

# HOW TO MAKE A HERBAL APOTHECARY AT HOME



HOWARD STANFORD

# How to Make a Herbal Apothecary at Home



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## Disclaimer

This book was created to provide information about natural medicines, cures and remedies that people have used in the past. This information is made available with the knowledge that the publisher, editor and authors do not offer any legal or otherwise medical advice. In the case you are ill you should always consult with your caring physician or another medical specialist.

This book does not claim to contain and indeed does not contain all the information available on the subject of natural remedies.

While the authors, editor and publisher have gone to great lengths to provide the most useful and accurate collection of healing plants and remedies in North America, there may still exist typographical and/or content errors. Therefore, this book should not be used as a medical guide.

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## Building a Herbal Apothecary

Having your own herbal apothecary at home will allow you to treat yourself and your loved ones naturally when the need arrives. It also stands as an excellent backup plan for medicinal use when the drugs you need are no longer available.

To use your apothecary as an effective backup, you need a knowledge of the herbs, information on how to make your medicines and how to use them. I will attempt to show you how to build and use your own home apothecary here. I recommend that you stock herbs for all possibilities now. If you wait until you have the need, you'll have to wait for your plants to grow or for your herbs to arrive.

I am not a doctor, and you should do your own study of any herb you intend to use. I will provide the basics here, but you are responsible for doing your own research as well. The herbs that I recommend are considered safe, but there are sometimes people with allergies or reactions. Do your research first.



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## Let's Get Started

You will need some basic equipment in addition to the herbs. Many of these items you may already have around the house. I suggest that you keep a supply separate for use in making and storing medicines. Here is a list of the basics you will need:

1. Mason Jars in all sizes, with lids. Many recipes use a mason jar to contain herbal mixtures while brewing and an airtight jar is a good way to store dried herbs for future use. You can also use other types of jars, but canning jars can withstand the hot and cold temperatures you will be using.
2. Dark colored bottles with tight lids and eye droppers. These jars come in sizes from 5 ml to 1 liter or more. I keep a supply of various sizes available.
3. A scale capable of weighing small quantities of herbs. You should be able to weigh in grams or ounces. An inexpensive digital scale will do the job. Look for a scale that can weigh as little as tenths or even hundredths of a gram or as much as a kilogram or more.
4. A digital thermometer. You don't need the fancy version, just a basic candy thermometer will do fine. If you have the budget, an infrared version is convenient. You need to be able to test temperatures when cooking, distilling, or extracting.
5. Bowls, measuring cups, measuring spoons, and graduated cylinders made from glass or polypropylene.
6. Funnels in a variety of sizes for transferring herbs into jars and bottles.
7. A dehydrator, if you plan to grow or scavenge for your herbs. Herbs can be purchased already dried but drying your own allows you to control the quality and freshness. If you don't have a dehydrator, you can use an oven or dry your herbs in the sun, but a dehydrator allows you to control the temperatures for best results.

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8. A coffee or herb grinder. I prefer an electric coffee grinder to make this job quick and easy. You can also use a blender, mortar and pestle, or manual grinder.
9. A mortar and pestle are handy for grinding and powdering small amounts of herbs or use a cylindrical model for larger quantities. Using a mortar and pestle is a lot of hard work and I prefer the coffee grinder in most instances, but for small quantities and rare herbs, sometimes you need the mortar and pestle.
10. Strainers and filter paper. I start the filtering process with a fine gold mesh coffee strainer and then pour it through an unbleached paper filter. (Keep a separate filter that is used only for herbs.)
11. Solvents: distilled water, alcohol (80 to 100 proof or higher), glycerin, oils, vinegar and witch hazel extract.
12. Beeswax for making salves.
13. Labels for all jars, bottles, and tins. Use ink or permanent marker.
14. A good book or binder of information on using herbs for specific conditions.

### Optional Equipment

15. Syringes (no needles required). I keep a supply of syringes in different sizes for measuring accurate doses. I mostly use a 5 ml syringe for measuring the doses of extracts and tinctures.
16. Capsules and a capsule loading machine. I use these for taking dried herbs. They are especially beneficial with herbs that have bitter or otherwise unpleasant flavors. The loading machine is not necessary, but it makes it much easier to make 25 to 100 capsules, or more, quickly. The "00" size is usually big enough to hold the herbs, but small enough to swallow.
17. A small perfume still for oil distillation.
18. A double boiler for making infusions.
19. A mini-crockpot for making herb infused oils. It can also replace the double boiler in some cases.



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## Storing Your Herbal Medicines

You've probably seen the pictures of herbs hanging from the rafters to dry, but this is not an ideal way to keep your herbs potency. Herbs are degraded by light, moisture, and heat, so your kitchen rafters are probably the worst possible spot. However, it does make a nice picture.

Store your herbs and herbal medicines in a cool, dry place. Not the refrigerator. A basement shelf or a dark pantry in an airconditioned room would be ideal. If you live in a humid environment, throw a desiccant packet or two in your pantry.

Keep them in dark bottles that block light from entering the bottle. When making some preparations, I use mason jars. I try to keep them in a dark cupboard. If you don't have a dark cupboard, wrap the jar in a paper bag or a square of cloth. Did you ever wonder why you see pictures of jars wrapped in gingham cloth? Now you know.

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## Common Terms and Their Meanings

### Types of Herbs

Warming herbs are herbs that speed up the metabolism, stimulate energy production, increase blood flow and warm the body.

Cooling herbs slow down the metabolism, decrease energy production and cool inflammation and irritation.

Neutral Herbs neither warm or cool the body but have an effect on the circulation or cellular metabolism.

Moistening herbs increase the moisture retention of tissues, lubricating and softening dry, brittle, or hardened tissue.

Drying herbs remove excess moisture from tissue, firming it and relieving swelling and dampness.

Balancing herbs are neither moistening or drying, but balance the moisture levels in the tissue.

### Terms Used to Describe Properties of Herbs and Medicines

**Alkaloid:** one of a large, varied group of alkaline compounds which react with acids to form soluble salts. Many alkaloids, such as caffeine, nicotine, and cocaine, have physiological effects on humans.

**Alterative:** an herb or medicinal that gradually restores health.

**Analgesic:** a pain-relieving medicine.

**Antibiotic:** An agent that kills or inhibits the growth or multiplication of a living organism such as bacteria and other micro-organisms.

**Anticholinergic:** an agent that blocks the action of parasympathetic or related nerve fibers.

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**Anticonvulsant:** an agent that reduces or relieves convulsions or cramps.

**Antifungal:** an agent that kills or inhibits the growth of fungi organisms.

**Antihistamine:** an agent that neutralizes the effect or prevents the production of histamine, an immune-system substance that promotes inflammation.

**Anti-inflammatory:** an agent that prevents or neutralizes inflammation.

**Antilithic cholagogue:** an agent that stimulates the flow of bile and prevents the formation of stones.

**Antimicrobial:** an agent that inhibits or kills micro-organisms.

**Antioxidant:** an agent that prevents oxidation. A preservative or agent that removes oxygen radicals or free radicals that cause oxidation.

**Antispasmodic:** prevents or relieves spasms and cramps in smooth muscle tissue such as the bronchial airways, uterus, intestines, or urinary bladder.

**Antiviral:** an agent that kills or inhibits replication of viruses.

**Anxiolytic:** A substance that reduces or relieves anxiety.

**Astringent:** an agent that causes tissue to contract. Tannins are associated with many herbal astringents.

**Calmative:** an agent with mild sedative or calming effects.

**Carminative:** an agent that relieves or removes gas from the digestive system. An anti-flatulent.

**Cardioactive:** affecting the heart.

**Cathartic:** a purgative or laxative that evacuates the intestines, with or without pain.

**Decoction:** a preparation made by boiling or simmering a plant part in water. Usually, decoctions are simmered for longer times than infusions.

