

American Ginseng root (adaptogen, antioxidant, bitter tonic, demulcent)

- Raises HDL and reduces total cholesterol
- Reduces allergies and allergic asthma
- Beneficial for chronic fatigue
- Improves sleep and relieves jet lag
- Improves male sexual tone

DOSING: Tincture (1:5) 60-90 drops 3x/day

Tea/decoction: 1-2 tsp root in 12 oz water; decoct 30 mins; Take 4 oz 3x/day

Capsules: Two 500mg capsules 2x/day

DRUG INTERACTIONS: May affect warfarin (Coumadin)

SAFETY: In general safe

PREGNANCY: not enough data

Ashwagandha (Nervous system and adrenal tonic; adaptogen for endocrine system)

- Helps the body adapt to new or stressful situations, recover from trauma or weakness
- Maintain balance and serenity in times of stress, major life changes and hormonal shifts
- Building energy and strength in people who are debilitate.
- Calms and clears the mind.
- Promotes deep and restful sleep

Always dry before making a tincture (otherwise can irritate the gut). Grown as an annual for the roots.

Can be used as a powder in milk or other liquids or with molasses and is rich in iron.

Astragalus root (adaptogen, antimicrobial, antioxidant, heart tonic, immune tonic)

- Aids in recovery from infection when fatigue is prominent
- Improves tolerance to chemotherapy/radiation
- Good for angina/mild congestive heart failure

DOSING: Tincture (1:5) 40-80 drops up to 3x/day

Tea: 2 tsp in 12 oz hot water, decoct for 20 minutes, let steep 30 minutes; 2-3x/day

Capsules: 1000-4000 mg per day (start at 1000mg 2x/day)

DRUG INTERACTIONS: None

SAFETY: do not use for active infection

PREGNANCY: causes defects in mice

Blue vervain (bitter herb and nervine)

- Good for women who hold stiff neck and shoulders
- Helpful in perimenopausal/postmenopausal impatience/intolerance
- Keep by the bedside and take 3-5 drops if awake with hot flashes

Calendula

- Healing for a wide variety of skin irritations/conditions
- Eases sore breasts

Dry herb for an oil infusion or make a fresh herb tincture

Celandine

- Good for warts and fungal infections

Squeeze the yellow/orange juice on the affected area

Chinese ginseng root (adaptogen, antioxidant, immune amphoteric, anti-inflammatory)

- Helpful with exhaustion (sometimes combined with licorice and scisandra)
- Improves sleep and memory when linked to emotional problems
- May help slow Alzheimer's dementia (often used with holy basil, white peony, ginkgo leaf, bacopa)

DOSING: Tincture (1:5) 20-40 drops up to 3x/day

Tea/decoction: 1-2 tsp in 8oz, decoct 30 minutes, up to 2 cups/day

Capsules: Two 400-500mg capsules, 2-3x/day

DRUG INTERACTIONS: may increase level of warfarin (Coumadin), may lower blood sugar, and may increase the effects of MAOIs (monoamine oxidase inhibitors, antidepressant)

SAFETY: may increase agitation with caffeine use

PREGNANCY: causes defects in mice

Cordyceps sinensis mushroom (adaptogen, antioxidant, immune amphoteric)

- Protects white blood cell production during chemotherapy
- Beneficial with chronic fatigue syndrome
- Helps regulate blood pressure and strengthens the heart
- Protects the kidney when taking nephrotoxic drugs (amikacin, gentamicin, prednisone)

DOSING: Tincture (1:5) 20-40 drops up to 3x/day

Tea/decoction: 1/4 -1/3 tsp powder or crushed root in 10oz, decoct 15 minutes, steep for 1 hour, drink 1-2 cups/day

DRUG INTERACTIONS: Safe with organ transplant drugs

SAFETY: May cause swelling, anxiety and headaches

PREGNANCY: not enough data

Dandelion (tonic)

- Supports the liver in clearing toxins
- Good for edema
- Harvest roots and dry

Eleuthero (Siberian ginseng) root, stem and bark (adaptogen, antioxidant, immune tonic)

- Used in middle-age people who work and play hard and do not get enough sleep
- Enhances endurance in athletes
- Lowers cholesterol

- Relieves angina and lowers LDL and triglycerides
- Improves the effectiveness of antibiotics in the –mycin family (erythromycin, azithromycin)
- Can be used by shift workers (combine with rhodiola, cordyceps or schisandra)

DOSING: Tincture (1:4) 60-100 drops 3-4x/day

Tea/decoction: 1-2 tsp in 12-16oz water; decoct 20-30 minutes, steep 1 hour.

