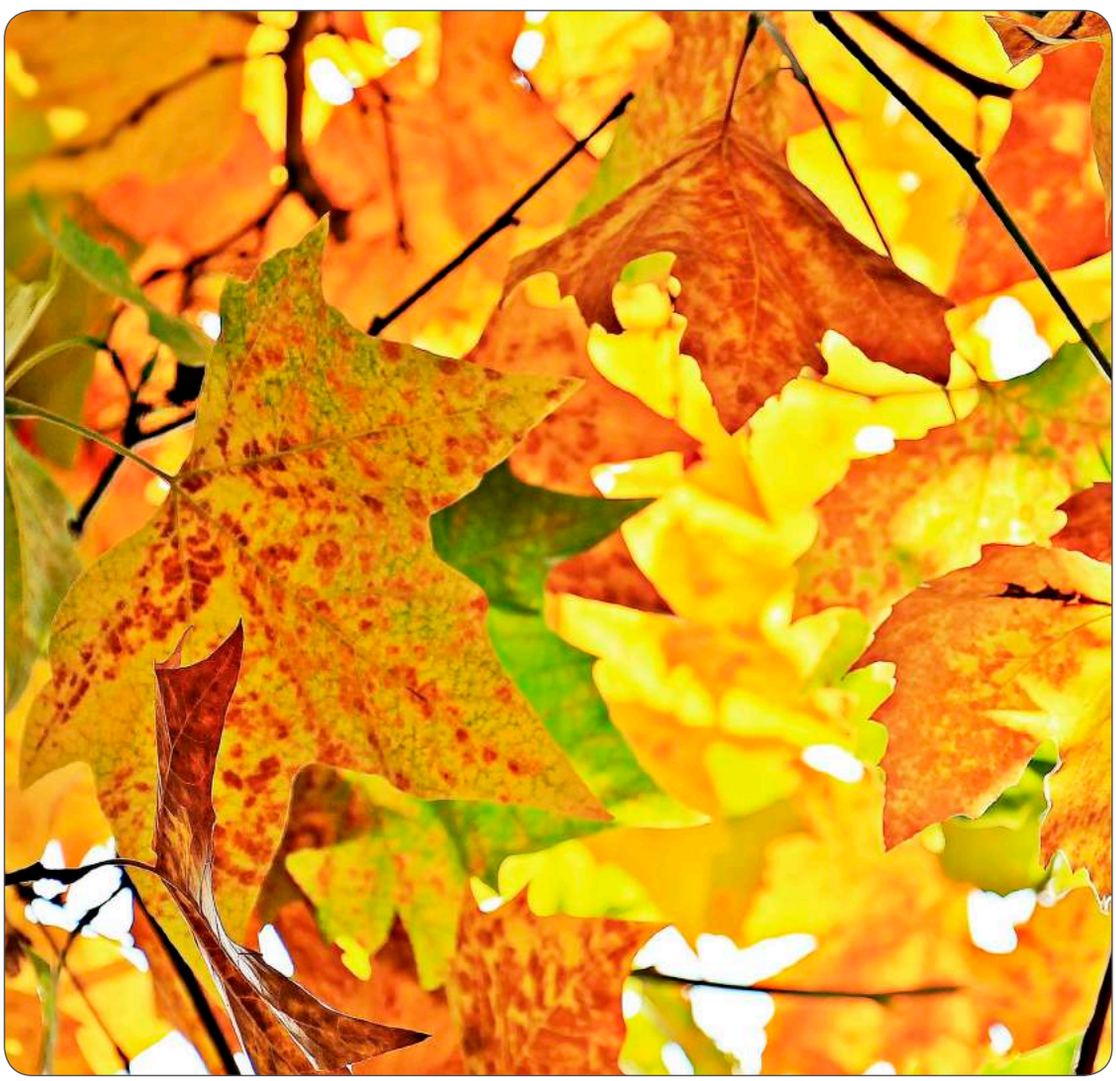
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THE HERBALIST



Some of the featured articles in this issue:

Plantago major • *Alpine Plants* • *Mentoring: A Mentor's Perspective* • *Glucose as a driver of breast cancer* • *Ãyurvedic herbs and Astrology* • *Recipes* • *Diary Dates*

The Association of Master Herbalists and the Unified Register of Herbal Practitioners Biannual Journal

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THE Herbalist TEAM ~ AUTUMN 2018

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the autumn edition of The Herbalist. I hope everyone had a fantastic Summer.