**Demulcent:** an agent that is soothing and softening where applied.

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Diaphoretic: an agent that causes sweating.

Digestive: an agent that promotes digestion.

Diuretic: an agent to induces urination to remove excess water from the body.

Dysmenorrhea: difficult or painful menstruation.

Emetic: an agent that induces vomiting.

Emmenagogue: an agent that increases or induces menstruation or menstrual flow.

Estrogenic: a substance that induces female hormonal activity and activates cells sensitive to estrogen.

Expectorant: an agent that loosens and induces the removal of mucous from the lungs.

Fungicidal: an agent that kills fungi

Hemostatic: an agent that stops bleeding.

Homeopathic: related to homeopathy, a system of medicine based on the principle that "like cures like."

Hypertensive: causing the blood pressure to rise. A person with hypertension or high blood pressure.

Hyperglycemic: causing a lowering of the blood sugar.

Immunostimulant: stimulating the functions and activities of the immune system.

Infusion: a preparation made by soaking a plant part in hot or cold water. A tea.

Laxative: a mild purgative.

Menorrhagia: excess blood loss during menstruation.

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Mucilaginous: containing mucilage, slimy.

Nephrotoxic: an agent that is toxic to the kidneys.

Nervine: an agent that calms, strengthens or otherwise affects the nerves.

Poultice: a moist mass of plant material applied to the skin and usually covered with a cloth or bandage. A poultice can be applied warm or cold.

Purgative: an agent that causes the watery evacuation of the digestive system, usually with cramping and diarrhea.

Rubefacient: an agent that causes irritation and reddening when applied to the skin.

Sialagogue: an agent that promotes the secretion of saliva.

Stimulant: an agent that increases the activity of another agent.

Stomachic: a medicine, food, or herb that improves appetite and digestion.

Styptic: an agent that contracts the blood vessels to stop bleeding.

Tincture: a solution usually made with alcohol that extracts beneficial plant compounds. Some tinctures can also be made with vinegar or other solvents.

Tonic: a substance that has a positive healing effect or a fortifying effect on organs or bodily functions.

Vasodilator: an agent that causes blood vessels to dilate or enlarge.

Vermifuge: an agent that has worm-killing properties

Vulnerary: an agent used to heal wounds.

## Choosing Herbs

When choosing herbs, there is much to consider. You need quality herbs that are renewable and effective for your needs. Moreover, you want a good mix of herbs that will treat most anything that may come up. Let's talk about these issues in a little detail.

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## Sourcing Your Medicinal Herbs

In choosing herbs for your apothecary, the source matters. If you are planning for a disaster event where shopping and shipping may be interrupted for long-term, you need to grow your own herbs or choose herbs that are available locally. For a home apothecary used on a daily basis under normal life conditions, purchasing herbs online from reputable sources allows you a much larger choice of herbs. You can even purchase oils, tinctures, and salves pre-made.

Consider where your herbs are grown. You do not want herbs that are grown close to a highway or on contaminated land. Exhaust fumes, industrial chemicals, and heavy metals contaminate the soil and are taken up into the plant. Look for herbs grown organically or grow them yourself in clean soil.

It is up to you to decide which herbs you will stock in your apothecary and how you will use them. You will want to pay special attention to diseases and conditions that are common problems in your area and for your family. For example, if you have family members who are diabetic, then adding extra herbs for the treatment of diabetes is a good idea.

If you are planning for a disaster situation, then add treatments for diseases that tend to be common when proper hygiene and sanitation are not available. You've probably never witnessed a case of dysentery, but if your local water treatment plant goes offline, you may start to see cases quickly.

For building your dispensary, I recommend a basic assortment of herbs that treat the most common problems. You will find my list in this book, but you can substitute your choices as your needs may vary. Once you have the basics and know how to use them, I encourage you to add herbs of your choice to expand your knowledge and experience.



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## My Herbal Choices

I chose herbs that grow locally whenever possible for my own apothecary, but you may not live in my area. So, for this book, I've chosen herbs that grow in the United States or that are easily purchased in the US. If you like to garden and have the room, I recommend growing your own. Additionally, some herbs, such as Aloe vera, are best used fresh. Here are my choices for the basics:

### Aloe Vera

Most everyone knows of aloe vera's ability to treat sunburn and moisten the skin, but it has many more uses. It is a good choice for treating heartburn, irritable bowel syndrome, respiratory problems, bleeding or swollen gums, for use as a natural laxative, lowering blood sugar in diabetics, and for skin infections, abrasions, and irritations and relieving pain from these conditions. I prefer to use fresh herbs, but dried herbs are also effective.

Preparations and Dosage:

- Fresh as a get applied directly to the skin or take 2 teaspoons of gel in a glass of water or juice, twice daily.
- Prepare as an ointment by boiling the gel into a thick paste. Use topically.
- Add gel to a steam inhalant to treat bronchial congestion and respiratory disorders.
- Dry and powder the gel for use in capsules.

### Angelica, *Angelica archangelica*

Angelica is primarily known as a digestive, but it also treats: ADD/ADHD, bloating, bronchitis, chest colds, constipation, cough, edema, enlarged prostate, fatigue, fevers, hemorrhoids, PMS, seasonal depression, varicose veins. It is calming on the nervous system and stimulates the circulatory system. It acts as an expectorant for bronchial congestion.

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## Preparations and Dosage:

- Respiratory congestion, use 3 to 4 cups of hot tea daily, sipped slowly.
- Use angelica as food.
- Take 1 to 2 droppers full of tincture before meals and snacks for digestive problems.
- Take three times daily as a tea or tincture for long-term issues.

## Bottle Gourd, *Lagenaria siceraria*

Bottle gourd is recommended for use with diabetics to help lower blood sugar readings. I also consider it to be a promising herb in the treatment of age-related senility and Alzheimer's disease when taken on a daily basis.

Use it to treat acne, boils, diabetes, headaches, skin irritations and infections, pancreas problems. It is also used as a cardio-tonic and as a sedative. It is anti-inflammatory, anti bacterial, pain relieving, and a tonic for the internal organs.

## Preparations and Doses

- A Chinese remedy for diabetes is to take 3 grams of bottle gourd daily; this is only about two large bites of the fresh vegetable pulp.
- Use young gourds that are mildly bitter. When excessive bitterness is present, the gourd may be spoiled.
- Boil, steam, fry, or use the gourd in soups, curries, and stirfries.
- Make a poultice with crushed leaves to relieve headaches.
- Make a poultice from boiled seeds to treat skin infections and other irritations.

## Boneset, *Eupatorium perfoliatum*

Boneset is an Antispasmodic, Cholagogue, Diaphoretic, Emetic, Febrifuge, Homeopathy, Laxative, Purgative, Stimulant, and Vasodilator. It is useful for treating fevers, respiratory infections, and ordinary colds and flu. It is named for its ability to treat Dengue Fever, also known as Break Bone Fever.

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It also has been used to treat malaria, yellow fever, and typhoid fever, mainly for its ability to reduce the accompanying fever.

## Preparations and Doses

- Make a tea from boneset leaves or flowers for treatment of colds, flu, and other respiratory problems, it discourages the production of mucus, loosens phlegm and removes it from the body.
- Use Boneset Tea or infusion to treat Dengue Fever, Malaria, Yellow Fever, and Typhoid Fever. It is excellent at reducing the fever and reducing the severity of the disease.
- Do not give boneset to pregnant women, nursing mothers, or young children.
- Use a long infusion time, four hours or more, and reheat the tea before drinking.