Drink up to 3 cups/day

DRUG INTERACTIONS: Avoid use with digoxin

SAFETY: May be overstimulating for some people

PREGNANCY: not enough data

Elderberry

- Preventing and treating viral infections
- Clears blocked ears (eustachian tubes)

To get the berries off more easily put it in the freezer for 30 to 45 minutes and berries will pop off easier

Hawthorne (cooling nervine)

- Heart and circulatory issues (high blood pressure, angina, coronary artery disease)
- Nervine (restlessness, irritability, anxiety, insomnia)
- Gut health (clears toxins)

Harvest berries, flowers, leaves. Look for red berries after the leaves have fallen. See sharp spikes.

Jiaogulan (adaptogen, antioxidant, expectorant, immune system tonic, nervine)

- Supportive in cancer to prevent immunosuppression
- Lowers cholesterol and triglycerides
- Improves cardiac function
- Combine with hawthorne to prevent angina/congestive heart failure

DOSING: Tincture (1:5) 80-120 drops up to 3x/day

Tea: 1-2 tsp in 8oz water, steep 40 minutes, use 1-3 cups/day

DRUG INTERACTIONS: avoid with warfarin (Coumadin). May increase sedation with benzodiazepines

SAFETY: sedating, rash, fatigue, palpitations; do not take on an empty stomach

PREGNANCY: causes defects in mice

Lavender

- Eases anxiety and stress ; especially good for folks who hold their stress inside
- Calming and soothing to the nervous system
- Reduces PMS-related symptoms such as anger, irritability, insomnia and stress induced headache
- Relieves occasional pain
- Beneficial for minor wounds and many skin conditions

- Use with St. John's wort and lemon balm for Depression and SAD
- Good for digestive disturbances
 - Mix with fennel seed and chamomile for GI tract

Lemon Balm (brain and heart tonic)

- Improves memory and may help with Alzheimer's (has properties like Aricept)
- Eases feelings of being overwhelmed and low self-esteem
- Good for kids with ADD
- Eases stress, anxiety, panic attacks
- Helps with PMS and perimenopausal/menopausal stress
- Clears head congestion
- Good for cold sores/herpes
- Calms nervous stomach
- Safe in children and may be used for fever, anxiety and sleep
- Avoid if hypothyroid, but helpful if hyperthyroid

Licorice root (adaptogen, antiviral, antioxidant, demulcent)

- Soothes irritable bowel syndrome, Crohn's Ds, Ulcerative colitis
- Relieves dry cough and wheezing
- Reduces immune response in rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, scleroderma and allergies
- Topical forms relieve the pain of herpes outbreaks
- Relieves hot flashes (use in combination with black cohosh, chaste-tree and sage)

DOSING: Tincture (1:5) 10-20 drops up to 3x/day

Tea/decoction: 1/2 tsp in 8 oz, decoct for 15 minutes then steep for 10 minutes;
1-2 cups/day

DRUG INTERACTIONS: be careful with certain diuretics (hydrochlorothiazide, furosemide, bumex...), digoxin and MAOIs antidepressants. Avoid long-term use with warfarin (Coumadin). Don't take with grapefruit juice.

SAFETY: monitor potassium levels for long-term use. Might increase blood pressure.

PREGNANCY: avoid

Milky oats (one of the most important for the nervous system)

- Nervous system repair
 - For those that "burn the candle at both ends"
 - Nervousness, anxiety, nervous exhaustion
 - Recovery from drug use, prolonged illness
 - Insomnia, irritability, headache
- Heart palpitations (combine with hawthorne and motherwort).

Plant in late May and then harvest 60-75 days later at the green stage (should be able to squeeze out milk from seed head). You can dry it and use as a tea or make a tincture.

Motherwort (bitter nervine)

- Heart issues associated with anxiety, nervousness, loneliness, and/or poor digestion.

- Palpitations with hyperthyroidism
- Stimulates and regulates the digestive system

Reishi mushroom (adaptogen, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, heart tonic, nervine)

- Lessens immune response in autoimmune diseases (lupus, rheumatoid arthritis...)
- Decreases inflammation associated with Hepatitis B and C, asthma and COPD
- Lowers cholesterol and triglycerides
- Beneficial for angina, irregular heartbeats and hardening of the arteries
- Soothes emotional problems that lead to anxiety, difficulty sleeping, moodiness and poor memory

DOSING: Tincture (1:5) 80-100 drops/day divided into 4 or 5 doses

Tea/decoction: 1-2 oz in 32oz water, decoct 2-4 hours until reduced to 16oz, 3-4 cups/day

Capsules: Take up to two 500 mg capsules, 3x/day

DRUG INTERACTIONS: Doses above 3,000mg may affect blood clotting; may lower blood sugar and blood pressure

SAFETY: dry mouth, throat and nose; itching, rash with reishi wine or inhaling spores

PREGNANCY: caution; use less than 1 month

Rhodiola root (adaptogen, antioxidant, nervine)

