



BACHA news

We are a network of herbalists dedicated to promoting awareness of Western Herbalism through clinical practice, education, and community building.

A Quarterly Newsletter

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Amanita Muscaria



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Trametes versicolor
Turkey Tails
© Mike Paquet

<http://www.mssf.org/>

Herbs for Colds and Flu

Winter is here, and so is the beginning of the cold and flu season. As the weather changes, we need to adjust our lives to be in harmony with our surroundings. Winter is a time to become more introspective and to pull our energy inward, like the bear that enters its cave for its yearly hibernation. Now is an important time to begin nourishing our bodies by slowing down, getting more rest, and cooking soups and stews made with whole grains, legumes, root vegetables, and leafy greens.



Rishi, garlic and beans against a winter landscape.

Herbs can help us stay healthy throughout this season, and can make any meal more flavorful. This is a great time of year to take advantage of medicinal mushrooms, such as shiitake, reishi, maitake, and turkey tails. These are all deep immune system tonics. Both shiitake and maitake are delicious to eat; you can easily add them to your soup or stir-fry. Reishi and turkey tails are woody and inedible, but you can simmer them in your soup stock to make a nutritional broth. Astragalus is another deep immune system tonic that also can easily be added to soups. Both astragalus and the medicinal mushrooms can be brewed and sipped as a tea or taken as an extract.

Elderberry is another important herb for the cold and flu season. Elderberry helps protect the body against a viral attack. Take a spoonful of elderberry syrup or brandy each day, as a preventive tonic. Elderberry also helps ease coughs and is a key ingredient in many herbal cough syrups.

Echinacea is one of the best herbs for viral and bacterial infections. It stimulates the body's immune response and increases the number of white blood cells, protecting the body from illness. Echinacea is best used for the acute or beginning phase of a cold or flu. Taking Echinacea over a long period of time can be over stimulating to the body's immune system, so make sure you monitor your use.

When you feel the first signs of a cold coming on, take 30 to 60 drops of Echinacea extract every couple of hours. As a preventative tonic, take 10 drops once a day for 10 days

Finally, eat your garlic! Garlic is both antiviral and antimicrobial and is most beneficial when consumed raw. Garlic is wonderful for respiratory tract infections. As a preventive measure, eat one raw clove per day. When sick, three cloves per day is sufficient. You can also make a garlic/lemon/honey tea.

Atava Garcia Swiecicki, MA, Clinical Herbalist & Flower Essence Practitioner

Herbal Remedies/Recipes for Winter

The Winds of Change

*Melissa, Sweet Balm, maiden fair
Shining her young face up to the sun,
Perfuming the air with lemony freshness and innocence
Her leaves, broad spring green open and ready to be plucked,
offer themselves up for a fragrant Cup of tea and a gentle
reminder to relax and breathe.
In the time of her blooming
Delicate white flowers add their momentum
to her change and maturing
She moves
And in that slight movement
Of sun and wind and rain and growth
She changes*

*She is a mother
A healer of many ills
Slight and deep*

*She mothers
Gently and effectively
With just a touch she uplifts the mood and brings sunshine
into dark hearts
To us her children
With more coaxing and a stronger nudge
She gives us her strength to fight off hardships
that we encounter in the wide world
Out of her protective nest
Those viruses that come with knowledge of intimate
blossoming of earthly pleasures
Vulnerable
We carry with us her teachings of strength and courage*

*With the harsh wind and sun
My Lemon Balm has altered dramatically
She is no longer tall and broad-leafed
But smaller, with paler leaves that do not venture as far from
their tether at the stalk
She still stands tall and stately
With the brave remnants of her reproductive calyxes
Attesting to another day long past
And a legacy that will continue after she is gone*

*Or maybe she will be reborn
After the cold rains of winter
Sending up new shoots of green
Ready for another cycle of Maiden, Woman, Crone*

*In her wisdom she moves back to the earth
And we inexorably follow
Attempting to learn the path of the Green Mother
Her teachings are available if we but listen.*

Kara Sigler, 2006
Community Herbalist

Prevention is the key to winter health. The best way to beat a cold is to strengthen your body's innate immune response, so that the buggers causing sickness can never gain a foothold to begin with. Bacteria and viruses can enter into your body in a number of



ways and it's important to be prepared for the harm they can do to your system. You can do this by incorporating Elder berries and warming spicy herbs into your diet. These are great tonics and yummy foods to eat before and during the winter months. Also, think of using onions, garlic, and cayenne pepper to fend off those illnesses that don't allow us to enjoy this cozy rainy season when most colds strike.

