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*Tinctures, Teas and Oils for
Your Home Medicine Cabinet*

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Medicine Making

Tinctures

Menstruums:

Alcohol (Tincture)

- The percentage listed equals $\frac{1}{2}$ of the listed proof. 80 proof vodka is 40% alcohol
- Extracts resins, balsams, camphors, essential oils and alkaloids
- Can use a 195 proof (95%) alcohol or blend a 95% alcohol with water to achieve a desired lower percentage. One can also use 80 or 100 proof alcohol such as brandy, vodka or tequila.
- Shelf life: the end product must contain at least 20-25% alcohol for reliable storage

Apple Cider Vinegar (Tincture)

- ACV is a dilute acetic acid liquid
- Since ACV has large percentage of water already present, it can extract all the constituents water does such as mucilage, starch, sugar, gums and tannins with a bonus of being an extremely efficient extractor of minerals and alkaloids.
- Shelf life: due to large amount of water present use straight, do not dilute any further with water
- Refrigerate fresh plant vinegar extracts. Store dry plant vinegar extracts in a cool dark place.
- Use wax paper between jar and cap when macerating (acid can eat away at any cap that is metal)

Vegetable glycerin (Glycerite)

- Glycerin sweet principle of oils, obtained by hydrolysis
- In general it will pull out constituents similar to water and alcohol, just to a weaker extent. Especially effective at extracting tannins
- For reliable storage, the end product should be at least 60-70% glycerin. It is used straight when working with fresh herbs due to the presence of water in fresh material and may be diluted to extract dry herbs. Shelf life is 3-5 years.
- Also used in smaller percentages (5-10%) in other tincture preparations to reduce precipitation of tannins and alkaloids

Basic Instructions

Place chopped (fresh) or powdered (dry) herbs in a jar and cover with menstruum. We break the plant down to expose more surface area for greater contact between the herb and the extracting menstruum. Macerate herbs for at least 14 days. Shake daily, Strain and compost the marc.

Folk Method:

This method does not require measuring or weighing. Place chopped herb (fresh or dry) in a jar, cover with menstruum (at least 2 inches above the herbs). Steep for at least 14 days,

and shake daily. Strain. Discard the spent herb (marc) and reserve the liquid. Label appropriately.

Weight to Volume Method [W:V]

Weigh dry or fresh herb. Chop fresh herb and grind dry herb to a powder. Place in jar. Cover with the volume of menstruum needed to make the ratio indicated below.

- ❖ **Dry Herbs [1:5]** 1 part dry herb to 5 parts menstruum
#oz. dried herb by weight x 5 = # fluid oz of menstruum by volume

Example: I have 2 oz. dried calendula flowers. $2 \times 5 = 10$. I will need 10 fl. oz. of menstruum

- ❖ **Fresh Herbs [1:2]** 1 part fresh herb to 2 parts menstruum
#oz. fresh herb by weight x 2 = # fluid oz of menstruum by volume

Example: I have 2 oz. fresh elecampane. $2 \times 2 = 4$. I will need 4 fl. oz. of menstruum

Formula for Custom Menstruum

___ total oz. menstruum x (O.x) desired alcohol % = ___ oz. pure Alcohol

___ total oz. menstruum - ___ oz. pure Alcohol = ___ oz. water (H₂O)

Example: You want to make 10 oz of 60% alcohol

$$\begin{array}{l} 10 \times 0.6 \text{ (60\% alcohol)} = 6 \text{ oz. pure Alcohol} \\ 10 - 6 = 4 \text{ oz. water} \end{array}$$

Make sure you double check it adds up to the required fluid oz for your extract.

$$6 + 4 = 10 \text{ fl. oz. (It checks out!)}$$

Labeling Tinctures:

- Common name
- Botanical name
- Fresh or dried (and plant part if applicable)
- Weight to Volume Ratio (herb : menstruum)
- Alcohol Percentage
- Date

Examples:

Elecampane (*Inula helenium*) Fresh root [1:2, 50% alc] 11.18.14

Calendula (*Calendula officinalis*) Dry [1:5, 70% alc] 9.06.19

Infused Oils

Methods for Infusing Oils

*I typically 1 oz of dried herb for 4-6 oz of oil.

Oven method for herb infused oils.