I have the difficult task of filling editor Christine's shoes and would like to thank her for her work for so many years and for her support. I also wanted to mention Andrew for helping me to get this issue out on time, and all the contributors.

We have a diversity of articles: a piece on mentoring which will be especially relevant to newly qualified members (don't forget that the AMH runs a mentoring scheme to support new practitioners), a revisited monograph on plantain, an article about the relationship between the microbiome and herbs, an essay on Ayurvedic herbs and their atrological use, an article about breath, trauma and herbs and our usual Herbwatch and recipe features.

If you would like to contribute to the magazine (articles, photos, travel, herbal tales…), please email me at celkonwinski@yahoo.com. All material counts toward CPD points.

Celine Konwinski

The Herbalist Subscriptions
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Mentoring: A Mentor's Perspective

by Sandra Collazo



Several years ago, I was approached and asked whether I would be willing to become a mentor. I learned that the AMH was encouraging mentoring for newly qualified practitioners and my first thought was "what a wonderful idea!"

I have always been interested in contributing to people's development which is why I was drawn to teaching and I have previously been involved in coaching; therefore becoming a mentor seemed a natural extension of this.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development describes mentoring as "a relationship between two people with the goal of professional and personal development. The mentor is usually an experienced individual who shares knowledge, experience, and advice with a less experienced person, or mentee." However, my experience is that it's much more than this and can be transformational for both parties.

Any Herbalist can cast their mind back to that time just after qualifying, feeling slightly adrift as they find their feet setting up in practice. Having a mentor as a sounding board can make a real difference to keeping motivated during such a crucial time. Ultimately it is the mentee who chooses a mentor and although in my case I did know the individuals, the request was unexpected.

I start my mentoring relationships with a discussion to clarify what the mentee wants to get out of our time together and what areas they want help with. This ranges from the nuts and bolts of setting up in practice, discussing difficult cases or perhaps managing boundaries with patients. My support is guided by the mentee and whilst this is responsive and flexible, I leave them each session with some action points to take forward although by the time we meet again, life has happened and sometimes those actions points may no longer be relevant. One of the key things I've learned is that a mentor's support needs to be adaptable as things do change. A mentee's progress is not always linear and sometimes what can appear as a setback is a good opportunity to take a step back and review things.

It's certainly not all one-way either. Becoming a mentor has benefitted me on a personal and professional level. Working with mentees with different life experiences has given me a fresh perspective on things and learning more about them as people has been a particularly enjoyable part of the mentoring relationship. The greatest reward is the sense of personal satisfaction in seeing mentees grow and develop.

I see my role most of all to be a cheer-leader for my mentees - they are talented Herbalists and I want them to flourish.

Top tips to finding a mentor:

Understand why you want a mentor. It should start with you seeking advice from that person, then any potential mentor can determine whether they can help you in the first place and if they have the time.

Find a good match. Do your research on your potential mentor, understand what common ground you have and what you might learn from this individual. This will be a close relationship, therefore your mentor needs to be someone with whom you will feel comfortable opening up to.

Be proactive . . . and do not forget to follow up. At the start of building a mentoring relationship, the onus should fall on you to arrange meetings, follow up and give feedback on how you are following your mentor's advice.

Bio:
Sandra runs a practice in London and is a lecturer and educator.

Plantain (Plantago major)

by Laura Yarham ND Dip Herb MURHP



Plantago major

I was fortunate enough at the beginning of the month, to be involved in leading a group of school children from the local primary school, for a walk of discovery across the surrounding countryside to search for medicinal plants, and to sketch the beautiful views all around. I noticed as they were foraging for 4 particular plants, that they kept bringing me plantain leaves and asking what the plant was called. The leaves of this plant were literally abounding at our feet. I had to smile as this thought came to mind, as its name comes from the Latin, "planta" meaning a foot, in reference to its appearance and habitat.[1] Several children were fascinated by its shape and the veins running through it. They had noticed, when a leaf was picked, there were fibres running though the leaves that hung like strings from the broken stem.

