

Sassafras

Sassafras albidum

Other Names: Filé
Description: An aromatic deciduous tree with broad one-to-three lobed leaves, small yellow flowers, and small bright blue fruits in the laurel family.

Part Used: Root Bark
Action: Alterative
Category: Specific
Systems: Blood, Liver, Urinary
Taste: Spicy
Energy: Warm
Primary Uses: Eczema, Psoriasis, Poison Oak
Caution: Not for use during pregnancy. Sassafras contains the essential oil ingredient, safrole, which has demonstrated carcinogenic activity in animals—this has provoked the Food and Drug Administration to restrict the trade of the herb. Many herbalists feel that this kind of isolated constituent testing, where the purified compounds are injected into animals, has little bearing on how toxic the actual plant is within the scope of its intended use—that is as a tea or as an ingredient in other herbal products. While the risk is probably minimal, it is recommended to use sassafras for periods of not more than 1 month a year in moderate amount.



Preparation: Decoction
Dose: 1 cup 2-3 x daily
Products: Bulk Herb, Tincture

Health Benefits: Sassafras is used externally as a wash for poison oak and insect bites. Taken as a tea, sassafras is used as a diaphoretic during colds and flu and is a traditional "blood purifier" taken in the spring as part of a cleansing program. The root bark provides much of the flavor one associates with root beer, and it is used to form an important part of a traditional root beer brew, along with burdock and other cleansing herbs. As a warming diuretic, it is useful for arthritic and rheumatic conditions.

Yarrow

Achillea millefolium

Other Names: Milfoil

Description: An upright aromatic plant in the Aster family with finely dissected leaves and flat-topped, umbrella-shaped white flowering parts.

Part Used: Flowering Plant

Action: Alterative, Diaphoretic

Category: Specific

Systems: Blood, Reproductive, Liver, Immune

Taste: Bitter, Salty, Aromatic

Energy: Cool

Primary Uses: Amenorrhea, Colds, Fevers

Caution: Contraindicated during pregnancy and nursing. Some herbal experts advise against the use of this herb if you have allergies to plants in the aster family. Occasional photosensitivity has been reported from eating the plant.

Preparation: Tincture; Infusion

Dose: 10-30 drops 2-3 x daily; 1 cup tea 2-3 x daily

Products: Capsule, Tablet, Tincture, Bulk Herb

Health Benefits: Yarrow is a well-known diaphoretic herb that has long been used to reduce fevers and clear up congestive colds, flu, and other upper respiratory infections. It is also an excellent herb for cleansing programs, for which 2-3 droppersful of the tincture are added to hot water or cleansing teas and used in conjunction with saunas and sweating therapy. When used cold, the herb has the ability to clear heat and toxins, especially nitrogenous waste products from the body through the urine. As a bitter tonic, it is used for lack of appetite, general debility, and convalescence. Yarrow helps regulate blood flow throughout the body, and coupled with its antiinflammatory action, it can relieve pain from arthritis and rheumatism. As a blood mover, it is also indicated for menstrual irregularities, such as sluggish or painful menses, delayed menstruation, and painful and heavy periods, having a mild pain-relieving effect as well as helping to remove blood congestion. It helps relieve spasms and inflammation and is sometimes helpful for irritable bowel complaints, colic, and intestinal and uterine cramps. Yarrow root is chewed to alleviate toothache.



Motherwort

Leonurus cardiaca

Other Names:	Common motherwort
Description:	A medium-sized garden perennial in the mint family with sharp-toothed leaves and whorls of small pink two-lipped flowers.
Part Used:	Herb
Action:	Cardiac, Sedative
Category:	Stimulating Tonic
Systems:	Blood, Cardiovascular, Liver
Taste:	Bitter
Energy:	Cool
Primary Uses:	Amenorrhea, Arrhythmias, Dysmenorrhea, Heart Palpitations, Heart Weakness, Hyperthyroidism, Low Blood Pressure, Suppressed Menstruation, Weak Heart
Caution:	Contraindicated in pregnancy
Preparation:	Infusion; Tincture
Dose:	1 cup 2-3 x daily; 2-4 droppersful 2-3 x daily
Products:	Tincture, Bulk Herb



Health Benefits: Well-known as an emmenagogue, sedative, and nervine, motherwort is extremely beneficial to the cardiac and the female systems. Women use it for amenorrhea, dysmenorrhea, PMS, and vaginal dryness. As a heart tonic, it is used to strengthen the heart, for palpitations, and hypertension.