If you've been unable to stave off the cold, it is important to work with your body's own defenses when they are under attack. Begin taking herbs at the onset of symptoms, the itch of a sore throat, or the drip of a runny nose.

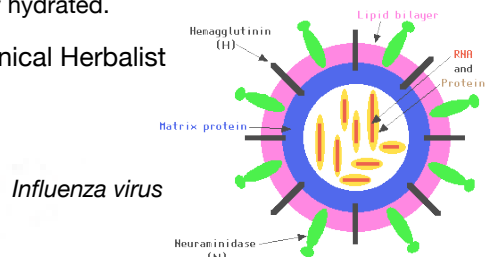
Your body has an alert system that can identify foreign bacteria and go into battle to eliminate them. While fighting, your immune system has the ability to store valuable information on these bacteria if it ever comes into contact with them again. If you allow your body to rid itself of the bacteria without using antibiotics, it will know what to do in the future to protect itself. You can better arm your immune system to fend off herbs by using antibacterial herbs such as Echinacea and raw garlic, and taking a healthy amount of vitamin C.

When harmful bacteria enter the respiratory tract, the body responds immediately by creating an inflammatory response. This puts your entire system on alert for foreign invaders. Membranes begin secreting mucus to encapsulate and expel the irritant. While this is helpful, it can make you miserable. Herbs that can help with a wet cough caused by too much mucus include Yerba Santa, elecampane, grindelia, and osha. And moisturizing herbs like mullein, licorice root, slippery elm, and wild cherry bark can be used for a dry, irritated cough.

Viruses are quite different. Viruses cannot reproduce on their own so they attach to your body's cells to live. To combat viruses your body heats up, creating a non-hospitable environment for the virus to live and spread. This process results in a fever. Fevers are healthy, and as long as they do not get too uncomfortable or too high, they are not at all dangerous. Diaphoretic herbs such as elder flowers and yarrow make great hot teas to naturally break a fever and allow the body to sweat out the virus. Take a hot bath, eat some spicy foods, and go to bed wrapped in a heap of blankets. Sweat it out. In the morning you will feel much better.

Finally, don't forget the old adage, "Feed a cold, starve a fever," but always stay hydrated.

Kara Sigler, Clinical Herbalist



Immune Support Soup



My Granny Antonija Leskovar is the baby in the lap of HER grandmother, Katerina Wutte who is actually the one that raised her and taught her mushrooming and cooking etc. in the Slovenian Alps where my grandmother lived until she was 16.

Soups are a great way to nourish and support our bodies as the seasons change. The changing weather challenges our bodies, and we can become more prone to illness. Soups help to keep us warm as the winter chill begins and can nourish us with herbs, seaweed, and mushrooms for wellness and vitality.

Bone marrow is a critical ingredient in my homemade stock. My Slovenian grandmother Antonija would suck the marrow out of the bones after our roast chicken meals. She was a bastion of health and wellness her entire life. So rather than having a clarified stock, I have my butcher cut the chicken bones up so the marrow extracts more easily into the soup. This leaves a cloudy stock that I believe has more nutrients than a clear stock. However you can also start from an organic stock and go straight to the soup recipe.

You can freeze extra stock for times when you need a boost. I tend to eat from the same soup for several days. I simply add the veggies and herbs I like for each bowl. Carrots, corn, broccoli, tomatoes, and cabbage are among my favorites. Some immune herbs you can add to soup are fresh or dried sage, thyme, or parsley. These herbs can be added generously for their antioxidant and antibacterial properties.

Jennifer Blythe Adams, Community Herbalist

Granny Antonija is the younger woman on the left with her mother. Upstate New York early 40's



Stock recipe:

5 lbs organic chicken parts or chicken from a butcher (If using a whole chicken, remove chicken meat just after stock is brought to boil and reserve.)

- 10–12 cups fresh water
- 3 carrots, cut into thirds
- 2 parsnips, quartered
- 2 celery stalks, cut into thirds
- 2 onions, quartered
- 1 oz astragalus root
- 4 inches of kombu seaweed, leave as a large piece
- 3 bay leaves
- 1 leek (optional), cut into thirds
- 1–2 tsp salt

Bring all ingredients to a boil. Skim the top layer of the stock and discard. Then cover and simmer for at least 2 1/2 to 3 hours. Strain and keep stock. Discard veggies and chicken carcass. Transfer astragalus and kombu to stock.