I decided to revisit the properties of this abundant plant and renew my acquaintance with it. Plantain contains flavonoids, allantoin, mucilage, tannins, silicic acid and glycosides. This makes it a demulcent, cooling, moistening and softening, while also being astringent.[1,3]

I knew it was a great drawing agent, viewed as one of the best in Western Herbalism. It was used in Greek times as a medicine that could draw out pus and infection. Still today it is valued for this property, soothing irritated membranes and in mucky wounds, drawing out the dirt and infection to leave it in a clean state.[1]

But what else did this humble plant at our feet have to offer us?

It has another name, 'snakeweed' and for good reason. The little seed stalk that grows from the centre of the wide, flat leaves, sometimes resembles a snake's head but, more importantly, it is used to draw out venom from a snake bite. In fact, it is an important remedy for the bites of bees, mosquitoes and poisonous spiders too.

Its drawing qualities also make it very useful for teeth abscesses or inflammation around the roots of the teeth. It has even been known, on many occasions, to save a tooth where it was thought to be lost. It is therefore a useful mouthwash to use before or after root canal surgery.[1]

Nicholas Culpeper described it in 1826 as a herb which, "prevails wonderfully against all torment or excoriations in the guts or bowels and stays all manner of fluxes".[2] Some types of plantain are used today for cooling and moistening the bowels and for bacterial enteritis, diarrhoea and haemorrhoids.[1]

It's a great soother for sore membranes while acting as an expectorant and so is ideal for coughs and mild bronchitis[3]. Back in Culpeper's day it was seen as "an especial remedy for those that are troubled with consumption of the lungs, or ulcers of the lungs, or coughs that come of heat".[2] This property, of course, still holds true today: it pulls water and mucus up from deep in the lungs and is used to treat emphysema and fibrosing alveolitis. It also works well if you want to give up smoking as it can make the taste of cigarettes unpalatable and cleanses the lungs too.[1]

All parts of the plant can be used (roots, stems, leaves and seeds), either in a syrup, decoction or infusion. It's best collected in the summer and autumn; leaves can be dried for use over the winter. If you happen to be needing it urgently for an insect bite or similar while out walking, just chew or rub the leaf vigorously and place on the affected part.

So when you next take a stroll in the countryside, look down at your feet and see if you may be stepping on this multi purpose healing plant!

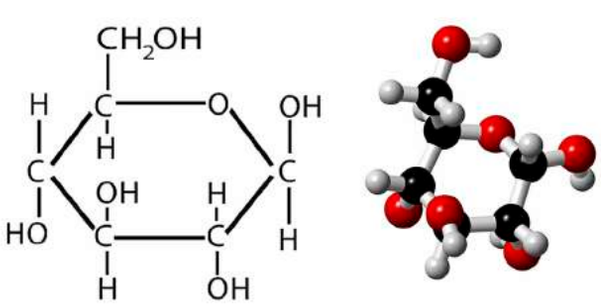
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For more information regarding other 'herbs of the month' and articles see Laura's Facebook page:
www.facebook.com/Healingsynchronicity

Glucose as a driver of breast cancer

by Jackie Day



Glucose molecule

New insights into how cancer cells fuel their growth are opening possibilities for cancer treatment. Research undertaken at Baylor College of Medicine and Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, published in Nature, identified a long sought after connection between how cancer cells use glucose to generate energy.

To generate energy from glucose, cells can use one of two pathways. One of them takes place in the mitochondria, yielding significantly more energy (ATP) than the second pathway, called fermentation. Normal cells mostly use the path in the mitochondria, but about 80% of cancer cells seem to have revamped their metabolism to preferentially generate energy via fermentation. This phenomenon is known as the Warburg effect, named after Otto Warburg who along with colleagues, in the 1920s, discovered that cancer cells consume larger amounts of glucose than normal cells.