## Calendula

Calendula is warming, drying, and acts as a tonic. Its actions are alterative, antifungal, antimicrobial diaphoretic, lymphatic, and vulnerary. It is a good treatment for abscesses, acne, allergies, athlete's foot and other fungal skin infections, breast fibroids and cysts, burns and sunburn, dermatitis, edema, detoxifying, eczema, edema, enlarged prostate, endometriosis, food sensitivities, gastritis, gingivitis, hemorrhoids, IBS, IBD, indigestion, inflammation, leaky gut syndrome, menopause and andropause, PMS, skin rashes, seasonal depression, stomach ulcers, varicose veins, wounds, and yeast infections.

## Preparations and Dosage:

- Use the flower head as a tea, compress, prepare an elixir or a salve.
- Use as a tea, consuming a quart a day.
- Apply as a compress, or use in a bath or as a soak.
- Prepare a salve for use several times daily.
- Use with cinnamon to treat fungal infections

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- Calendula is safe for use with babies and the elderly.

## Chamomile, *Matricaria recutita*

Chamomile is a warming or neutral herb and a relaxant. The flowers are antimicrobial, antispasmodic, anxiolytic, aromatic, carminative, sedative, soothing nervine, stomach tonic, and vulnerary.

It is ideal for treating abscesses, acne, ADD, ADHD, anxiety, depression, dermatitis, food sensitivities, headaches, heart palpitations, IBS, IBD, indigestion, insomnia, leaky gut, menstrual cycle problems, pain management, receding gums, stress, ulcerative colitis, and wounds. Some people may be allergic to chamomile.

Preparations and Dosage:

- Take chamomile tea freely as needed. Three to four cups daily for digestive issues.
- Wash wounds in the tea, apply as a compress or soak.
- Use in a steamer multiple times daily.
- Chamomile is safe for children and pets.

## Cinnamon cassia

Cinnamon is a valuable spice for medicinal purposes, especially for patients with diabetes. It is effective at lowering blood sugar levels and preventing complications in type 2 diabetes patients. The inner bark acts as an antimicrobial, aromatic, astringent, demulcent, diffusive, hypoglycemic, mild circulatory stimulant, and relaxant.

It is an ideal treatment for athlete's foot and other fungal skin infections, bloating, fever hypoglycemia, indigestion, dyspepsia, PCOS, respiratory problems, and sore throats. Cinnamon is considered warming and moistening when prepared in water.

Preparations and Dosage:

- Use as a tea throughout the day.

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- Use as a powder to treat fungal infections.
- Cinnamon has a blood thinning effect in larger doses, limit to 6 grams daily when taking blood thinning drugs.
- Prepare hot cinnamon tea, then allow it to cool for several hours to absorb the moistening properties. Strain the tea and reheat gently.
- Use diluted essential oil or in a salve several times daily to treat fungal infections.
- Use 1 to 6 grams of cinnamon daily to lower blood sugar, cholesterol and triglyceride levels.

### Cleavers, *Galium aparine*

Cleavers is an alternative, astringent, antiphlogistic, diuretic, diaphoretic, depurative, tonic and febrifuge. I use it internally and externally. I include it in my apothecary for its benefits on glandular problems like tonsillitis, glandular fever, and prostate problems and prostate cancers. It is also beneficial in treating skin diseases, urinary tract infections, and cancer.

#### Preparations and Dose

- Make an infusion of cleavers to use as a skin treatment. Apply it to healthy skin to prevent aging and rejuvenate it or use it on skin problems to help healing. Leave on for 10 minutes.
- Drink a cup of cleavers infusion three times daily to detoxify the body.
- Use 2 capsules of powdered cleaver leaves daily to treat urinary tract infections, kidney stones, and gravel.
- Give 2 to 4 ounces of cleaver infusion for children and 8 ounces for adults to relieve the itching of chickenpox, measles, and fevers. Also, wash the skin with the infusion.
- Use fresh cleavers juice to treat prostate problems, glandular fever, and tonsillitis.

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## Dandelion, *Taraxacum officinale*

Dandelion has a bitter, sweet, earthy flavor that many enjoy. It is a cooling, drying, and tonifying herb. Its leaves act as an alternative, antilithic, diuretic, drying, and nutritive. The root is an antilithic cholagogue, mild laxative, sialagogue; and the flowers are an exhilarant.

Use dandelion to treat acne, constipation, detox, dry mouth, eczema, endometriosis, gout, hemorrhoids, kidney stones, menstrual cycle problems, PCOS, PMS, Rashes, and varicose veins.

Preparations and Dosage:

- Infuse leaves for tea. A long cold brew or sun brew releases the most nutrients. Drink 2 to 3 cups a day.
- Prepare a tincture of dandelion leaves in vinegar
- Eat dandelion leaves in a salad or cooked as a green.
- Prepare a decoction of the roots and drink 2 to 4 cups daily.
- Prepare the roots as a tincture. Take 1 to 4 droppers full, 3 times a day.
- Dandelion flowers can be infused in honey or used in a tincture or syrup.
- Dandelion leaves may not be a good choice for patients taking blood thinners or diuretics.

## Elderberry, *Sambucus nigra*

Elderberry flowers and berries are best known for their ability to stop viruses and stimulate the immune system. They are useful for preventing and treating the influenza viruses along with other viral diseases.

Elderberry also treats anxiety, bronchitis, colds and the flu, depression, fever, supports the immune system, PMS, pneumonia, and stress. It treats skin irritations, boils, eczema, and other skin problems. Elderberry also has heart benefits and reduces cholesterol.



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## Preparation and Dosage:

- Cook elderberries before use and dry other parts of the plant. They can be toxic when fresh.
- Use elderberries and elderflowers to make tea. Drink hot tea to boost the immune system, treat and prevent viruses, and treat fevers. It is also effective at releasing emotions and treating stress, especially when mixed with chamomile.
- Make a tincture.
- Apply the leaves topically for bruises, sprains, and skin problems.
- Make a honey infusion or syrup from the berries or flowers. Take 1 teaspoon of syrup 3 to 4 times a day.
- Make into a liqueur.
- Use chopped elderberry leaves to make a poultice for bruised tissue and muscle sprains.
- Use the bark tea as a skin wash or eyewash for irritations and infections.
- Elderberry is well tolerated by patients with autoimmune conditions and is safe for use by children.
- Large doses have a laxative effect.

## Evening Primrose, *Oenothera biennis*

Evening primrose is well known for its ability to balance the female hormones and treat other menstrual complaints. It is a useful treatment of polycystic ovarian syndrome and can help treat infertility. It is also useful for treating hair loss in men and women, treat skin diseases such as acne, eczema, psoriasis, and atopic dermatitis. I use it as a supplement for patients with rheumatoid arthritis and osteoporosis. It also treats gastro-intestinal disorders, whooping cough, asthma, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol, bruises, piles, and other skin wounds.

Evening primrose may also be useful in the treatment of multiple sclerosis, hyperactivity, and alcohol-related liver damage.

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## Preparations and Doses

- Make cold-pressed evening primrose seed oil by grinding and pressing fresh seeds.
- Make a strong tea from the bark and leaves to treat whooping cough. Give 1 teaspoon to 1 tablespoon as needed to alleviate the cough.
- Give 1 gram of evening primrose oil daily, divided into two or three doses, for hormonal issues.
- Give Evening Primrose Tea as needed to treat asthma. It does not cure the asthma, but helps the patient breath better.
- The tea is also indicated for treating gastro-intestinal disorders. It calms the muscle spasms in the digestive tract and helps restore function.

## Fennel, *Foeniculum vulgare*

Fennel is a vegetable related to carrots that is coming into popular use. It is aromatic, pungent, and sweet with a licorice flavor.

