

Growing & Using Peaceful Herbs



For more details on many of these herbs, check out the “Backyard Medicine” and “Zen Herbs” class notes on my website!

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PLEASE READ: The information in this handout has not been approved by the FDA and does not in any way intend to diagnose or prescribe. Always consult with your health practitioner before taking any remedy.

Above this, I also recommend that you...

1. Research an herb in at least three good sources before ingesting it (see website for sources),
2. Listen to your body/intuition to determine if an herb resonates or doesn't resonate with you.
3. Take proper steps to ensure that any wildcrafted or cultivated plant is what you think it is, AND
4. Check with your pharmacist for herb-drug interactions if you take prescriptions.

GROWING PEACE

We are blessed to have many nervous system tonic herbs that will grow happily in a range of garden ecosystems. These herbs can give us calm energy, quell anxiety, boost mood, improve focus, and help us sleep. Many are quite beautiful, most can be harvested the same year they're planted, and several are even adaptable to containers. You can devote your entire garden to peace if you so desire. Consider adding at least a few of these herbs to your landscape this year.

A Quick Overview

Perennials

Lemon Balm
Motherwort
Skullcap (finicky, likes wet)
Lavender (finicky, likes dry)
Valerian (roots)
Blue Vervain
Catnip
Wood Betony
Korean Licorice Mint
Anise Hyssop
St. John's wort

Annuals

Some may self seed
Milky Oats
California Poppy
Chamomile, German

Trees & Shrubs

Few years until harvest.
Linden
Mimosa
Roses (wild/heirloom)
Schizandra (vine)

Tender Perennial “Annuals” from Hot Climates

You can try bringing them indoors in winter or grow them in a greenhouse if your climate is cold.
Holy Basil
Gotu Kola
Ashwagandha
Passionflower

Relaxing Recipes

Maria's Sleep Tea

Great for kids, too!

For daytime anxiety use, use less passionflower and skullcap (which are more sedating) or switch them out for holy basil's calm energy.

1/2 teaspoon skullcap
1/2 teaspoon lemon balm
1/2 teaspoon passionflower
1/2 teaspoon spearmint
1/2 teaspoon honey

Steep these herbs in a small 6-ounce teacup for 15-20 minutes. Strain and sweeten with honey.

DIY Fresh Herb Tincture

This works FABULOUSLY for almost any herb, including valerian root, lemon balm, SJW, and milky oat (whir the oat seeds in a blender for the best results) which are preferable fresh. (Note: ashwagandha is the only herb mentioned here that is preferred dry.

Use 1 oz dry herb per 5 oz 100-proof vodka, shake it..)
Chop and SHOVE as much plant material into a jar as you can fit. Cover with 40-95% alcohol (ie: vodka, whole grain) to the tippity top. Without measuring, this comes to about 1 oz herb to 2 oz solvent. Let macerate 1 month. Strain. Most tinctures keep 6+ years.

Visit the Links page of www.WintergreenBotanicals.com for Local & Online sources for *herbs, supplies, informative articles... upcoming classes, consults, and to buy my book!*

Highlights on Some of My Favorite Peaceful Herbs

Calm-Energy Adaptogens - Adaptogens help the body adapt to stress, improve energy

- ***Holy Basil** (*Ocimum tenuiflorum* syn *O. sanctum*), also called Tulsi, comes in several varieties. I prefer the unnamed variety (likely Kapoor) sold by Red Fox Farm (NH seedlings) and High Mowing Organic Herbs (seeds) for productivity in a temperate climate. Grow it like culinary basil. Use it for Zen-like calm-energy. Adaptogen. Balances cortisol, lowers/balances blood sugar, reduces cravings (especially stress-induced). Anti-anxiety, mood-boosting, cognition-enhancing, anti-inflammatory, digestion-enhancing. A great Protector: stress, inflammation, ulcers, radiation, cold/flu/infections... Great as a fresh or dry tea (especially with roses) but really useful in any way shape or form. Blends well with green tea. Use flowering aerial parts.
- **Gotu Kola** (*Centella asiatica*), also called Brahmi (FYI, so is *Bacopa monnieri*), is a creeping ivy-like vine tender perennial that loves warm, ultra moist, extremely rich soil in full or dappled sun. Also boosts brain/cognition, improves wound healing, circulation. Use aerial parts or perhaps whole plant.
- **Ashwagandha** (*Withania somnifera*), nightshade tender perennial, grow like tomato. Harvest roots after 1-3 years and dry before further processing (on its own, it's strong!). Harvests can be small. Also decreases inflammation, boosts mood, libido, sexual function, cognition, thyroid function, supports immune function, and much more.
- **Schizandra** (*Schisandra chinensis*), a vigorous bittersweet-like vine in need of strong supports, will grow in cold climates. May take a few years til you can harvest the berries. Sweet, sour, salty, pungent, bitter. Liver tonic, immune.