One of the researchers taking part in the 2018 study said it has been a mystery for some time as to "why would cancer cells, which need large amounts of energy to sustain their growth, prefer to use a pathway that produces less ATP than another available pathway? What would be the advantage for cancer cells to use the Warburg pathway? Our study sheds new light on this mystery."

SRC-3, a protein that is an important regulator of gene expression, was identified some years ago. SRC-3 is overproduced in most cancer cells and this transforms it into an oncogene; it can turn on genes involved in abnormal growth, invasion, metastasis and resistance to anti-cancer drugs. If cancer cells modify SRC-3, for example by adding a phosphate chemical group to it, then SRC-3 becomes hyperactive, a hallmark of many tumours.

The researchers tried to identify enzymes that add phosphate groups that are able to enhance the activity of SRC-3. They identified an enzyme named PFKFB4 as one of the most dominant regulators of protein SRC-3. This was unexpected because PFKFB4 was well known for its ability to only add phosphate groups to sugars in the Warburg pathway. "Nobody had described before that this enzyme could also add phosphate groups to proteins," said one of the researchers. "When PFKFB4 adds a phosphate group to SRC-3, it transforms it into a potent driver of breast cancer and other cancers as well."

"Our data (in mouse models) shows that by removing PFKFB4 or SRC-3 from the tumours, we are able to almost completely eliminate recurrence and metastasis of breast cancer. In addition, modification of SRC-3, so it cannot receive a phosphate group, also results in tumour control." These and other findings allowed the researchers to connect for the first time the Warburg pathway to cancer growth which also identified PFKFB4.

The researchers suggest these findings provide more potential intervention points for future therapies. https://tinyurl.com/yc8ch3up

Jackie Day

Making friends with fellow travellers: how herbs can help gut biome

by Su Bristow

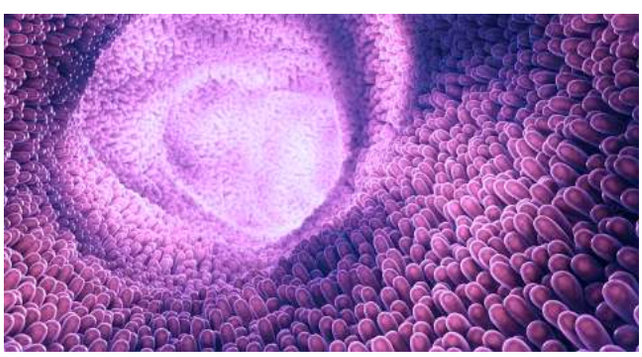


Illustration of the intestinal lining and villi.

Herbs bridge the gap between food and medicine. We Herbalists have always known this; and we also know that when you use herbal medicine, you can't avoid treating digestive problems. Our most-used herbs are broad-acting and tonic; they help to restore balance, rather than zapping specific symptoms. And it works the other way round, too: if you treat a patient's digestive problems, a lot of other troubles can be improved or resolved, from anxiety to immunity and from arthritis to allergies.

However, what we didn't know until the last couple of decades or so, was that the herbs aren't just acting on our digestive tracts, improving circulation and healing inflammation and so on. They are also talking to the community of bacteria that resides in our gut, encouraging some and inhibiting others, helping to facilitate the breakdown of food, and no doubt doing all sorts of other jobs that we don't even know about yet.

We used to think that our microbes were not much more than passengers, and we focussed mainly on the ones that can cause problems – like Escherichia coli or Candida albicans – and more or less ignored the rest. When the use of antibiotics became commonplace, it was noticed that they could disrupt our digestion because they killed 'helpful' bacteria as well as 'pathogens', but it's only recently that we've begun to appreciate just how sophisticated and complex our internal ecosystems really are.

The 'gut biome', as it's now commonly called, is mainly made up of 30-40 species of bacteria, but there can be up to 1,000 different species. There are normally about a trillion microbes per gram of intestinal content. That's about 40 trillion altogether, and when you consider that our actual body cells number about 30 trillion, you can see that we are hugely outnumbered. They are not just passengers; they are fellow travellers, sometimes almost symbiotes, and they are absolutely essential to our survival. Yes, they break down food and make nutrients more available to us, but that's just the start of what they do.