It is antiemetic, antispasmodic aromatic, carminative, cholagogue, diuretic, galactagogue, and sialagogue. Tea made from fennel seeds is useful for treating digestive problems such as indigestion, heartburn, and flatulence. It also treats constipation, stomach pain, and cramping. Nursing mothers take it to improve milk flow and relieve colic in babies. It is effective for urinary tract problems, kidney problems including kidney stones, skin inflammations, menstrual problems, and for healthy eyes. It has a strong diuretic and detoxifying effect and is useful for treating asthma, bloating, food sensitivities, IBD, IBS, indigestion, leaky gut, PMS, and ulcerative colitis.

## Preparations and Dosage:

- Make fennel seed tea with distilled water to make an eyewash. Use it to treat conjunctivitis, eye inflammations and infections.
- Eat fennel bulb and use fennel seeds in your meals.

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- Drink fennel seed tea up to 3 times daily for use as a diuretic and detoxifier.
- Use fennel seeds in recipes calling for fatty cuts of meat and sausage. It improves the digestion of fat.
- Fennel is safe for babies, children, and the elderly.

### Garlic, *Allium sativum*

Garlic has strong medicinal qualities. It contains sulfuric compounds that develop on chopping or chewing. It is an alterative, antifungal, antimicrobial, antiparasitic, and antiviral, aromatic, carminative, circulatory stimulant, diffusive, hepatic stimulant, hypotensive, and rubefacient. It is useful for treating acne, warts, corns, lowering cholesterol levels, lowering blood pressure, lowering blood sugar in diabetics, treating bronchial asthma, bronchitis, whooping cough and congestion. It treats athlete's foot and other fungal infections, ear infections, and sinus infections. It supports the immune system.

The beneficial compounds in garlic are sweated out through the skin and breathed out through the lungs. On their way out they kill fungi, viruses, and bacteria, boosting the immune response and treating invading infections.

#### Preparations and Dosage:

- For best results, mince or chop fresh garlic about 10 minutes before using.
- Pickle garlic in vinegar, add it to broth, and use it to flavor foods. Eat one or two cloves with each meal.
- Mash garlic for use as a topical application.
- Eat parsley with garlic to prevent garlic scent in sweat.
- Apply garlic paste topically for treatment of fungal and yeast infections, including thrush, yeast, athlete's foot, ringworm, and others.
- Eat garlic with every meal to lower blood sugar in diabetics.

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- Drink garlic juice or tincture.
- If raw garlic is too strong, try pickled garlic

### Ginger, *Zingiber officinale*

Ginger is warming, antispasmodic, and anti-inflammatory, making it a good choice for many different medical problems.

It is ideal for treating arthritis, back pain, bloating, bronchitis and chest colds, constipation, cough, dry mouth endometriosis, enlarged prostate, fever, headache, heart palpitations, hemorrhoids, IBD, IBS, intestinal cramping, ulcerative colitis, inflammation, joint pain, menstrual cycle irregularities, nausea, pain management, PMS, pneumonia, seasonal depression, sprains, strains, and bruises, sore muscles and varicose veins. It is heart healthy, treating cardiovascular problems and increasing blood flow. It is also effective treating rheumatoid arthritis and other issues caused by inflammation.

Preparations and Dosage:

- Use ginger in recipes.
- Take 3 to 4 cups of ginger tea daily to treat chronic inflammation, headaches, cramps, and digestive issues.
- A few drops of ginger tincture may be enough to treat problems, you can take up to 4 droppers full at a time.
- Apply mashed ginger topically or use a tincture or liniment.
- Ginger has a blood-thinning effect. Patients taking blood thinning medications should consult their doctors.
- In therapeutic doses, ginger can increase the menstrual flow.

### Greater Burdock, *Arctium lappa*

Burdock is a detoxifying herb with beneficial effects on the immune system. It is a diuretic, helping to flush toxins out of the body along with excess water. It treats infections caused by bacteria, fungus, and parasites. In addition to medicinal use, it is edible.

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Greater Burdock is considered antibacterial, antifungal, carminative, diuretic, hypoglycemic, stomachic, and a blood purifier. It is a powerful detoxifier. The dried root is most often used for medicine, but the leaves and fruit can also be used.

Use greater burdock to treat conditions caused by an overload of toxins, including boils, rashes and other skin problems, sore throat, infections, and eliminating heavy metals and infections from the body. Greater burdock kills cancer cells, increases blood circulation to normal cells, protects the organs, and boosts whole body health. Use it to treat breast cancers, colon cancer, pancreatic cancer, and others.

Greater burdock has a high iron concentration, making it a good treatment for iron deficiency anemia. It is also used as a treatment for high blood sugar in diabetics and reduces complications. It also strengthens the immune system, stimulates the kidneys, reduces fluid retention, and helps the spleen get rid of dangerous pathogens. It improves blood quality, liver health, blood circulation, and fights inflammation.

### Preparations and Dose:

- Use greater burdock in combination with sheep sorrel and slippery elm to kill cancer and detox the body.
- Take one to two grams of powdered burdock root, three times a day to build blood levels of iron. Use capsules for ease.
- Use Greater Burdock Tea to wash the skin and take it internally to treat skin problems such as herpes, eczema, acne, impetigo, ringworm, boils, and insect bites.
- Crush the seeds and use it to make a poultice for treating bruises, burns, and sores.
- Use fresh root to improve digestion and lower blood sugar in diabetics. If fresh is not available, use 1 to 2 grams of dried powdered root, 3 times a day.
- Consume 3 cups of Greater Burdock Tea daily to treat osteoarthritis and degenerative joint disease.

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## Goldenseal, *Hydrastis canadensis* L.

Goldenseal functions as an immune booster as well as an antibiotic, antiviral, and antifungal. It is a good treatment for infections of all kinds, both internally and externally. It is also beneficial for diabetics in lowering the blood sugar, for detoxing the body, and treating respiratory problems.

Goldenseal is an antiviral and antimicrobial. Use it to treat bacterial infections including vaginal infections, infectious diarrhea, eye infections, urinary tract infections, and the cold and flu. Infections respond to both internal and external application of goldenseal.

### Preparations and Doses

- Use goldenseal root powder in doses from 250 mg to 1 gram, repeated three times a day. Some patients need more.
- Give 10 to 30 drops of extract, two to four times daily.
- Watch the blood sugar closely when using goldenseal, it can lower blood sugars and increase blood pressure.
- Use goldenseal in combination with echinacea for greater benefits. Goldenseal boots the effects of other herbs.
- Use goldenseal infusion as a douche to treat vaginal infections.
- Treat skin eruptions with topical applications of goldenseal extract.
- Apply goldenseal extract to fungal and yeast infections such as acne, athlete's foot, skin irritations, and jock itch.

## Marshmallow, *Althaea officinalis*

Marshmallow herb has sweet, salty, and bland roots and leaves with anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, dehydration, demulcent, diuretic, emollient, expectorant, nutritive, sialagogue, and vulnerary effects. It is ideal for treating arthritis, asthma, burns and sunburn, cough, dry mouth, food sensitivities, gastritis, gout, hangovers, headaches, heartburn, high blood



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pressure, hypertension, IBD, IBS, Indigestion, leaky gut, sore throat, stomach ulcers, ulcerative colitis, urinary tract infections, and wounds.