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Soup recipe:

Mix home-made chicken broth and an equal amount of organic chicken broth. (By using both together, you can ration the precious homemade stock.)
Add:
Reserved chicken
Reserved astragalus
Kombu from stock, cut into small pieces
2 oz. dried shiitake mushrooms or 1 oz fresh, if available
1–2 burdock roots, sliced into bite-sized rounds
2 inches grated ginger root, or enough to taste
6–8 cloves garlic

Simmer 15 minutes to 1/2 hour. Serve immediately.

MAINTAINING HERB VITALITY

We've all had it at one time or another—the bequeathed herb and spice rack. Whether it was your grandmother's or one of your housemates, chances are it was given to you full of herbs. Oregano from 1963, turmeric purchased on the same day that Apple Computer introduced the Commodore 64. Still, you haven't thrown them out because they were a gift and someday you may "need" them for the dinner party you've been putting off for a decade.

The time will come when you'll turn one of those herb-filled bottles upside down and witness the contents refusing to give in to gravity. Instead, it will stubbornly cling to the position it has held since Nixon's 1974 impeachment. You may even open the jar and attempt to break it up by sticking a knife into the center of the coagulated mass. If you pull out an herbal Popsicle instead, it may be time to consider disposal. Take a breath. Change is good. The tips below can help you determine the quality of your herbs and maintain their vitality for the longest duration possible.

Herb Selection

Use your senses when selecting herbs for medicinal or culinary use.

Seeing: The color of the herb should resemble, as closely as possible, what it would look like before being cut and dried—clean and vibrant in color. If the herb resembles the washed-out paint job on a 1978 Toyota Corolla, you may want to move on; it has been oxidized and therefore has lost some or all of its potency.

Smelling: You should notice a fragrant, natural scent. Reconsider the purchase if you whiff a horrific smell reminiscent of smelly socks. Valerian is the exception. It should smell like sock funk. If your whiffer can't capture the scent of the herb at all or very little of it, pass it by; it has lost its vitality. Also, if the herb you are considering smells like mold or mildew, it wasn't properly dried before being packaged. Move on.

Tasting: This is a simple concept as well as a fun experiment, if you are able to sample the herb before purchase. The herb should taste as close to the live plant as possible. If the flavor of your lemon balm smacks of old cheese, something is seriously wrong. If it reminds you of cardboard or hamster pellets, shop elsewhere.

Touching: Are the herbs crisp and fully dry? Do the smaller twigs and roots snap when you bend them? If so, and it has passed the other sensory tests, this is probably a good herb to take home. If the herb is flexible or wilted, it may not have been dried properly.

Herb Storage

Dried herbs have a shelf life. They don't last as long as the emergency canned ham you have stuffed in your cupboard's farthest reaches, perhaps in a box labeled, "Earthquake Survival Kit, October, 1989." However, there are ways to stretch out the efficacy of the herbs you buy.

Paper or plastic? Neither. When returning home with your bounty, immediately transfer the herbs from the plastic or paper bags into glass jars. Inexpensive Mason jars work well, just make sure the lids fit properly and are secure. Plastic bags can sweat in heat, causing mildew which breaks down your

precious herbs. Paper doesn't protect the herbs from oxidation and makes it convenient for critters to trespass and sample your stores.

Grind as you go. Within reason, store your herbs as whole as possible. Further grinding or powdering causes more of the herb's surface area to be exposed to the deteriorating effects of oxygen.

Be cool. Once well contained, place your herbs in a cool, dark place. Glass conducts heat from sunlight and can break down herb vitality. A few hours of diffuse light during the day is acceptable but darkness is preferable. Never keep your herbs and spices in or near heat sources such as ovens, stoves, heating vents, fireplaces, saunas, campfires, bonfires, computer towers, or recently used car engines.

Check in. Take inventory of your stock twice a year and discard spent or damaged herbs. Try buying only as much as you will use within the next six months. You can always buy more and this effort can reduce the size of your compost pile. Many herbs can maintain their potency for months, some for years. In either case, a quick spot-check a couple times annually is ideal when using herbs.