The more research that is carried out, the more we are discovering about the links between the gut biome and all sorts of health problems. Sampling from healthy individuals has given us an idea of what the gut biome should look like, and it turns out that there are patterns linked with various medical disorders. Inevitably, the research so far has focussed mainly on 'first world' issues like obesity, diabetes,

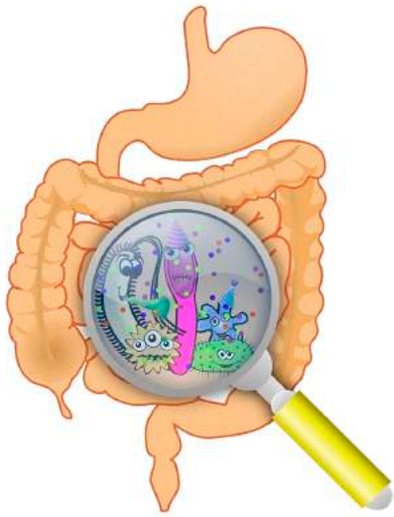
dementia, osteoporosis, and a range of mental health disorders from autism to post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). It's also been found that within a study group, the response to antibiotics and immunotherapy varies according to the gut biome of the individual. It seems that we only have to ask the question, and there will be a meaningful answer.

The patterns that are emerging can be classified in two ways. Firstly, in some disease profiles there may be an abnormal concentration of some bacteria that are relatively uncommon in a healthy gut. Secondly - and this seems to apply in all the conditions that have so far been studied – there is a reduction in diversity. In many cases, both are true. Of course, a lot of the research is aimed at developing drugs that can be used to treat these conditions, but there have been some innovative and promising results with some less conventional treatments. Faecal transplant, anyone? In subjects with depression and other mental health issues, a transplant from someone with a healthy and diverse gut flora has been shown to improve things in a significant number of cases. This may well end up being used for all sorts of conditions.

However, from a herbal point of view, our focus would always be on encouraging a healthy gut biome as well as treating an unhealthy one. In other words, we need to think in terms of feeding our gut flora as well as feeding ourselves. And it turns out that if we feed our flora, we also take care of our own nutrition and wellbeing.

How do you feed your flora?

1. Probiotics and prebiotics
There's a lot of focus on taking probiotics and prebiotics, and they will undoubtedly help to some extent, but they are not a quick fix, and they are a source of quick profit to the companies who market them.



Gut flora (friendly and unfriendly).

2. Fermented foods
This includes yogurt, as above, but it also covers sauerkraut, kefir, kombucha, kimchi and other fermented foods from around the world. The fermentation process makes food more digestible and results in a rich bacterial culture; but again, most of the bacteria don't make it through to your intestine, so they won't contribute much to the population there.

3. Fasting
From time to time, fasting can be very beneficial. When you don't eat for a while, a whole different set of bacteria come into play that help to 'clean' your gut, and this can really help if you are suffering from any inflammatory gut problem, from irritable bowel to ulcerative colitis. Early humans must have been used to going without food, sometimes for prolonged periods, and this is something that our guts understand and respond well to. Obviously, fasting doesn't suit everybody, and you should take professional advice before undertaking it, but it's always worth considering as part of a programme to improve gut health.

4. Fibre
It used to be thought that the fibre content of our food, which we can't break down, had no value other than to provide 'roughage', and so to encourage regular bowel movements. We now know that this is not the whole story. Among the normal gut bacteria are many that live on fibre; what is indigestible to us is the stuff of life to them. We don't yet know exactly what function they perform for us, but we do know that there is a link between a low population of fibre-eating bacteria (and so, presumably, people whose diet lacks fibre) and patterns of disease such as dementia and depression. There is obviously more to be discovered here.

How do you increase your fibre intake?

By eating more vegetables and less processed, high-calorie food. But make the change slowly; your gut – and your gut bacteria – will need time to adjust to your new diet, and a sudden change can lead to digestive problems. Taking herbs while you make this transition can make the process a great deal easier and faster.

