



Tincture Guide

**Information on known uses for each herb,
dosing, and contraindications*

www.bespokeapothecary.com

Find us on Facebook and Instagram!!

FDA: Disclaimer: These statements and products have not been evaluated by the FDA. They are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease or condition. If you have a health concern or condition, consult a physician. Always consult a medical doctor before modifying your diet, using any new product, drug, supplement, or doing any new exercises.

Bespoke Apothecary
103 Sullivan Crest Rd * Elmira, NY
email@bespokeapothecary.com
revision - May 22, 2019

Bee Balm Tincture

Wild Bergamot

Monarda Fistulosa

Wound care
Headaches
Indigestion
Cold/flu
Antiviral
Antifungal
Diuretic
Catarrh - Inflammation of mucus membrane
Gastric disorders
Reduce low fevers
Soothe sore throat
Relieve flatulence
Nausea
Menstrual pain
Insomnia
Diaphoretic - sweat inducer

Dosage:

See dosage at the end of the guide.

Contraindications:

- SHOULD NOT BE USED BY PREGNANT OR NURSING WOMEN
- SHOULD NOT BE USED BY CHILDREN UNDER 12 YEARS OF AGE
- MAY LOWER BLOOD SUGAR LEVELS, MAY EFFECT BLOOD SUGAR CONTROL IN PEOPLE WITH DIABETES
- MAY INTERACT WITH PHOTSENSITIZING MEDICATIONS
- STOP USING 2 WEEKS BEFORE SURGERY

Black Pepper Tincture

Piper nigrum

Benefits:

High levels of:

Potassium, magnesium, calcium, phosphorus, thiamin, niacin, riboflavin, folate, vitamins B6, K, & E

- Relieves asthma(prevents, too!), sinus, nasal congestion, and respiratory issues
- Improves cognitive function - Alzheimer's and Dementia
- Known cure for Vitiligo
- Anti-bacterial
- Reduces risk of cancer, and heart and liver ailments
- Anti-tumor properties
- Treatment for peptic ulcers
- Weight loss benefits - fights fat!
- Facilitates and aids in digestion
- Increases bioavailability (Turmeric/Curcumin)
- Helps prevent ear-aches and gangrene
- Used for treating conditions like hernias, hoarseness, and insect bites
- Treats tooth decay and toothache
- In ancient times, pepper was also administered to treat vision problems

Dosage:

See dosage at the end of the guide.

Contraindications:

It is generally recognized as safe for human consumption

Do not use if allergic to piperine.

Burdock Tincture/Burdock Seed Tincture

Arctium Lappa

Benefits:

Fresh burdock root or the various liquid extracts are taken internally as a treatment for staph infections, impetigo, and obstinate ulcerations of the skin or mucous membranes.

Often combined with dandelion or yellow dock, burdock is an effective blood purifier used to treat psoriasis, eczema, oily skin, acne, boils, and gout.

For treating cancer, burdock is often combined with red clover.

Anti-inflammatory

Diuretic

Dosage:

The dried seed tincture vs. the root is very powerful, cut dosing instructions in the back of the guide in half.

Contraindications:

Burdock root is safe for use as a food.

Burdock Poultices are also safe for general usage.

Burdock decoction and tincture are safe for general use, but it should be understood that, used alone, the herb will sometimes cause expulsion of toxins through the skin, resulting in the formation of pustules. Therefore, burdock is usually combined with a diuretic, such as dandelion, in order to move the toxins out through the urine and not the skin.

The intensely bitter seed extract is stronger medicine and should not be used during the first 2 trimesters of pregnancy.

Cats Claw Tincture

Uncaria tomentosa

Helps with intestinal disorders such as diverticulosis, dysentery, gastric ulcers.

Helps with arthritis (rheumatoid or osteo), allergies (do not use in anaphylaxis or sudden allergic edema) such as hay fever, rhinitis, or mild food reactions.

Helps with agonies of cancer treatment, effective against, nausea and pain caused by chemotherapy treatments.

Antiviral and antioxidant properties helping with infectious and contagious disorders such as herpes, skin irritations, infections, and viral diseases of the skin.