Preparations and Dosage:

- Marshmallow helps hydrate the body, helping water absorb into the tissues.
- Soak or spray dry, irritated skin to cool and soothe.
- Treat infections, inflammations, ulcers, UTI's, and cystitis with cold marshmallow tea. Drink one or two cups at a time or sip it throughout the day. Take 3 to 5 cups daily, hot or cold.
- Marshmallow root preparations coat the digestive tract with a thick mucilage. While soothing, it can also inhibit the absorption of medications. Do not take medications within 2 hours of taking marshmallow.
- Use marshmallow root tea in the bath or as a compress for external irritations.
- Take 5 to 15 ml of marshmallow tincture 3 times daily.
- Use marshmallow to prepare an ointment or cream. I like to combine it with slippery elm.
- Use marshmallow leaves to make a hot or cold tea.

### Milk Thistle, *Silybum marianum*

Milk thistle is usually taken in a capsule or powdered and added to smoothies, but it is also effective taken as a tea. It's well known for its action on the liver. It protects liver cells, stimulates the repair and replacement of damaged liver cells, and nourishes the tissue. It has strong anti-inflammatory effects and is good for treating liver problems while acting gently on the body.

Milk thistle also supports insulin-resistance and hormonal imbalances. Use it to detox the body from drugs, stress, and other situations that put an extra load on the liver. Consider it for skin rashes, eczema, acne, and other inflammations of the skin that may be caused by the same toxins that are

## How to Make a Herbal Apothecary at Home



overloading the liver. Also consider it during the teenage years, menopause, and andropause when the hormones can easily fall out of balance.

Milk thistle is effective to treat acne, allergies, andropause, constipation, dermatitis, detoxification of the liver, eczema, endometriosis, hangover, hypothyroidism, menopause, PCOS, prevents gallstones and kidney stones, and rashes. It also helps control blood sugar in insulin-resistant patients and helps lower high cholesterol.

Milk thistle has hormone-like effects that stimulate menstruation and increase the flow of milk in nursing mothers. It also has benefits for treatment of prostate cancer.

### Preparations and Dosages

- Take two capsules of milk thistle daily for support.
- Take two capsules morning and evening for treating liver diseases or extra hormonal stress on the body.
- Two capsules, twice daily also help rid the body of extra drugs, alcohol, and detoxification.
- Make milk thistle tea with 1 teaspoon of crushed or ground milk thistle seeds.
- Do not use milk thistle if you are allergic to plants in the Asteraceae Compositae family.
- To prevent a hangover, take 2 capsules of milk thistle before going out, and two more when returning home. Stay hydrated throughout the night.
- Large doses of milk thistle can cause a mild laxative effect.

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## Nettle, *Urtica dioica*

Nettle is packed with vitamins and minerals and can be eaten as a nourishing food, or it can be taken as a capsule or tincture. It is a cooling herb with drying and tonifying properties. Stock the leaves and root for medicinal use. Nettle is an alterative, diuretic, kidney tonic, and nutritive.

Use nettle to treat allergies, andropause, arthritis detox, endometriosis, enlarged prostate, gout, hemorrhoids, incontinence, inflammation, kidney stones, stimulates blood flow, menopause, PCOS, rashes, skin inflammations and urinary tract infections.

### Preparations and Doses

- A long infusion of nettle leaves extracts the nutritive properties along vitamins and minerals.
- Cook nettle leaves for use as a green or add it to soup and stews.
- Make a tincture from nettle roots. Take 2 to 4 ml, three times daily.
- Dry and powder nettle roots for use in capsules of 300 mg each. Take 2 to 3 capsules daily.
- Make nettle tea to stimulate blood flow.
- Make a strong nettle infusion to use as a skin wash on burns, insect bites, wounds and other skin irritations.
- Take nettle juice prepared from fresh nettles to treat anemia, cardiac insufficiency, enlarged spleen and as a tonic. Allow two ounces, three times a day.
- Make a tincture for use with menstrual problems.

## Peppermint, *Mentha piperita*

Peppermint is useful for treating the symptoms of a wide range of digestive upsets. It also relieves arthritis, bites and stings, bloating, burns and sunburns, fever, IBD, IBS, indigestion, itchy skin, leaky gut, muscle soreness, migraines and headaches, nausea, relieves pain from gout, neuralgia, and sciatica.

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Peppermint is warming, drying, and a relaxant. It is an anticatarrhal, antiemetic, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, antispasmodic, aromatic, carminative, cholagogue, and a stimulating diaphoretic.

### Preparations and Doses

- Brew peppermint leaves into tea to relieve digestive complaints and colic in young children.
- Prepare peppermint oil for use in salves. Peppermint relieves muscle soreness and relaxes the muscle.
- Use peppermint oil in a steam to relieve respiratory infections.
- Take peppermint tea to relax the body in stressful situations.
- Peppermint tea increases the flow of oxygen to the brain and sharpens the mind.
- Give peppermint tea to reduce fevers in children.
- Peppermint tea can be taken in any quantities as desired. Use it to flavor less desirable teas.
- Excessive amounts of peppermint can cause heartburn in some people.

### Red Clover, *Trifolium pretense*

Red clover is a natural hormone replacement and is useful to slow the bone loss in osteoporosis. It can even increase bone density in women. It relieves symptoms of menopause and reduces hot flashes and night sweats.

Red clover protects the hear by increasing good cholesterol in pre- and post-menopausal women. It thins the blood, improves the blood flow, and prevents clotting which can cause strokes.

It is also helpful to treat skin diseases and combatting heart disease.

### Preparations and Doses:

- Harvest red clover away from sources of pollution.
- Brew red clover together with yellow dock and nettles to treat skin irritations that crack and ooze.
- Use soaked red clover flower heads as a poultice to treat skin lesions.

## How to Make a Herbal Apothecary at Home



- Give several cups of red clover tea weekly for hormonal benefits.
- Drink 2 to 3 cups a day to treat specific complaints.
- Use 1 to 2 tablespoons of tincture daily to treat specific complaints.
- Red clover can be taken as a dried herb.
- Do not use red clover for women with a history of endometriosis, breast cancer, uterine cancer, fibroids, or other estrogen-sensitive conditions.
- Do not use red clover for patients taking anticoagulants.
- Do not use before surgery or childbirth.

### Sheep Sorrel, *Rumex acetosella*

Use sheep sorrel for treating digestive problems, parasites and worms, gastro-intestinal problems, kidney problems, Urinary tract diseases, and skin cancer. It is a good whole-body detoxifier. It can be used as a treatment for skin cancers, cysts, and swellings. It reduces inflammation and pain caused by colds, flu, and sinusitis.

Because of its high oxalate content, people with kidney stones, arthritis, rheumatism or hyperacidity should not use sheep sorrel.

Preparations and Dose:

- For best results, take freshly made juice of sheep sorrel for detoxification.
- Alternately, use sheep sorrel tea or powdered leaves for detoxing.
- Apply a poultice of sheep sorrel leaves over skin cancers, cysts, and swellings. Use several times daily and leave on as long as possible.
- Use one cup of tea, twice daily for two weeks as a vermifuge to kill and flush worms and intestinal parasites out of the system.

# How to Make a Herbal Apothecary at Home



## St. John's Wort, *Hypericum perforatum*

St. John's Wort is effective in the treatment of hormonal problems of many types. It regulates the female hormones and treats problems associated with menopause and menstruation. It helps balance the hormones, relieves depression and increases the tone of the uterus. It is also useful for treating anxiety, nerve and muscle pain, inflammation, skin wounds, and burns. It is helpful to relieve the symptoms of opiate withdrawal.

### Preparation and Doses

- Dispense as a tincture, twice daily
- Consume St. John's Wort Tea 3 times a day for menstrual problems and PMS.
- Use the tincture, three times a day for symptoms of mild opiate withdrawal.
- Use extracted St. John's Oil topically to facilitate healing of burns, injuries, wounds, and infections. Or use diluted essential oil.
- Topically applied oil also treats neuralgia, sciatica, and shingles. Also take the tincture or tea.
- Use oil topically for hemorrhoids.
- Take St. John's wort oil for peptic ulcers and gastric problems.
- For high blood pressure, detoxing, and calming the nerves, take St. John's Wort Tea daily.
- Give 5 to 10 drops of St. John's Wort tincture in the afternoon to flush the body of excess fluids and prevent bedwetting in children.