5. Diversity
From a herbal perspective, this is where it gets really interesting. The 'Five a Day' campaign actually grew out of research into various disease processes involving inflammation, and particularly into diets that might help to prevent or

inhibit the growth of cancer. Vegetables and fruit are our main source of antioxidants, which we know are anti-inflammatory, and in the average British diet there are not enough of them.

In fact, it's fair to say that vegetables and fruit are the source of almost all the nutrients we need. 'Five a Day' is just for starters; really, it should be at least eight or more. That doesn't leave a lot of room for much else, and that's exactly how it should be. Our hunter-gatherer ancestors lived mainly on roots and tubers, with whatever else they could forage and the occasional helping of meat. That's the diet our guts – and our gut flora – have evolved to deal with.

Even today, when most of the surviving hunter-gatherers live in marginal environments not wanted by anybody else, their diets contain a far greater variety than those of their farming neighbours, and certainly more than the average city-dweller will ever see. Something like 70% of Britons eat more or less the same food every day, so it's no wonder that our digestive systems go to sleep. It's been calculated that for optimum health, we should be eating at least thirty different plants in a week.

How on earth can we manage that? Part of the answer lies in eliminating 'junk' food and processed food. That would leave more room for the vegetables, and remove the refined sugar and fat which tend to reduce the diversity of the gut flora. Even so, it's a stretch, and it only goes part of the way. Cultivated vegetables and fruit are the result of generations of selective breeding for qualities that have very little to do with nutritional value. They are much blander than their wild counterparts, higher in plant sugars and lower in fibre, because we prefer them that way. They are grown for disease resistance, high yield, keeping quality and uniform appearance. In the process of selecting for all that, the odd compounds that have no obvious market value tend to disappear.

We can't all go back to hunting and gathering, and the so-called 'Palaeolithic Diet' is a pale approximation of what our proto-human ancestors actually lived on. But this is where the herbs come in. Although many of our herbs, both culinary and medicinal, are now farmed rather than collected from the wild, they are still much closer to wild vegetables than anything we grow for food. Herbs are full of complicated, ever-changing, quirky constituents, a lot of which have no apparent value to us either as food or as medicine – or none that we yet understand, anyway. A core part of their action lies in the way that they wake up our systems: first our digestion, but then our circulation, our immune systems, our respiratory systems and all the rest. They are tonic, in the old-fashioned sense; they challenge and stimulate. They remind us, at a visceral level, of how things should be.

We Herbalists are fond of talking about how herbs feed your vitality. Perhaps that is true in more ways than we realise; perhaps they also encourage a wider range of gut bacteria, and by feeding them, they feed us and enhance our wellbeing. And by using them liberally, we can extend the number and variety of vegetable foods that we take in.

We can do this in various ways. We can add them to food, of course, and by that I don't mean a bit of parsley as a garnish, or a pinch of mixed herbs added to a soup or a stew. Be generous with your herbs and spices when you cook, and make a point of trying out new tastes. With the wealth of recipes from all over the world on the internet, there is no excuse for not giving it a go.

Beyond that, we can include them in salads and stir-fries, hide them in soups and smoothies and, of course, enjoy them as herb teas. Try making herb tea with freshly picked herbs (use about four times the volume of fresh as opposed to dried herbs, to allow for the water content), and you will be amazed at the intense tastes you will discover. Volatile oils account for much of the taste of a herb tea, and they don't keep well when the herb is dried and put into tea bags. If you think you've tried chamomile or limeflower tea from a packet of tea bags, think again.

But what about the more medicinal end of the herbal repertoire? By their very nature, a lot of herbs are bitter, astringent, acrid-tasting and certainly not pleasant to eat. Those tastes, however, are a very good indicator that they contain some of the unusual constituents which we have carefully bred out of our chosen foodstuffs. Older patients often remark that 'If it tastes bad, it must be good for you,' and the traditional understanding that bitterness has hidden benefits is something we need to bring back to the table.

You don't have to force down huge amounts of nasty-tasting potions, though. These days, tinctures can offer you concentrated extracts of herbs, and a few drops, or a teaspoon at most, is enough. The usual way to take them is a few minutes before you have a meal, partly because the herbs will be absorbed more quickly that way, and partly because they will start to wake up your digestive system, stimulating

the release of digestive juices from your mouth right down to your small intestine.