QUIN quinolic acid

High levels of QUIN in the brain will cause an overstimulation of neurons, produce excitotoxic lesions, degradation of brain tissue, high levels of reactive oxygen species in the brain, and, sometimes seizures. Cats Claw will help protect the brain from effects of QUIN and reduce QUIN levels.

Dosage:

1/2 to 1 teaspoon, 3-6 times daily, depending on severity of infection.

Contraindications:

- Do not use if you have an autoimmune disorder (Lupus, MS, HIV, Tuberculosis, etc.) or are immune compromised.
- Do not use while pregnant or nursing.
- Do not mix with hormones, insulin, blood plasma, or vaccines.

Chaga Tincture (double extraction)

Inonotus obliquus

Prevent and treat cancer - Research reveals that Chaga extract may be able to prevent liver cancer cell growth & inhibits cancer progression.

Stimulates the Immune System - by increasing the production of certain immune cells including interleukin 6 (IL-6) as well as T lymphocytes. Helps to regulate the immune system and make sure that your body is fighting off any invading bacteria and viruses.

Potent Anti-Viral-Chaga mushroom appears to have anti-viral abilities when it comes to quite a few viruses. Including but not limited to HIV & Hepatitis C.

Inflammation Reducer - specifically inflammation due to ulcerative colitis- also promotes a continuation of the inflammatory response.

Improves Physical Endurance - Naturally decreases lactic acid levels in the bloodstream = less fatigue and better endurance.

Treatment for IBS, UC, gastritis, ulcers, and Diabetes.

Powerful Antioxidant - capacity to scavenge free radicals.

Dosage:

See last page of this guide.

Contraindications:

None found/reported

Corn Silk Tincture

- Is a demulcent, which provides a soothing and heating action on mucus membranes.
 - Good for the urinary tract and also female reproductive system
 - Soothes urinary membranes irritated from infection
- Has antilithic action
 - Helps prevent the formation of stones or gravel in the urinary system and can help the body with their removal
- Is a diuretic
 - Increase the secretion and elimination of urine
- Used for renal problems in children
- Used-combined with other herbs for treatment of cystitis, urethritis, prostatitis, etc.
- Tincture dosage
 - 3-6 milliliters, 3 times a day
 - 1 milliliter = 45 drops
 - Mix with water or juice

Echinacea Tincture

Echinacea augustifolia

Benefits:

Increase overall resistance to disease


Best if used in early stages of bacterial or viral infections

Anti-inflammatory, Anti-bacterial Anti-viral, used in colds, flu relief and upper respiratory infections

Used internally and externally for infected wounds and insect bites

Promotes salivation (sialagogue)

Aids in controlling blood glucose levels and healthy cell growth

Reduces risk of breast cancer 

Soothes mucus membranes

Helps manage anxiety

Lowers blood pressure

Dosage:

See dosage at the end of the guide.

Contraindications:

Though rare, a small amount of people experienced an upset stomach
Safe for anyone over the age of 2

Eleuthero Tincture

Eleuthero helps one adapt to stress, whether it be emotional, physical, or environmental in nature.

The herb is immune-enhancing and improves energy levels.

It is specifically useful for athletes to improve strength, stamina, and performance and is not classified as a stimulant or steroid.

The herb also has a profound normalizing and balancing effect on blood pressure and blood sugar levels.

A very important effect, shared also by astragalus, holy basil, and schizandra, is in protecting the body during radiation and chemotherapy, lessening side effects and improving overall energy and comfort.

Contraindications:

Use of eleuthero is usually reserved for teenagers and adults.

Overdose can cause sleeplessness, elevated blood pressure, and/or temporary flush or rash of the skin, usually occurring on the chest and neck.

If these symptoms appear, reduce dosage, increase exercise, or discontinue use.