Place the herbs and oil in a large ovenproof dish and place in a preheated 250 degrees oven. Turn the oven off and place the herb filled bowl in the oven for 24 hours uncovered. Then strain.

Double boiler method for herb infused oils.

Place the herbs and oil in a double boiler and bring to a slow simmer. Slowly heat for 30-60 minutes. Keep the heat nice and low for a longer simmer time and to help release medicinal properties. Decant, bottle, and store following the instructions above.

Don't forget to label!

InstantPot method for infused oils.

Place the herbs and oil in a sterilized mason jar. Set the jars in the instant pot with some water in the pot and set it to 72 hours on the yogurt setting. Let infuse for 7 days, continuing to reset the instant pot. Take out jars and strain out plant material.

Dehydrator method for infused oils.

Place the herbs and oil in a sterilized mason jar. Set the jars in dehydrator with the shelves taken out. Set to 100 degrees F. Let infuse for 7-10 days. Take out jars, cool and strain out plant material.

Car method for infused oils:

Place the herbs and oil in a sterilized mason jar. Wrap the jar in brown paper and place in car during warm months. The heat from the car will gently infuse the herbs (but be careful on really hot days, you don't want it to get over 125F). Let infuse for 7-10 days and shake every time you get out of your car. Then strain, label and store in a cool dark place.

RECIPES:

Herbal Salve

To make an herbal salve, combine infused oils with beeswax and melt over gentle heat (such as over a double boiler, in an oven at a very low temperature, or in a jar surrounded by water in a crockpot on low). Use a ratio of 1 oz beeswax to 1 cup of infused oil. If adding essential oils, place drops of essential oil in bottom of container that it will be stored in, then pour in liquid salve. Stir with a chopstick or knife to disperse. It will solidify quickly as it cools down.

Herbal Lip Balm

- 0.5 oz shea butter
- 1 oz herbal infused coconut oil
- 0.25 oz castor oil
- 0.4 oz beeswax

Place the oils, wax and shea butter in a heatproof jar or measuring cup. Set this down into a pan filled with a few inches of water and bring the water to just under a simmer. Heat until the wax and shea butter is melted. Remove from heat, then pour into container.

Teas

Water extraction: Water is an excellent solvent for minerals, mucilage, volatile oils, and most medicinal constituents, although it doesn't easily extract resins or some alkaloids.

How to prepare herbal tea:

Infusion/Tisane

Parts of the plant: leaf, flower, petals or aromatic seeds

Instructions: Cover herbs with freshly boiled water and allow them to steep (covered) for about 10 minutes (up to overnight). For cold infusion: place herbs in a jar and cover with cool water. Let steep on the counter or in the fridge for 4-12 hours, strain then drink or store in the fridge for later. Tisanes and infusions can be prepared using a tea ball, tea strainer/infuser, muslin bag, tea bag, coffee filter, French press, mason jar, percolator, or tea pot.

Decoction

Parts of the plant: root, bark, seedpod, rind, or husk

Instructions: Add herbs to cold water, bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer (covered) for 15-20 minutes. This releases the trapped oils and flavors in the harder parts of the plants. Sometimes you can finely powder roots and seeds to be able to put them in a steeped tea.

Proportion for Tisanes and Decoctions:

1-2 teaspoon dried herb, or 2-4 Tablespoon of fresh herb per 8 oz. of water. Use more or less depending on taste preferences.

How to blend an herbal tea:

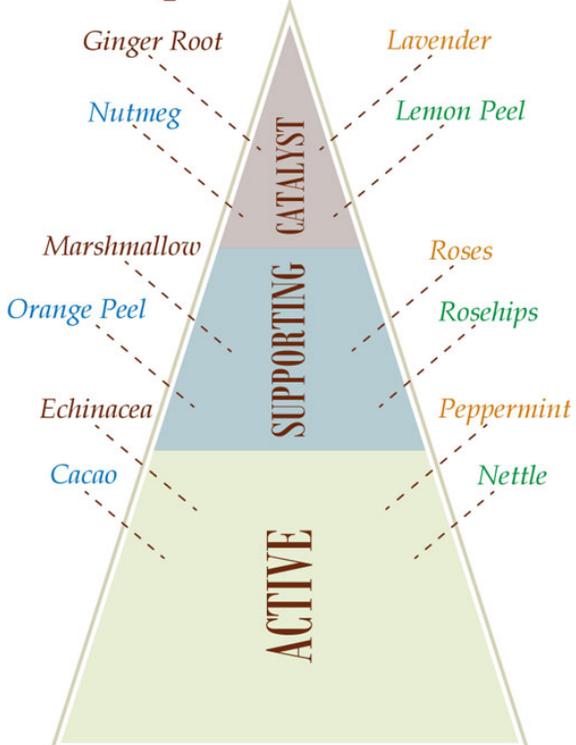
1. Start with the herbal action you need (immune support, calming, digestive stimulant, etc.) and use your preferred herb as the "active ingredient" base.
2. Then add a "supportive ingredient" that is soothing to that particular body system.
3. The final ingredient is the "catalyst" which adds a pop of flavor or offers stronger potency to the active ingredient by providing a complimentary action.

Feel free to experiment!

Measure in parts: it puts the recipe into a ratio.

A part can be assigned any measurement, volume or weight. If using volume, for smaller recipes, parts are in teaspoons or tablespoons. Larger recipes, the parts are in cups or pounds. Start with 3 parts active ingredient, 1 to 2 parts supportive, and 1/4 to 1 part catalyst, and then make adjustments as needed. You will find that herbs often switch roles from one blend to the next.

TEA BLENDING TRIANGLE



<http://mountainroseblog.com/guide-tea-blending/>

Learn More

Recommended Reading

- Herbal Constituents: Foundations of Phytochemistry – Lisa Ganora
- Herbal Therapy and Supplements – David Winston and Merrily Kuhn
- Medicinal Plants of the Southern Appalachians – Patricia Howell
- Adaptogens: Herbs for Strength, Stamina and Stress Relief – David Winston and Steven Maimes
- Alchemy of Herbs – Rosalee de la Foret
- Growing 101 Herbs that Heal – Tammy Hartung
- Medicine Makers Handbook – James Green

Learn More:

- Botanologos
 - North GA in person school on weekends
- Chestnut School of Herbal Medicine
 - Has various online programs
- Learning Herbs
 - Membership site with lots of great info
- American Herbalist Guild
 - Lots of free webinars and herbal education, especially for people interested in clinical herbalism

Herb Sourcing:

- Regional Herb growers
 - Pangaea plants
 - Heilbron herbs
 - Gentle Harmony Farm
- Large scale herb sellers
 - Mountain Rose Herbs
 - Starwest Botanicals
 - Frontier Herbs
 - Monterrey Bay Spice Company
- Brands I trust for purchasing products
 - Herb Pharm
 - Gaia
 - Red Moon Herbs
 - Heartsong Herbs

Herbal Actions Reference Sheet

Adaptogen - increases the ability to respond and adapt to stress

Alterative – “cleans” the blood, increases the efficiency of lymph glands, liver, kidneys, to detoxify and cool the blood

Amphoterich – normalizes organ function, can either stimulate or sedate, activate or tonify

Anti-depressant - relieves symptoms of depression

Anti-inflammatory - reduces inflammation

Anti-microbial - kills infectious organisms

Anti-spasmodic – relieves muscle spasms or tightness

Aromatic - contains high amounts of volatile oils, stimulates digestion, reduces congestion, may be diaphoretic, see also **Carminative, Diaphoretic**

Astringent - binds tissues together, reduces secretions

Carminative - stimulates digestion, relieves flatulence, spasm and bloating, see also **Aromatic** and **Stomachic**

Circulatory stimulant – stimulates circulation, increases cardiac function

Demulcent - soothes irritated tissues, usually internally

Diaphoretic - causes sweating, surface releasing

Diuretic - stimulates urine production, reduces blood volume/pressure, balances fluid levels

Emollient - soothes and moistens tissues, usually external

Expectorant - stimulates the break up and elimination of mucus from the respiratory system

Hepatic - tonifies and detoxifies the liver

Lymphatic - stimulates lymphatic drainage, reduces lymphatic swelling

Nervine relaxant - relaxes the central nervous system

Stomachic - stimulates digestion

Vulnerary - promotes tissue healing by increasing cell regeneration, used internally or externally