplar, Wintergreen, Yarrow  |
| Asthma                | <u>Elecampane</u> , <u>Ephedra</u> , <u>Grindelia</u> , <u>Lobelia</u> , <u>Pill-bearing Spurge</u> , <u>Sundew</u> , <u>Wild Cherry</u> , Balsam of Tolu, Black Cohosh, Black Haw, Blood Root, Blue Cohosh, Butterbur, Coltsfoot, Mullein, Pasque Flower, Senega   |
| Blood Pressure (High) | <u>Hawthorn</u> , <u>Lime Blossom</u> , <u>Mistletoe</u> , <u>Yarrow</u> , Balm, Black Haw, Cramp Bark, Garlic  |
| Boils                 | <u>Blue Flag</u> , <u>Echinacea</u> , <u>Garlic</u> , <u>Myrrh</u> , <u>Pasque Flower</u> , <u>Poke Root</u> , <u>Wild Indigo</u> , Chickweed, Cleavers, Coltsfoot, Comfrey, Fenugreek, Figwort, Flax Seed, Greater Plantain, Mallow, Marshmallow   |
| Bronchitis            | <u>Blood Root</u> , <u>Coltsfoot</u> , <u>Echinacea</u> , <u>Elecampane</u> , <u>Garlic</u> , <u>Grindelia</u> , <u>Lobelia</u> , <u>Mouse Ear</u> , <u>Mullein</u> , <u>Pill-bearing Spurge</u> , <u>Pleurisy Root</u> , <u>Senega</u> , <u>Sundew</u> , <u>White Horehound</u> , Angelica, Aniseed, Balm of Gilead, Balsam of Tolu, Caraway, Carline Thistle, Comfrey, Cowslip, Ephedra, Fennel, Fenugreek, Flax Seed, Greater Plantain, Ground Ivy, Horseradish, Hyssop, Iceland Moss, Ipecacuanha, Irish moss, Licorice, Mallow, Marshmallow, Nasturtium, Pansy, Scots Pine, Soapwort, Squill, Sweet Violet, Thyme, Wild Cherry |