

Wildcrafting

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some herbalists believe that wild plants are more potent than cultivated plants because they embody energy from their wild habitat and are more connected to the “spirits” of their ancestral homes.• Some “weeds” or plants from other parts of the world that grow locally are not endangered or rare, and they can be safely harvested, helping to control their spread and competing with local native plants (fennel, St. John’s wort, and milk thistle are good examples).• Making a pilgrimage to a remote or wild spot, preparing for the journey by eating lightly and giving thankful prayers, as well as the time spent away from our usual busy life, can make good medicine.• Spending time in native plant habitats gives us a heightened appreciation for the importance of preserving these places for future generations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Traveling here and there to pick medicinal plants uses energy, gas, and time, especially when we have to travel great distances.• Some medicinal plant populations are stressed by human intervention and development.• It is often difficult to fully appreciate how much of a medicinal plant species or variety is actually left in the wild, and so it is easy to over-harvest.• For commercial herbs, a company can say “wildcrafted” on their herb products when in fact, the harvester or wildcrafter is often not known. The company often does not know whether the plants were harvested in a good-spirited manner with conservation and thankfulness in mind, or whether they were carelessly and greedily ripped from the ground, even with a bulldozer. Practitioners and other herbalists buy commercial herbs from suppliers where the original source is often not known.• The quality of herbs and their level of active constituents can easily vary widely with varying environmental and soil conditions.

Cultivation

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Energy can be saved by growing the medicinal plants one needs in a local garden or field.• Overall quality and levels of plant constituents can be better controlled when all the plants are grown in the same soil with similar climate conditions.• You get a chance to intimately observe plants through the year, learning much about their preferred environmental needs, growth habits, germination patterns, and much more because they are close by.• Conservation of rare as well as other medicinal plants is well-served by propagating and growing numerous medicinal plants. Pass the seeds and cuttings along to friends.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some medicinal plants may not be as potent when they are “pampered” with abundant amounts of fertilizer and water.• Cultivation of some medicinal plants might require time to gather experience, and costs are associated with expenditure of resources, such as water, soil amendments, etc.