I'd be willing to bet that, if the funding could ever be found for a clinical trial, it would show that over time, taking herbs encourages a healthy gut flora. It makes sense. And we don't have to go hunting all over the world for obscure (and expensive) new foods to augment our depleted repertoire. As Nicholas Culpeper – who is virtually the patron saint of Herbalists – used to point out to customers in his shop in Spitalfields, the remedies you need are growing right here, all around you.

Ayurvedic Herbs and their Astrological Connections Part 2.

by Andrew Mason

In Part.1 (Winter Newsletter 2018) I not only introduced Vedic Astrology's nine planets but also those herbs commonly used to remedy their more negative effects. I also gave some account of the qualities ascribed to each planet and their Yantra (specific geometric designs) used to pacify or empower each planetary deity. In this second and concluding article, I'll discuss nine alternate herbs also attuned to each of the planets.

Note: most of the herbs discussed in this article already hold time-honoured positions in Āyurvedic medicine; that being said, it's interesting to consider some of the metaphysical connections between herb and planet. In many cases it was these otherworldly connections that endeared them to the ancient Rishis (Vedic saints and traditional healers), in whose commentaries and spells, the knowledge of stars planets and luminaries endures.

Two approaches to healing

As previously touched upon, Āyurvedic treatments fall broadly into two categories: *Yukthi-vypashraya* or those therapies aiming to re-balance the body through purification, tonification or life-style changes, such as exercise, medicine or diet. Secondly: *Satwa-avajaya*, those therapies aiming to harmonise the mental aspect of our being, adopting practices such as mantra, prayer and *deviyo-bandana* (deity worship).

Herbal remedies fall into the former, whereas Astrology falls mostly into the latter. Āyurveda considers both approaches valid, but notes certain conditions/aliments respond better to one approach, over the other. In situations where treatment fails to yield benefit, the alternate path will be explored. Pragmatically, Āyurveda considers any treatment that aggravates also useful, in as much as identifying what opposites need to be applied. Āyurveda works largely with the principle that *like increases like*, while *opposites reduce*.

Alternate Planetary Herbs

I have provided an alternate table (page 10) listing nine single herbs recognised as having prominent astrological connections.[1] As before, I have given their planetary ruler, common and Latin names, followed by their medicinal action/s and those parts most commonly harvested for remedies. When reading indications/significations it may well be worth reacquainting yourself with the planetary qualities given in the Winter Newsletter 2018.

1. Sūrya / The Sun

Pippali / *Piper longum* appeases and is ruled by Sūrya (The Sun). Long pepper has an excellent tradition of use in Āyurveda, its medicinal and rejuvenating effects well known and utilised. Pippali has positive benefits for the heart, chest and respiratory system. Pippali has been praised in many of the classical Āyurvedic texts, as both remedy for disease as well as rasayana (rejuvenative) properties. Pippali may be used singularly, as a culinary spice or anupana