Anemia

Recommended Herbs:

Gentian	Tincture	40-60 drops 2-3 x daily
Nettles	Decoction: 2-4 grams	1 cup 2-3 x daily
Angelica	Infusion: 2-4 grams	1 cup 2-3 x daily
Bloodbuilder Formula	Tincture	2 droppersful 2-3 x daily
Dong Quai	Tincture	25-40 drops 2-3 x daily
Yellow Dock	Tincture	2-4 droppersful 2-3 x daily

Medical Description:

Anemia is related to blood deficiency and is a symptom connected to a number of metabolic and bodily imbalances. Blood deficiency is a condition that is more comprehensive than the western concept of anemia. In anemia, the red oxygen-carrying pigment hemoglobin is reduced. Blood deficiency relates to the health of the blood in general. The blood contains immune substances, hormones, carrier proteins, electrolytes, sugars, toxins and metabolic by-products, as well as iron, hemoglobin, and oxygen. A diagnosis of "blood deficiency" means that a number of important functions of the blood may be deficient.

Holistic Program:

Anemia is often treated with chlorophyll-rich foods and herbs. Chlorophyll is the plant analogue to hemoglobin, and when the body has a good supply of it, hemoglobin, the oxygen-carrying component of blood, is more efficiently produced with less energy expenditure by the body.

An herbal program for general anemia or weak blood would include blood builders (dong quai, fo-ti), digestive stimulants (Digestive Bitters formula, artichoke leaf, yellow dock), and a good supply of dietary iron and magnesium (collard greens, kale, chard, beet greens, beet root).

Cholesterol, high**Recommended Herbs:**

Green Tea	Infusion: 6-9 grams	1-3 cups daily
Fenugreek	Decoction: 3-10 grams	1 cup 2-3 x daily
Psyllium Husk	Whole Herb: 1 tbsp to 1 pint water	1 cup morning and evening
Garlic	Oil	3-6 perles daily
American Ginseng	Tincture	25-40 drops 2-3 x daily
Shepherd's Purse	Tincture	1 dropperful 2-3 x daily
Guggulu	Standardized extract	1-2 capsules, twice daily
Shiitake	Standardized extract	2 capsules, twice daily

Medical Description:

High cholesterol, also called hyperlipidemia, is an excessive amount of cholesterol circulating in the blood and body tissues. A high level is defined as a total cholesterol level above 200 mg/dl, or levels of high-density cholesterol below 35 mg/dl. High levels of cholesterol have been associated with increased risk of cardiovascular disease. Causative factors include stress, a high-refined sugar or oil intake, or regular consumption of animal fats.

Holistic Program:

An herbal treatment consists of cholesterol-lowering herbs (garlic, shiitake, guggulu).

A diet high in fruits, vegetables and fiber can be helpful in lowering cholesterol.

Sprains

Recommended Herbs:

Witch Hazel	Liniment	Apply as needed
Arnica	Oil	Apply to affected area 2-3 x daily
Horsetail	Infusion: 8-10 grams	1 cup 2-3 x daily
St. John's Wort	Tincture	1-2 droppersful 2-3 x daily
St. John's Wort	Oil	Apply to affected area as needed
Horse Chestnut	Cream	Apply as needed

Medical Description:

A sprain is injury to the muscles, tendons or ligaments around a joint, usually as a result of trauma. Sprains result in swelling and pain in the affected joint.

Holistic Program:

Sprains are treated with rest, elevation of the affected joint and ice packs to reduce the swelling. They are best treated with herbal antiinflammatories (horse chestnut cream, St. John's wort, plantain), astringents (witch hazel), and trauma herbs (arnica).

Project

Make a strong ginger tea with dried ginger, and apply a compress or fomentation to a place on your body that is sore, like the neck area, lower back, elbow, or other joint. If you are completely pain-free, find a friend with a sore spot and apply the ginger compress for about 30 minutes. After the initial heat of the compress wears off, it should get hot again after about 10-15 minutes once the ginger oils penetrate the skin and increase circulation. Remember that ginger also has antiinflammatory and immune-activating properties when used in this way.

To make a ginger compress, buy several large fresh ginger roots from the store, slice them thinly (about 1/8"), and place in a warm place on a screen where they can dry, but not in the direct sunlight. After these slices are completely dry, which makes the ginger more active, store in a glass jar in a cupboard or other place out of the sun.

Simmer a few tablespoons of these slices in 3 cups of water for about 10 minutes in a covered pan, and then let the brew steep for another 15-20 minutes. Soak a washcloth in the tea, and apply to the sore spot for 30-45 minutes. Don't leave it on too long, or you might eventually create a mild burn.

Report on the results of your application. You might want to apply the compress several times over a week period for best results.