Goldenrod Tincture

- Soothing for the entire genito-urinary tract
- Diuretic
- Antiseptic for treating kidney and bladder infections
- Kidney stone treatment
- Anti-inflammatory for lower urinary tract
- Prevent and breakdown renal and kidney calculi and gravel
- Contains quercetin
 - Treatment hemorrhagic nephritis and other hemorrhagic conditions

Mouth inflammations and gum disease

Carminative - settles digestion

Upper respiratory infections

External for eczema

Dosage:

See dosage at the end of the guide

Contraindications:

SAFETY OF USE BY PREGNANT OR NURSING WOMEN UNDETERMINED
FLUID RETENTION (EDEMA) DUE TO HEART OF KIDNEY CONDITIONS

Japanese Knotweed Tincture

Fallopia Japonica

Benefits:

****highly recommended for Lyme Disease maintenance due partly to its high levels of resveratrol***

Antibacterial, Antiviral, Antifungal, Anti-inflammatory, Antioxidant, Angiogenesis modulator, Calcium channel adaptogen, Central nervous system (brain and spinal cord) protectant and anti-inflammatory, Antischistosomal, Antispirochetal, Immunostimulant, Antiatherosclerotic, Anti-mutagenic, Antihyperlipidemic, Anticarcinogenic (ANTI-CANCER), Antineoplastic, Vasodilator, Inhibits Platelet aggression, Inhibits eicosanoid synthesis, Antithrombotic, Tyrosine Kinase inhibitor, Oncogene inhibitor, Antipyretic, cardioprotective, analgesic, Antiulcer (slightly reduces stomach acid and protects against stress ulcers), Hemostatic, Source of Vitamin C, and astringent.

Active Against:

- Staphylococcus, E. coli, Cholera, and more (powerful antibacterial)
- Candida (powerful anti fungal)
- ECHO viruses (powerful antiviral)
- Respiratory infections
- Snake bites
- Breaks up tooth plaque and tones the gums
- AND SO MUCH MORE

Dosage:

See dosage at the end of the guide.

Contraindications:

In rare occasions gastrointestinal side effects occurred: dry mouth, nausea, abdominal pain, diarrhea (recommend to back down the dose if this occurs).

This herb is contraindicated for use in pregnancy.

Lemon Balm Tincture

Melissa Officinalis - *Lamiaceae* family

Benefits:

- Gentle sedative, calming herb - anti-anxiety
- Increases GABA in the brain - improves mood
- Treatment for panic attacks
- Reduces depression
- Soothes the mind/agitation
- Promotes healthy sleep cycle
- Reduces stress
- Used to treat nervousness and overexcitement in children and adults
- Anti-viral - used for a cold/helps sweat out a fever
- Hyperactive Thyroid benefits - prevents thyroid-stimulating hormones from binding to its receptor
- Anti-inflammatory
- Type 2 diabetes treatment
- Anti-cancer
- When used with a laxative it has a complimentary antispasmodic effect
- Improves brain function
- Improves memory and mood - used in Alzheimer's to reduce agitation and improved QOL
- Used to treat cold sores and herpes
- Anti-microbial
- Treats infant colic

Dosage:

See the last page of this guide

Contraindications:

none!

Licorice Tincture

Glycyrrhiza glabra

Benefits:

Soothes the stomach and gastrointestinal problems.

A demulcent (soothing) herb, licorice root works as a natural remedy for ulcers and can be a beneficial leaky gut supplement.

Used in food poisoning, acid reflux, and heartburn, licorice root extract can speed the repair of stomach lining and restore balance.

Immune booster.

Anti-inflammatory.

Increases and supports adrenal function.

Treatment for irritated mucous membranes and soothes upper respiratory tract.

PMS and pain relief benefits - hormone balancing during menopause.

Dosage:

See the last page of this guide

Contraindications:

Not to be used if pregnant or nursing, may interact with some heart medications as it can increase potassium in your body.

Spearmint Tincture

Mentha viridis

Benefits:

Good for digestive upsets: commonly used to help relieve symptoms of indigestion, nausea, vomiting and gas.

High in antioxidants.

Diuretic.

Spearmint is frequently given to relieve cramping, including menstrual and abdominal cramps, bowel pain and spasms and so it is great support for Irritable Bowel Syndrome.

Aids Women with hormone imbalances.

May reduce facial hair in Women.

May improve memory.

Fights bacterial infections.

May lower blood sugar.