## Valerian, *Valeriana edulis*

Valerian has a calming effect on the body and is useful for alleviating panic attacks, anxiety disorders, and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorders. It improves the brains activity and calms the spirit when used in small doses. It also lowers blood pressure and the heart rate and is useful for treating acne, ADD, ADHD, andropause, chicken pox, cold sores, depression, Detoxing, endometriosis, epilepsy, gastritis, hangover, herpes,

## How to Make a Herbal Apothecary at Home



hypertension, hypothyroidism, inflammation, insomnia, lowers pulse rate, menopause, menstrual cramps, PCOS, PMS, rashes, sprains and strains, stomach ulcers, stress, and wounds.

- Brew a Valerian Decoction from the leaves or roots to treat panic and anxiety disorders.
- Use small doses to treat symptoms of anxiety and OCD. Larger doses can make the problem worse.
- Give 100 mg to 1 g of dried powdered valerian root to treat epilepsy. Dose depends on patients size. Start with a lower dose and increase as needed.
- For high blood pressure and/or rapid pulse rate, give 100 mg of dried root daily, increasing if needed.

### White Mustard, *Sinapis alba*

I stock white mustard seed for its use in preventing cancer, but it is also useful for treating infections and respiratory diseases. The seeds of white mustard cause vomiting when taken in quantity. Use this property to bring up poisons or other undesirable substances which have been swallowed.

White mustard also has an abundance of sulfur compounds which prevent and treat infections.

White mustard is antibacterial and antifungal, carminative, cathartic, diaphoretic, digestive, diuretic, emetic, expectorant, rubefacient, stimulant, and vesicant. It is used internally and externally.

- Apply a mustard poultice to the chest to relieve congestion, colds, and other respiratory problems.
- Grind fresh or dried and soaked white mustard seeds into a paste. Use the paste on wounds and infections.
- Use one tablespoon of crushed or ground white mustard seed daily to protect against the start or return of cancer. Note: white mustard does not cure cancer, but slows or prevents its growth.



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- Add 1 tablespoon of white mustard powder to the bath water and soak to relieve rheumatism and other joint pain. Soak only until the skin is irritated, then wash away.
- Or grind white mustard seed and apply the past to rheumatic joints. Wash away when the skin becomes irritated.
- Gargle with mustard seed tea several times a day to prevent and heal throat irritations.

### Wooly Lamb's Ear, *Stachys byzantine*

Fresh wooly lamb's ear is soft and fuzzy. It makes an excellent dressing for wounds of all kinds. The leaves absorb blood and encourage clotting, while the antibacterial, antiseptic, and anti-inflammatory qualities begin the healing.

I use Wooly Lambs Ear to make an eyewash. It treats pinkeye and sties. It is also useful as an antibacterial wash for all kinds of wounds. Wooly Lamb's Ear is an alternative, antibacterial, antiseptic, anti pyretic, antispasmodic, and astringent. It is also a diuretic, carminative, febrifuge, stomachic, styptic, tonic, hypotensive, vermifuge and vulnerary with many medicinal uses.

Preparations and Doses:

- Place wooly lamb's ear leaves on wounds and cover with a soft cloth or gauze dressing. Leave in place until you change the dressing.
- Make tea with distilled water and wooly lamb's ear to use as an antibacterial wash for wounds of all kinds. It can be used as an eyewash to treat pinkeye, conjunctivitis, and other eye infections. For use in the eye, strain the tea twice or more, if needed, so that no fine particles are present.
- Drink Wooly Lamb's Ear Tea to treat internal bleeding, diarrhea, and fever.
- Gargle with the tea to treat a sore throat or mouth. Repeat several times a day to relieve pain and treat the infection.

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- Use the leaf tea as a general tonic. It is especially good for the liver and heart.
- The leaves can be consumed daily as a vegetable or used as a herb.

### Yarrow, *Achillea millefolium*

Yarrow has a wide range of use in your dispensary and is part of many remedy recipes. It is often used in combination with other herbs, mainly because of its usefulness and to improve the flavor. On its own, yarrow is bitter and unpleasant.

I use yarrow for treating abscesses, acne, bites and insect stings, cholesterol management, colds and flu, dermatitis, eczema, edema and swellings, enlarged prostate, fever, gastritis, gingivitis, gout, hemorrhoids, high blood pressure, hypertension, inflammation, leaky gut, muscle soreness, PMS, rashes, stomach ulcer, urinary tract infections, varicose veins, and wounds.

Preparations and Doses:

- Use yarrow topically as an astringent and antimicrobial. Make a wash or poultice for cleaning the skin, wounds, rashes, and acne.
- Use powdered yarrow or whole yarrow leaves to stop bleeding in wounds and treat varicose veins, hemorrhoids, and bruises.
- Use yarrow tea as a mouthwash for abscess, gingivitis or receding gum lines.
- Take yarrow tea or tincture to lower cholesterol, reduce blood pressure, and improve blood flow.
- Use 1 to 3 dropperfuls of yarrow tincture up to 3 times daily. Or take up to 4 cups of yarrow tea.

# How to Make a Herbal Apothecary at Home



## Making Basic Herbal Formulas

Most herbal medicines are easy to make, although some require long periods of soaking or macerating. It does you no good to have the ingredients on hand to make the tincture for a sick child if the medicine takes 6 weeks to brew. So be sure you read the instructions thoroughly to the end before you begin. Fortunately, there are usually some quick fixes to make it in a hurry, if required. But remember, the slow way is usually the most effective unless otherwise noted.

## Making an Infusion

An infusion is the simplest medicinal preparation. It is the equivalent of making a tea, although sometimes longer brewing times are required. It is the preferred preparation in most cases whenever the medicinal components are water soluble. Infusions are usually made from plant leaves, flowers, and stems.

## A Hot Infusion

A hot infusion is made like using a tea bag. Unless the recipe states otherwise, you will use 1 tablespoon of herb to 1 cup of boiling water. For larger quantities, use 1 ounce of herb for 1 quart of boiling water. Follow these steps to make a hot infusion:

1. Place 1 tablespoon of herb in a cup or jar.
2. Pour 1 cup of boiling water over the herbs and let it steep for 30 to 60 minutes. Steeping times vary depending on the herb and may be longer or shorter.
3. Strain the herb out and drink the tea.

Hot infusions are best used with aromatic or volatile constituents which may evaporate with longer steeping times.

# How to Make a Herbal Apothecary at Home



## A Cold Infusion

This method is best used for demulcent or mucilaginous herbs such as marshmallow. Use it with herbs that thicken the water as they infuse, causing it to become velvety or slimy when cold. The mucilaginous components are only released in cold water. Follow these steps to make a cold infusion:

1. Place one cup of herbs into a clean quart jar.
2. Pour water into the jar until full and the herbs are completely covered. Leave about 1 inch or more room at the top of the jar. Push the herbs down to wet them all, if required. Cover the lid with a tight fitting lid.
3. Shake the jar and label it.
4. Place the jar in the refrigerator or the freezer to brew for 4 to 8 hours, or as indicated in the recipe.
5. When ready to use the tea, thaw it out slowly in the refrigerator (if frozen).
6. Strain the tea into the second jar and drink as desired.
7. Store the cold infusion in the refrigerator for up to three days or freeze it for six months or more.

A cold infusion is a good way to make teas that need to be prepared from fresh herbs that have a limited harvest. Freeze the infusion when the herb is available, then thaw and use it later in the season.