Trophorestorative Nervines - Calm and nourish nervous-adrenal system without over-sedating. Anxiety, stress, etc.

- ***Lemon Balm** (*Melissa officinalis*) easy to grow, harvest leaves/aerial. Also boosts cognition, aids sleep, topically (and maybe internally) fights herpes, improves digestion (relaxing aromatic bitter), reduces hyperthyroid.
- ***Motherwort** (*Leonurus cardiaca*) excellent for panic attacks and stress that feel like heart issues. Mild cardio tonic. Easy to grow, self seeds prolifically. Use the aerial parts before or ideally just as it starts to flower.
- ***Lavender** (*Lavandula angustifolia*) ask locals which variety grows best (in NH, hidcote, munstead). Use flower buds for aromatic hydrosol, tincture, tea, or buy an essential oil. Internal use = potent. Calming, pain-relieving, estrogenic. Sleep.
- ***Blue Vervain** (*Verbena hastata*) water-loving wildflower, use aerial parts/tops in flower. MANY uses, relaxes muscle spasms, headaches, neck tension/pain, control freaks, also immune/flu aid, lowers blood sugar and aids the "metabolically brittle."
- ***Milky Oats** (*Avena sativa*), a popular cover crop. Fresh seeds pop a milky latex when squeezed. Whir in blender with alcohol, vinegar, glycerine - tinctures (or water, to freeze). Best fresh for nervine properties. Super nourishing to nerves, quells drug withdrawal. Best in steady, long-term doses. Dried or oat straw = rich in minerals, B vitamins, use for bones and nourishment.
- These are just a few! Also check out **Catnip** aerial (*Nepeta cataria*), **Wood Betony** flowering aerial (*Stachys officinalis* syn *Betonica officinalis*), **Korean Licorice Mint** aerial (*Agastache rugosa*), **Anise Hyssop** aerial (*A. foeniculum*), German **Chamomile** flowers (*Matricaria chamomilla* syn *M. recutita* syn *Chamomilla recutita*...), **Linden** flower/bract maybe leaves (*Tilia* spp), **Mimosa** bark, twigs, and/or flowers (*Albizia julibrissin*)...

Sedatives - sleep, anxiety, sometimes for pain

- ***California Poppy** (*Eschscholzia californica*), common desert wildflower, harvest entire plant when flowering and in seed to tincture (or dry for tea). Aids sleep, swirling thoughts, bratty moments, off sleep cycles, mild nonaddictive opioid-like pain relief.
- ***Valerian** (*Valeriana officinalis*), tall garden flower, rampant self seeder, use roots. Potent sedative, warming (best for cold, anxious people), relaxes muscles and muscular pain. High doses ok at bedtime. Some feel agitated or drugged.
- **Passionflower** (*Passiflora incarnata*), overall cooling, sedating, relaxing herb. Useful for anxiety, sleep, cardio... Tropical flowering vine, use flowering aerial parts.
- **Skullcap** (*Scutellaria lateriflora*), "caps the skull" and nervine, quells hypersensitivity to everything, sleep, anxiety, pain, also digestion (bitter relaxer), nerve trophorestorative that may or may not be too sedating for the individual in the daytime.

Antidepressants - note that depression is complex and difficult to work with when severe

- **St. John's Wort** (*Hypericum perforatum*) Harvest/use fresh flowers and buds after hot, sunny week in hot, sunny, gravelly spot for strongest medicine. Turns tinctures, oils red. Internally nervine, antidepressant (long-term), immune antiviral, nerve restorative (ie: after injury). Topical for burns, pain (especially nerve), mild sunscreen, heals wounds. Internally - interacts with many pharmaceuticals, may cause photosensitivity in fair skinned. Topical should be fine.
- Also mimosa, holy basil, ashwagandha, lemon balm, roses... (see above), herbs that gladden the heart (below), flower essences

Focus & Nootropic Brain Tonics

- Gotu kola, lemon balm, mint, holy basil, ashwagandha (see above) as well as rosemary

Gladden the Heart - Gentle heart tonic, stress hypertension, depression, broken heart, grief, panic that manifests in the heart

- ***Roses** (wild/heirloom - *rugosa*, *centifolia*, *damascena*, *gallica*), any that have a nice rosy scent, good flavor, unsprayed. Add to water (cold, steep for hours), make extracts (especially sweet glycerites or honeys), sprinkle into tea blends. Stop and smell the roses, good for workaholics experiencing panic attacks, the broken hearted, those who need to love and take care of themselves
- Also mimosa, linden, lemon balm, hawthorn, motherwort... most listed above