May help reduce stress.

Spearmint is considered an effective expectorant that is good for sinusitis and helps to expel excess mucus, bringing relief to the upper respiratory tract, easing coughs and asthma.

When used externally, Spearmint is believed to be mildly anesthetic and anti-inflammatory and has been used for hemorrhoids and joint pain.

Breath freshener.

Dosage:

See the last page of this guide

Contraindications:

It is generally recognized as safe for human consumption.

Local, wild harvested Mushroom Double-Extraction Tinctures

'Fungi are the interface organisms between life and death' Paul Stamets

Documented/Reported Benefits:

Birch Polypore/Fomitopsis Betulina

- Anti-viral
- Slows cancers
- Anti-inflammatory - from triterpenes
- Antiseptic
- Antibacterial
- Helps stop bleeding (topically)
- Antibiotic
- Aromatase inhibitor
- Helps hormonal imbalances related cancers

Reishi/Ganoderma Lucidum

- Detoxifies the body
- Improves cognitive ability
- Immune system modulating - adaptogen - immune system enhancer
- Helps with seasonal allergies
- Improves blood circulation
- Improves anxiety
- Helps with insomnia
- Reduces the number of tumors in colon related cancers
- Reduces symptoms of clogged arteries, shortness of breath and chest pain, reduced blood pressure
- Diabetes: reduces hemoglobin but not blood sugar levels
- Hepatitis B - improves liver function and reduces virus
- Reduces shingles related pain
- Boosts energy

Dosing in the back of this guide

No known contraindications/ Consult with a physician for use during pregnancy.

Giant Polypore Tincture

Black Staining Polypore - *Meripilus Sumstinei*

Benefits:

Anti-Bacterial

- Bacillus species
- Rhodococcus Equi (foal pneumonia)
- Staphylococcus Aureus

Anti-oxidant

Significant activity against estrogen-dependent breast cancer, cell line MCF-1

Hemolytic potential (Red Blood cells)

Inhibition of acetylcholinesterase (neurotransmitters) which makes it have possible benefit for Alzheimer's and related conditions.

Dosage:

See dosage at the end of the guide.

Contraindications:

None known/found.

Motherwort Tincture

Leonurus cardiaca, L. sibericus

Benefits:

- Used to regulate menstrual cycle and can promote delayed menstruation
- Stimulates uterine flow
- Regulates hyperactive thyroid and blood pressure
- Strengthens heartbeat, used for heart failure and irregular heartbeat
- Helpful for anxiety - especially fast heartbeat/ heart related symptoms
- Eases intestinal gas
- Helps with insomnia
- Relieves hot flashes and other menopause symptoms

Dosage:

See dosage at the end of the guide.

Contraindications:

People with hypoactive thyroid should not take
Likely unsafe for pregnant or nursing women

Oregano Tincture

Practical uses: Used medicinally, oregano has a broad activity as an antioxidant (cell-protector), antiseptic, preservative, anthelmintic, anti-cancer, anti-inflammatory and antifungal.

The tea or tincture can be taken for viral or bacterially mediated colds and upper respiratory infections.

The essential oils exert an antiseptic influence on the lungs, bronchi, and nasal passages.

Plantain Tincture

You can use plantain tincture both internally and externally.

Spring tonic, a gentle alternative, antiseptic, and astringent, treats toothache, infections, cough, diarrhea, and hemorrhoids. It also treats eczema or acne. The seeds contain a large amount of mucilage and are a direct and oft-employed substitute for psyllium, demonstrating the same emollient and laxative effects.

Plantain also greatly eases the itch of poison ivy, oak, or sumac.

Rosemary Gladstar, in her **Medicinal Herbs Book**, ranks plantain as a close second to dandelion as “most common and most useful weed.”

Taken internally, it's considered a blood purifier, helping to improve liver health and supporting kidney health, too. Liver and kidney health is so crucial!

5-10 drops under the tongue or in a small glass of water is said to help draw out infections, mucous and other toxins out of the body. Herbalists have said it draws out bad emotions also, thereby relieving you of past or present hauntings.

Contraindications:

None, safe for general use.