## A Long Infusion

This infusion combines the hot and cold infusion over a longer time period. This allows you to extract the aromatic components, while still getting the mineral and nutritive benefits from the herb.

Follow these steps to make a long infusion:

1. Place 1 ounce of herb in a quart jar.

## How to Make a Herbal Apothecary at Home



2. Pour 1 quart of boiling water over the herbs and let it steep until cool. Place it in the refrigerator for long steeping times, usually 4 to 8 hours, or overnight.
3. When the long steeping time is reached, strain the tea.
4. Drink it cold or reheat it gently to warm. Drink.
5. Store the remaining tea in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.

### Making a Decoction

Making a decoction is similar to making tea, except that you are usually working with roots, barks, seeds, or other woody plant parts that require more cooking time to release their components into the water. Follow these instructions to make a decoction:

1. Use 2 to 4 tablespoons of herbs for one quart of water, or the amounts specified in your recipe.
2. Put the herbs and water into a pot on the stove. Cover with a tight fitting lid and bring to a boil.
3. Turn the heat down to a low simmer and simmer for 20 minutes to an hour or more, depending on your recipe.
4. Strain the decoction to remove the herb.
5. Serve warm or cold.
6. Store in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.

### Stems

Herbal stems are an excellent way to breath in the health benefits of the herbs to treat sinus issues, the face, eyes, and lungs. If you are using oils, you can place 10 to 20 drops of oil into a cold vaporizer, but in most cases the steam is also beneficial.

To make a steam, place the herbs into the boiling water and breathe in the evaporating steam. You can use a steam vaporizer or a pot of water on the stove. Stand or sit near the steam, but do not put your face (or any other body part) in it. Steam can burn very quickly. You can use a towel to funnel the steam toward your face.

# How to Make a Herbal Apothecary at Home



## Poultices

A poultice is a wet mass of plant matter that you apply directly to the wound. Follow these steps to make a poultice with fresh or dried herbs:

1. Place  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup or more of the herb mixture in heat-proof bowl.
2. Pour boiling water over fresh herbs to wet them. Barely cover dried herbs with boiling water.
3. Place the hot herbs on a piece of cheesecloth and squeeze out the excess liquid.
4. Place the warm herbs on the wound. Cover the area with a cloth or bandage to keep the herbs in place.
5. Keep the poultice in place for 5 to 20 minutes, or longer as desired. Some poultices should be left in place as long as possible. Remove the poultice if the skin become red or irritated.

## Making a Compress

A compress is similar to a poultice, except that it uses an infusion or decoction instead of the whole herbs. They are soothing on a wound and help deliver the healing herbs where they are needed. For a compress:

1. Prepare the infusion or decoction and strain it. If cold, gently warm it.
2. Soak the cloth in the hot infusion. Remove it from the infusion and allow it to cool slightly until it is comfortable to the touch.
3. Place the wet cloth on the affected area and cover it with a dry cloth.
4. Let the compress stay in place for 10 to 20 minutes, or longer as desired.
5. Remove the compress and clean the area and cover with a bandage, if needed.

When applying the compress to infected tissue, it is vital that you keep everything clean and do not re-use the cloth. For a longer soaking time, you can keep the compress warm by placing a hot water bottle on top of the compress.

# How to Make a Herbal Apothecary at Home



## Tinctures

Tinctures are potent extracts and a powerful weapon in your herbal apothecary. They usually need to be made in advance and stored in dark colored bottles or stored in a dark place. When properly stored in a cool, dark, place, tinctures will remain potent for 5 to 10 years or longer.

### Making Your Tincture

You will need:

- 80 or 100 proof drinking alcohol (vodka, brandy, or other)
- Herbs, fresh or dried
- Mason jars with tight fitting lid
- Storage bottles with flat top
- Dropper (for dosing)
- Strainers
- Funnels
- Labels.

Steps:

1. Place fresh herbs on a paper towel and allow to dry overnight to remove excess water. Use dried herbs as is.
2. Chop the herbs or run them through a blender (dry- do not add water),
3. Fill a mason jar half way full with roots and seeds, or three-quarters of the way full for leaves, flowers, and stems.
4. Fill the jar completely with alcohol. Close the lid securely and label the date. Be sure to include your starting date and solvent. For example: Chamomile Tincture in 100 proof alcohol, Started 7/6/18.
5. Allow the herbs to infuse in the alcohol for 4 to 6 weeks, shaking the jar daily. Keep the jar in a cool, dark place.
6. At the end of 4 to 6 weeks, strain out the herbs and pour the liquid into a dark colored bottle. Seal tightly and label, adding the finishing date.



# How to Make a Herbal Apothecary at Home



## About Solvents for Tinctures

Most tinctures work well in 80 to 100 proof alcohol, but other concentrations can be used. For herbs high in resins, use grain alcohol (95% alcohol or 190 proof). For mucilages, you want a mixture that is mostly water. Twenty percent alcohol is the minimum, for preservation purposes.

For people who cannot have alcohol, some tinctures can be made with vinegar or other solvents. Vinegar based tinctures are usually not as strong as alcohol based tinctures. Check your recipe for dosage and suitability.

## Using Tinctures

Tinctures can be used alone or mixed with other tinctures for combined remedies. Herbs can also be mixed before the tincture is made.

Most tinctures are taken by the dropperful, with 1 to 4 droppersfull being a standard dose for an adult. Repeat the dose 3 to 5 times daily. One dropper full is approximately equal to 1 ml, so 5 droppers full equals 1 teaspoon. For precise dosing, I like to use a 2 ml or 5 ml syringe, depending on the dosage. (Of course, the syringe does not have a needle.)

## Steam Distilled Oils

Most of the oils that you find for sale are Essential Oils. If you are buying essential oils, look for steam extracted. Oils that have been extracted by solvents leave behind traces of hexane or other solvents that are not good for your body. You can make your own steam distilled oil, but it is a little more difficult than most of the other methods in this book.

Using a small perfume still is idea for distilling essential oils, but you can also build your own still from a pressure cooker. When using a pressure cooker, you will need to use more herbs than you would in a perfume still. Instructions of building a still from a pressure cooker are found below, but skip this step if you have a small still.

# How to Make a Herbal Apothecary at Home



## Building a Pressure Cooker Still

You will need:

- a small pressure cooker
- glass tubing
- tinned copper tubing
- flexible hose
- tub of cold water
- collection vessel
- thermometer
- a heat source.

1. Build a cooling coil out of tin-plated copper tubing. Wrap the tubing around a can or other cylinder to shape it for cooling the oil.
2. Use a small piece of flexible hose to connect the copper tubing to the pressure cooker relief valve. The steam will rise through the valve and flow into the copper tubing to cool.
3. Bend the copper tubing as needed to place the coil into a pan or tub of cold water. Cut a small hole in the bottom side of the tub for the copper tubing to exit the tub. Seal the exit hole with a stopper or silicone sealer. The tubing now runs down from the pressure cooker, into the cooling tub, out of the tub into your collection vessel.

# How to Make a Herbal Apothecary at Home



## Instructions for Steam Distillation of Essential Oil

You will need:

- Perfume Still or pressure cooker still (see above)
  - Herbs
  - Water to cover the herbs
  - Carrier oil such as coconut oil or olive oil.
1. Place the herbs into the still. Add water as needed to fill the still to a level of 2 to 3 inches.
  2. Heat the still gently and watch for the oil to begin collecting in the collection vessel. The oil will begin to distill near the boiling point of water, but before the water boils. Watch for oil production.
  3. Monitor the still to make sure it does not boil dry.
  4. Collect the distillate until it becomes clear or until most of the water has distilled. The cloudy oil and water mixture indicates oil in the distillate. Once the distillate is clear, it contains only water, and your distillation is finished.
  5. Transfer the oil to a glass bottle with a tight lid for storage.
  6. Dilute the oil to at least 10% essential oil and 90% carrier oil before use.