- Improves immune depletion from overwork, chemotherapy/radiation therapy
- Strengthens the heart and prevents stress-induced heart damage/irregular heartbeats
- Relieves stiffness and spasms in Parkinson's disease
- Improves infertility in women
- Lessens erectile dysfunction
- Reduces stress-induced heart damage and irregular heart beats
- May be helpful in fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue

DOSING: Tincture (1:4) 40-60 drops up to 3x/day

Tea/decoction: 1-2 tsp in 8oz water, decoct for 15 minutes; 1-3 cups/day

Capsules: Take two to four 500mg capsules/day

DRUG INTERACTIONS: may lower blood sugar and blood pressure

SAFETY: dizziness and dry mouth

PREGNANCY: safe for short-term use < 10 weeks

Rose (anti-depressive, anti-inflammatory, calmativ)

- Eases sadness, grief and loss
- Supportive to people in transition
- Eases PMS and menopausal stress

Rosemary (brain and heart tonic)

- Improves memory and concentration
- Increases energy and vitality
- Reduces mental fog and mild depression

- Clears toxins from the gut
- Relieves pain and spasm in the gut
- Steam inhalation breaks up congestion in the sinuses and lungs

Sacred Basil/Holy Basil/Tulsi (adaptogen, anti-bacterial, anti-inflammatory, anti-spasmodic, antitumor, antiulcer, expectorant, nervine)

- Heightens awareness, mental clarity and enhances memory
- Helpful with ADHD and recovery from head trauma
- Improves lethargy
- Lowers blood sugar
- Reduces allergy symptoms
- Prevents gastric ulcers
- Reduces stress hormones, builds resiliency (ability to cope)
- Supportive in patients undergoing chemotherapy and radiation for cancer
- Decreases congestion in the lungs and sinuses
- In depression may be combined with rosemary and lavender.

Grown as an annual.

DOSING: Tincture (1:5-1:2) 40-60 drops up to 3x/day

Tea: 1 tsp dried leaf to 8oz water, steep 5-10 minutes. 2-3 cups/day

DRUG INTERACTION: may increase bleeding with anticoagulants, may increase phenobarbital levels

SAFETY: may decrease sperm counts

PREGNANCY: not enough data

Schisandra berries and seeds (adaptogen, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, immune tonic, nervine)

- Calms the mind and aids memory, concentration and learning
- Builds resiliency: for folks who are quick to react to stress
- Strengthens the heart liver, kidneys and lungs
- Normalizes blood pressure (raises and lowers as needed)
- Reduces diarrhea, frequent urination and excess vaginal discharge
- Improves premature ejaculation
- May reduce night sweats and hot flashes
- Reduces symptoms associated with stress
 - Heart palpitations, agitation, anxiety, insomnia
- For fatigue and stress combine with lemon balm, lavender and sacred basil

DOSING: Tincture (1:5) 40-80 drops, 3-4x/day

Tea/decoction: 1-2 tsp dried berries in 8oz water, decoct 5-10 minutes; 1-2 cups/day

Capsules: One-two 400-500mg capsules up to 3x/day

DRUG INTERACTIONS: increases the effects of barbiturates

SAFETY: avoid with active infections; may cause decreased appetite, stomach pains, hives or rash

PREGNANCY: avoid

Skullcap (soothing nervine)

- Reduces stress, anxiety, restlessness and irritability
- Great for headaches
- Helpful for repetitive thoughts that prevent one from sleep or rest
- Eases twitching muscles during rest
- Withdrawal symptoms from drug addiction

St. John's Wort (tonic, analgesic, anti-inflammatory, astringent, antiseptic)

- Reduces nerve pain, chronic fatigue, depression
- Seasonal affective disorder (start taking it mid-September, combined with lemon balm and lavender)
- Anxiety and insomnia
- Varicose veins and easy bruising
- Slows bleeding and decreases fluid buildup
- Beneficial for bruising, inflammation, nerve pain, muscle spasm, sprains when used topically

Harvest over 2-3 weeks so you get some open flowers, some buds and some leaves.

To make a salve: use either dried leaves or slightly “limp” (let herb dry on screens for 24 hrs. then cover completely with olive oil to avoid mold).

Stinging Nettle (adaptogen, tonic for urinary, endocrine and reproductive systems)

- Builds energy, stamina and strength
- Builds the blood in anemia
- Increases breast milk supply
- Enlarged prostate symptoms (benign prostatic hypertrophy or BPH)
- Varicose veins
- Seasonal allergies (start taking it one month ahead of allergy season)

Harvest the leaves just before flowering, usually the 3rd week in May when it is a foot tall. If you cut it back and it will keep re-growing. You can also tincture of the seeds. Use gloves!

Yarrow (astringent)

- Lowers blood pressure and improves circulation
 - Especially circulation in extremities, fingers and toes (Raynaud's)
- Decreases edema (swelling) in extremities
- Good for bruises, minor wounds, cut and scrapes
- Improves digestion
- Great for colds, coughs and flu