Always drink plenty of water throughout the day when taking Plantain.
(always, really)

Queen Anne's Lace Tincture

Daucus carota/ Wild carrot

Benefits:

Soothes digestive disorders, kidney and bladder disorders

Porphyryns:

*Stimulate pituitary gland & increase release of sex hormones & stimulates uterus

Encourages delayed menstruation

Can induce uterine contractions

Anthelmintic & Carminative

Contraceptive & Anti-estrogenic

Deobstruent & Diuretic

Emmenagogue

Galactagogue

Ophthalmic & Stimulant

Analgesic

Anti-arthritis

Anti-depressant, Anti-psychotic & Anti-schizophrenic

Anti-inflammatory

Anti-bacterial

Anti-convulsant

Anti-diabetic

Anti-flu

Anti-histaminic

Anti-oxidant & Anti-septic

Anti-spasmodic

Anti-epileptic

Anti-anxiety & Anti-stress

Anti-PMS

Anti-hangover

Anti-viral

Cancer preventive

Expectorant

Fungistat

Immunostimulant

MAO-inhibitor

Sedative & Tranquilizer

Aphrodisiac

Gout & Cystitis

Dosage:

See dosage at the end of the guide

Contraindications:

SHOULD NOT BE USED BY PREGNANT OR NURSING WOMEN.

Interacts with: Estrogens, Lithium, Medications for high blood pressure, Photosynthesizing medications

Stop using 2 weeks before surgery.

Rose Tincture

Rosa Spp

Benefits:

- Packed with vitamins - C, A, B-3, D
- Lifts spirits, melts away stress, tension, moodiness, anxiety
- Gift to console grieving women
- Used to titillate romantic interest
- Increase sexual function in both male and female
- Powerful for female reproductive system
- Used to cover up awful smells
- Antimicrobial, antiviral, used in cold and flu relief
- Soothes mucus membranes
- Supports liver, gall bladder and bile flow
- Diuretic/gentle laxative, gets everything moving!

Dosage:

See dosage at the end of the guide.

Contraindications:

None known/found

Rosemary Tincture

Rosmarinus officinalis

Benefits:

- Antimicrobial
- Stimulates liver and gallbladder function
- Relieves cold, flu, sore throat, chest infections
- Stimulates digestion - Digestive, Nerve, Circulatory tonic
- Relieves anxiety and depression
- Relieves migraine
- Helps low blood pressure and poor circulation
- Improves memory
- Gives courage
- Lifts spirits

Use internal or external for areas of poor circulation, to gently stimulate a weak heart, also use externally for lice treatment (on hair/hairbrush)

Dosage:

See dosage at the end of the guide.

Contraindications:

None known/found

Teasel Tincture

- Anti-inflammatory
- Stimulant for the nervous system
- Pulls toxins (including bacteria, like Lyme) from the muscles, helps bring them out of hiding so that prescription and natural antibiotics such as colloidal silver, garlic, raw apple cider vinegar, or grapefruit seed extract can destroy the bacteria.
- Teasel root in traditional Chinese medicine is classified as a yang tonic with an affinity for assisting with structural repair especially of the connective tissue and bone.
- Increases circulation and aids in building strong tendons and bones
- Helps damaged bone tissue grow, stimulating new bone growth
- A natural diuretic, ridding the body of excess water weight, encouraging flow of urine.
- Stimulates sweating and helps with tissue swelling/inflammation
- Helps treat candida overgrowth by purging to the bloodstream and the inulin helps probiotic growth in the colon.

Dosage:

Due to possible herxheimer reaction start with 1 drop, 3 times a day. Can be increased to 10-30 drops, 3 times a day

Contraindicatons:

May cause herxheimer reaction. Herxheimer reaction is a short-term detoxifying reaction in the body that makes one feel worse because the toxins are spilling into the bloodstream. This can cause headaches, increased muscle pain or nausea as a result of the detoxification process.