## Herb Infused Oils

Herb infused oils are not as strong as distilled oils and do not need to be diluted before use. You can use them directly as a massage oil, or mixed with other ingredients to make a salve, lotion, or liniment.

When using fresh herbs, it is necessary to use a heat method which drives off the water and prevents mold from forming. If you are using dry herbs you can use the heat method, or use the cold method.

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Store herb infused oils in a dark, light-blocking bottle in a cool, dry place. They will be potent for 1 year or longer if properly stored.

Steps to making Herb Infused Oil

## Heat Method

1. Mix the herbs and oil together in a small oven-safe dish or a small crock-pot. I prefer to use a mini crock-pot designed for small quantities. The oil should just cover the herbs.
2. If using the oven, place the dish in the oven set to its lowest temperature, usually 180 or lower. If using a mini crock-pot set it on the lowest setting, either warm or low, depending on your crock-pot.
3. Heat the herbs and oil for 8 to 12 hours.
4. Strain the oil and wrap the herbs in cheesecloth. Squeeze out the last drops of oil.
5. Place the oil in a light-blocking glass bottle with a tight lid. Label the container with the oil name and date. Use within one year.

## No Heat Method for Dry Herbs Only

1. Fill a mason jar half to three-quarters full with herbs.
2. Add enough oil to fill the jar. Stir if needed to make sure all herbs are covered in oil.
3. Label and date the oil and cover with a tight-fitting lid.
4. Allow the oil to steep for 4 to 6 weeks in a cool, dry place.
5. Strain out the herbs and wrap the herbs in cheesecloth.
6. Squeeze the herbs to extract the remaining oil.
7. Bottle in a light-blocking glass bottle with a tight lid. Label and date. Use within one year.

## Liniments

A liniment is a mixture of herb-infused oil or essential oil and tincture. It is used as a topical application only. Mixing the oil extract and tincture extract

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constituents allows you to get the full benefits of the herb. It has both fast-acting and slow-acting qualities.

To apply a liniment, apply it liberally to the skin and massage it into the tissue until your hands no longer feel oily. Use the liniment 3 to 5 times daily, or as needed. Store liniments in dark glass bottles with tight fitting lids. Do not use dropper tops or plastic bottles, the oil will degrade the rubber or plastic over time.

Steps for making a liniment:

1. Fill your storage bottle approximately half-full of herb-infused oil or with carrier oil mixed with 10 to 30 drops of essential oil.
2. Fill the remaining space with your tincture made with alcohol or witch hazel extract.
3. Cap the bottle and label it with the liniment ingredients, date, and instructions “shake well before use.”

You can vary the portions of oil and tincture to fit your preference.

## Salves

A salve is an herb infused oil that is thickened with beeswax. Once cooled it is about the consistency of petroleum jelly or lip balm, depending on how much wax you use. Store your salve in a small flat tin, short, wide-mouth jar or nonreactive plastic container. You want a short container that you can reach into and easily touch the bottom.

To make your salve:

1. In a small pot, heat 6 to 8 ounces of infused oil gently over low heat. Do not boil.
2. Add 1 ounce of grated beeswax or beeswax pellets. Less beeswax will produce a softer salve and more will produce a harder salve.
3. Stir continuously until the wax melts.
4. Put a spoonful of the salve in the freezer for a few minutes until it sets up. Remove it and test it with your finger to judge the consistency. If

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you want a harder salve, add a little more beeswax and test again until it is the consistency you want. If you want it softer, add a little more oil, stir and test again.

5. Remove the salve from the heat and add any desired essential oils (if using) and stir.
6. Pour the oil into your container(s) and put the lid on tightly.
7. Label the containers with the name and date.
8. To use your salve, apply a generous amount to the affected area at least twice a day.
9. Use within one year.

## Herb Capsules

Powdered herbs can be easily packed into capsules for easy administration. Using capsules allows you to premeasure the dosage and they can be easily taken without worry about taste or grit.

Packing each capsule individually takes a serious amount of time, so I prefer to use a tool called The Capsule Machine. Mine makes 100 capsules at a time. Operation of the machine is easy, but difficult to describe. My advice is to look up the video on Youtube that describes how to use your version. I watched several times before I sat down to make my first batch. They really are easier than they look in the video.

To calibrate the dosage, I multiply the dosage by the number of capsules that the machine holds. My machine makes 100 capsules at a time, so if I want 300 mg capsules, I weigh out  $300 \times 100 = 3,000$  mg or 3 grams. I then distribute the 3 grams of powder across all of the 100 capsules. It won't be exact, but it should be pretty close. Put the lid on and you have 100 capsules ready to go. If you are concerned that your dosage is not right, just weigh the individual capsules. If you distribute the powder evenly, they will all be close enough.

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For best results grind your herbs into powder with a coffee or spice grinder just before making your capsules. Then use the batch within 2 weeks to a month. The powder loses some of its potency over time.

Just a tip: I have a hard time swallowing the capsules, so I prefer a smaller size. My first time buying capsules, I ended up with huge pills because I didn't understand the sizing. There are sizing charts for capsules online that will help you decide which size to buy and how much each size will hold.

## Keeping Records and Expanding Your Skills

Herbs act differently on different individuals and in different combinations. It is easy to start with single herbs or herbal recipes. But to grow your knowledge and get the best results, you should experiment and keep good records.

Most herbs work best when taken in smaller doses more often. That is why most of the teas and tinctures are spread out throughout the day. Keeping good notes helps you understand how the herb works for you and how long the effects last. You want to find the right dose for you and take it on a specific regimen or protocol that works best for you. I usually will make a two-week supply of my capsules or tincture, then reassess when I begin to run out. Is this protocol working? Do I need to increase or decrease the dose? Should I add other herbs or take different herbs? Am I experiencing side effects such as indigestion, etc. that could be alleviated by taking the herb with meals or at a different time? Keeping track of your protocol and how it is working will allow you to learn more as time goes by.

I recommend keeping a journal, using an app, or a spreadsheet to keep track of your doses and their effects. Keep track of everything you eat, drink, and your supplements and herbs. Don't worry about quantities unless you are changing your dosage, just write what you consumed and any effects that you notice.

This kind of record keeping will help you understand cause and effect. For example, if I eat a tomato sauce-based dinner with my oil of oregano



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supplement, I'm going to have heartburn at bedtime. I was able to avoid the heartburn completely by taking my oil of oregano at breakfast.

Another good tip is to set up a schedule for your herbs and take them at the same time every day. I use the alarm on my phone to remind me when it is time to take my supplements. When the phone alarm goes off, I stop whatever I am doing and take the herbs. If I can't take them immediately, I activate the snooze on the phone. I do not cancel it until I have taken the herbs.

Sometimes the herb may not give you the result you are looking for. Good record keeping will help you understand what is happening and whether you should take a different herb or continue on your schedule. You can always change the herb or add an herb.

Building your own apothecary does not need to be done overnight. You can start small with a few herbs and add to them over time. But be careful with this method that you are adding a variety of herbs, not just the ones that you take daily. If you have a good assortment, you can treat the stomach upset that pops up in the middle of the night or enjoy a soothing cup of tea when stress overwhelms you. If the herbs are not in your cupboard, you will just have to suffer.

A well-stocked apothecary is one of the essentials at my house. We use it as an everyday treatment center for the ravages of old age and as an insurance policy against whatever may come in the future. I sleep better knowing that I am fully prepared. I hope you will too.