By following these simple steps, you can secure a longer lifespan of your medicinal and culinary herbs as well as create more flavorful teas and meals.

Lainie C. Baker
Clinical Herbalist

West Coast Mushrooms

photos by
Michael
Wood

Bear's
Head



Chanterelle



Porcini/ King Bolete

California plays host to a diverse range of mushrooms that come in a variety of shapes, colors and toxicity. With the winter rain the fruiting bodies awaken from underground mycelial nests to show themselves in the light. There is nothing like a personal encounter in the field. A close second is the arm-chair view from two gorgeous local websites:

<http://www.mykoweb.com/>
<http://www.mssf.org/>

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*Gathered Together
To Build a Healthy
Community*



Winter

Walnut Trees
Madrone Berries
Toyon Berries
Witches Hat
mushroom
Trillium

Book Reviews

Atava recommends: **Herbal Healing for Women** by Rosemary Gladstar

This is an important herbal book for women of all ages. Gladstar discusses herbs for all stages of a woman's life, from puberty to menstruation and pregnancy to menopause. Gladstar also covers herbal remedies for common reproductive disorders in women, such as PMS, uterine fibroids, yeast infections, and infertility. The book includes Gladstar's in-depth materia medica of many common herbs for women. This book is easy to use for any herbalist at any level.

Lainie recommends: **Medicinal Plants of the Pacific West** by Michael Moore

This is by far my favorite plant book. Providing information on a collection of herbs found in the Pacific West, this book is filled with monographs containing colorful descriptions of the plants and their medicinal properties, beautiful pictures by Mimi Kamp, and a wealth of information on what herbs can do for the body. A must read for any experienced herbalist.

Kara recommends: **A Modern Herbal** by Mrs. Maude Grieve

This classic two volume text is one of my favorite sources for information on exotic and kitchen herbs. Grieve offers an in-depth look into herbs with her description of medicinal uses, native regions, and historic overview of each herb in her material medica. Some of her medical jargon is outdated, but still pretty accessible and packed full of facts and folklore.

Jennifer D. recommends: **How to be Your Own Herbal Pharmacist** by Linda Rector-Page

This is one of my newly discovered favorites. This lovely book offers herbal recipes to soothe and amplify various systems, from gland and hormone balance to herbs for good looks. There's also mention of acid/alkaline balance and suggestions of mineral rich and anti-inflammatory plants. Quite essential to the book are abbreviated monographs and dictionary of terms familiar to herbalists and healers everywhere. Page has a PhD in herbal research and is a certified doctor of Naturopathy.

Herb Walks

Join us and learn about your local plants. We will talk about the various herbs we encounter and the medicinal uses for each. For exact meeting locations and cost please contact the Ohlone Center at <http://www.ohlonecenter.com>.

March

Samuel P. Taylor Stat Park

Saturday, March 3, 2007

1:00 pm - 3:30 pm

Cheryl

Briones Park

Sunday, March 4, 2007

10:00 am - 12:30 pm

Pam Fischer

April

Fairfax

Saturday, April 21, 2007

1:00 pm - 3:30 pm

Catherine

Albany Land Fill

Sunday, April 29, 2007

1:00 am - 3:30 pm

Tracy

May

Mt. Diablo

Sunday, May 6, 2007

10:30 am - 1:00 pm

Pam Fischer

San Francisco Precideo

Sunday, May 13, 2007

1:00 pm - 3:30 pm

Kat



Classes

 For more information

<http://www.bayareaherbalists.net/>

The Blood Sugar Blues

Session 1

Tuesday February 27, 2007

7:00 pm to 10:00 pm

Jennifer Adams, Western Clinical Herbalist

Cost:\$50

Herbs for Women

Thursday nights in March

7:00 pm to 9:30 pm at Ohlone Center

Kara Sigler, Clinical Herbalist

Cost : \$100

Flower Essence Intensive

Session 1

Saturday May 19, 2007

9:30 am to 5:00 pm

Session 2

Sunday May 20, 2007

9:30 am to 5 pm

Atava Garcia Swiecicki, MA, Clinical Herbalist

Cost: \$160

Holistic Disaster Preparation: Herbs and First Aid for Community-Based Response

Session 1

Friday, May 25, 2007

7:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Instructors: Ohlone Center Of Herbal Studies staff & Bay Area Radical Health Collective

Cost: \$70

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