Tulsi Tincture

“Holy Basil”

Ocimum tenuiflorum

Benefits:

Holy basil has been shown to boost your body’s health in a variety of ways. It can help ease stress, protect against infection, lower your blood sugar, lower your cholesterol, ease joint pain, and protect your stomach.

antidepressant and anti-anxiety
increases endurance
antibacterial
antiviral
antifungal
anti-inflammatory
anti-oxidant
analgesic (a painkiller)
weight loss aid
hyperinsulinemia, or excess insulin in the blood
high cholesterol
insulin resistance
hypertension
regulating blood glucose levels
gut health
stomach ulcers
with black pepper, for malaria
diarrhea, nausea, and vomiting

Topically:

mouth ulcers
keloids
raised scars
acne
ring worm
eczema

Dosage:

See dosage at the end of the guide

Contraindications:

No negative side effects have been reported during human clinical trials. However, you should avoid holy basil if you’re lactating, pregnant, or trying to conceive.

Yarrow Tincture Uses:

-Yarrow Tincture For Fevers

“Fevers are our friend” is longstanding wisdom in the herbal tradition. Now, modern medicine is taking the same view.

“Fever is the body’s normal response to infection - It’s a natural defense mechanism,” Dr. Janice Sullivan, professor of pediatric clinical care and clinical pharmacology at the University of Louisville School of Medicine, [told the Washington Post](#).

She explains that a high temperature triggers the body’s production of infection-fighting white blood cells, which inhibits the growth of viruses and bacteria, and that “if you lower the fever, you may be affecting the body’s ability to respond to that infection.”

I’ve written before about [how to treat a fever naturally](#) by supporting the body, and also discussed guidelines from a pediatrician on when to go to the doctor. Yarrow is one of the remedies mentioned in that post, and for good reason:

This plant is a do-it-all for flu and fever! Yarrow is both an anti-inflammatory as well as being antimicrobial. It reduces pain, is an anti-catarrhal, relaxes circulation, and is a mild sedative, too.” - [The Herbal Academy](#)

-Yarrow For Digestive Support/Diabetes

The Cherokee, Goslute, Iroquois, and Mohegan nations have traditionally used yarrow for digestive support, which makes sense because bitter, aromatic herbs help digestion by stimulating the production of bile and pancreatic juices ([Kruidwis](#))

“When used internally, yarrow’s bitterness increases digestion as well as the absorption of nutrients by the body, The astringent gifts of yarrow makes her very useful in stopping diarrhea... The bitter properties of yarrow invigorate the liver and help it release bile while the antispasmodic gifts (an agent that relieves spasms of cramps) help in relieving cramps arising out of tensions, wind, colic, or nervous digestions.” [Sobo](#)

-Yarrow For Headaches

The anti-inflammatory properties of yarrow are thought to be helpful for dull, pounding headaches or migraines that seem to drag on.

Modern research has confirmed the historical use of yarrow to relieve pain caused by a broad range of conditions. Yarrow teas and tinctures contain salicylate-like derivatives such as stigmasterol and beta-sitosterol that reduce the inflammatory process, which may accelerate healing. These compounds stop the formation of enzymes necessary for a series of chemical reactions that cause inflammation and pain.

Yarrow also contains a compound designated sesquiterpene lactones, which reduce the action of pain-provoking hormones, the prostaglandins.” ([Belch](#))

How much yarrow should I use?

Fresh yarrow plant tincture of 1:2 ratio in 95% alcohol, 2-5mL/day

Is yarrow safe for pregnancy and breastfeeding?

Yarrow is a uterine stimulant and emmenagogue and should not be used internally during pregnancy. Yarrow has also not been proven safe for breastfeeding.

Yarrow, sometimes known as milfoil or plumajillo, is a small drought-tolerant perennial flowering plant in the *Asteraceae* family that typically reaches about three feet in height.

Medicinal Uses

Yarrow is a diaphoretic, hypotensive, astringent, diuretic, anti-inflammatory, vulnerary, carminative, and antiseptic herb. It's one of the best herbs you can use to sweat out a fever. It also tones and dilates the blood vessels, which helps lower blood pressure. Yarrow helps relax the smooth muscles of both the uterus and the digestive tract, making it useful for menstrual cramps as well as stomach complaints, flatulence, diarrhea, and sluggish digestion. It's also useful as an anti-anxiety herb, as it contains the biochemical constituent *thujone*, a substance sometimes compared to marijuana. While yarrow doesn't have a potent enough amount to achieve euphoric effects, it can sometimes help counter insomnia, anxiety, and act as a mild sedative. Externally, its chemical constituents *achilleine* and *achilletin* aid in blood coagulation, stopping bleeding and heal wounds. Several other of its constituents act as anti-septics, analgesics, and anti-inflammatories, making it a good external poultice or wash. The flower extract is said to be helpful in treating hay fever. It is considered a neutral to cooling herb and good for Pittas.

Folk Uses

Yarrow's other Latin namesake, *Achillea*, comes from the Greek legend of Achilles stopping the bleeding of his fellow soldiers during the Trojan war using the plant as a poultice. It was later used in Roman times up to the Middle Ages to stop nosebleeds and the bleeding of other small wounds. The leaves can be used in culinary, cooked or eaten fresh in salads, and the flowers are used to flavor liquors and beers. Around the time of Achilles, Chinese physicians were using yarrow to treat snakebites, inflammation, bleeding, menstrual complaints, and dog bites. In India, Aryurvedics were using yarrow to treat fevers. Early American settlers used yarrow for menstrual cramps, diarrhea, dysentery, hemorrhaging, and bloody urine. Cahuilla Indians use yarrow as a mouthwash for toothaches and to strengthen muscles. Yarrow has a long history of use in the occult; it was used in the ritual practice by druids and in China for divining the I-Ching, a way of predicting the future, by asking questions and casting yarrow stems to read the answers. In the west, Yarrow was once thought to be a witches herb, and was often brought to weddings to ensure seven years of love.

Dosage of Tinctures

The advantages of taking herbs in tincture form are many. Tinctures are stable, convenient, and due to the fact that they are cold-processed and preserved from enzymatic change though the addition of alcohol, they probably represent the actual chemistry of the herb more closely than any other preparation. Because they are liquid, the dosage can be regulated almost infinitely, from near-homeopathic dosages (1 drop diluted in water taken over time) to heroic dosages (1/4 ounce or more taken over the space of a few hours).

Tinctures are quickly and readily absorbed into the bloodstream through the lining of the stomach and, because of this, their effects are not dependent upon the efficiency of digestion. This is an advantage over solid preparations (tablets or capsules), but it also means that one must remember to take the tincture several times daily in order to produce the desired effect. Absorption is a bit more efficient if the extract is taken between meals, and tasting the herbs without the buffering of other food will maximize the benefits, because in many cases, especially with bitter or immune-enhancing herbs, the taste is part of the effect. The most important time to remember to take the extract is just before bed. At this time the body is in its most receptive phase, allowing the herbs to tonify the body organs and orchestrate the body processes in a clear and uncomplicated manner.

The basic dosage recommendations given in this section apply to tinctures that are safe for general consumption. Please check the formulary section of this book for potential contraindications. The decision to take an herb should be based on good herbalism and the advice of a qualified health care provider.

Dosage for infants (10 weeks to 3 years): The average dosage for infants is 2 to 5 drops well-diluted in water, milk, or juice, taken 3 to 5 times daily. Most herbs are safe for consumption by infants, but low-dose botanicals (e.g. arnica, lobelia) should be avoided. Infants are very sensitive to herbal therapy and should be given the minimum effective dosage. In treating infant colic, it often makes sense for the mother to take the herb, delivering the influence to the child by way of breast milk.

Dosage for children (4 years to 10 years): The average dosage for children is 5 to 15 drops well-diluted in water or juice, taken 3 to 5 times daily. As with infants, the low-dose botanicals should be avoided in favor of gentler herbs.

Adult dosage: The normal adult dosage of most tinctures is 30 to 60 drops (1 to 2 standard droppersful) diluted in a little water and taken 3 to 5 times daily. This represents a therapeutic level of intake, and is an appropriate starting dosage.

Senior dosage: Seniors tend to be very sensitive to herbal therapy. A good starting dosage is 1 dropperful (30 drops) taken 3 to 5 times daily.