Planet	Common Name	Latin Name	Action / Parts Used
Sun	Pippali	*Piper longum*	Pungent in taste, sweet in post digestive taste. Its action is neither heating or cooling, it soothes Pitta (fire element) and reduces Kapha (water element). Fruit of Pippali is favoured as a medicine.
Moon	Shatavari	*Asparagus racemosus*	Bitter in taste, sweet in post digestion, Shatavari is heavy in quality, increasing Kapha (water element) balancing Pitta and Vata Dosha. The roots of Shatavari are favoured as a medicine.
Mars	Adrak[2] / Shunti[3] ginger	*Zingiber officinale*	Pungent in taste, heating in action, ginger is warming and drying. Ginger reduces Vata and Kapha but mildly increases Pitta. Rhizome of ginger is favoured as medicine.
Mercury	Brahmi/Indian pennywort	*Bacopa monniera*	Bitter in taste, cooling in action. Brahmi pacifies all three dosha (VPK) and is sweet in post digestion. The roots of this plant are favoured as medicine.
Jupiter	Bala/country mallow	*Sida Cordifolia*	Sweet in taste, light and slightly oily in quality. Bala pacifies all three dosha (VPK) but has an affinity with Vata Dosha. Bala is sweet in post digestive taste. All parts of this plant are favoured for medicinal use.
Venus	Padma / lotus	*Nymphaea caerulea*	Bitter and sweet in taste, light and cooling in action. Padma (pacifies Pitta while soothing Vata Dosha). The flower, stem, seeds, seed pods and roots are favoured as medicine.
Saturn	Guggulu	*Camphora Mukul*	Bitter, pungent and astringent in taste, light and drying in action. Guggulu is pungent in post digestion. Guggulu removes Vata Dosha, clears excess Kapha and slightly aggravates Pitta Dosha. The resin of this tree is favoured as medicine.
Rāhu	Patola[4]/snake gourd	*Trichosanthes cucumerina*	Bitter and pungent in taste, light heating and drying in action. Patola is pungent in post digestion. Snake gourd pacifies all three Dosha, clears excess Pitta and is a blood cleanser. Leaves, fruit and roots are favoured as medicine.
Ketu	Lasuna/garlic	*Allium sativum*	Sweet, salty, pungent, bitter and astringent in taste; heating, heavy and piercing in action. Lasuna is pungent in post digestion. Garlic pacifies Vata and Kapha Dosha, but aggravates Pitta Dosha in excess. Bulbs and oil are favoured as medicine.



(a vehicle for other medicines). Pippali fruit is especially medicinal when soaked in honey for extended periods and taken daily as an rejuvenator. Pippali is a perennial shrub, grown in both India and Sri Lanka, it is a member of the tropical piperacae family. The flowers of its plant form spiked pods, which are eventually harvested, dried and ground into long pepper powder. Being hot/heating, Pippali displays a strong solar energetic, however its sweet post digestive effect helps cool the fiery orb of the sun.

2. Chandra / The Moon



Shatavari / *Asparagus racemosus* appeases and is ruled by Chandra (The Moon). Use of Shatavari is very old, it has been mentioned in ancient texts. Its name is nowadays translated as 'having one hundred husbands' but etymologically was more likely to have been 'having one hundred wives' - hence the use of this herb is beneficial for both male and female (in regard to the reproductive system) as well as being a blood cleanser[5]. Shatavari has a balancing quality for Vata (air) and Pitta (fire) Dosha, but may slightly increase Kapha (water) Dosha. Overall this herb has an oily nature, nourishing the tissues and facilitating some level of rejuvenation. Shatavari is also beneficial to the digestive system, soothing excess heat while promoting a balanced level of digestive fire. Being sweet and oily, Shatavari naturally gravitates toward the lunar energetic. Having cooling and cleansing energetics, it promotes all lunar qualities.

3. Kuja / Mars



Shunti/*Zingiber officinale* appeases and is ruled by Kuja (Mars). Both dried and fresh ginger have similar properties, but the latter is favoured during the summer months, as it's less likely to aggravate Pitta Dosha. Āyurveda considers ginger a self-contained medicine chest, seeing its actions to work largely upon digestion (the seat of many diseases). Ginger not only aids in digestion but actively promotes appetite and increases circulation. Ginger has a slight roughness which also helps clear bodily channels. Across the board there is no better remedy than ginger, however there are one or two contraindications ie: hyperacidity, vertigo, internal haemorrhaging, menstruation or hot / itchy diseases of the skin. Being a heating herb, ginger naturally aligns itself with the Martian energetic, however its inherent sweetness also soothes the extreme and fiery nature of this planet.

4. Budha / Mercury

Brahmi/*Bacopa monniera* appeases and is ruled by Budha[6]/Mercury. Brahmi means *god-like*, having its origin in the name Brahmā (the creator). Use of



this herb is very old, and is mentioned in many Ayurvedic classics dating to almost 500BCE. Brahmi has long been associated with intelligence and was ceremonially anointed on the foreheads of children, opening their awareness. Brahmi is a water loving herb, creeping along the banks of rivers (water is also associated with memory). Brahmi is used as panacea for old age, promoting intellect, longevity, speech/voice as well as complexion and overall lustre. Being a rejuvenating cool-bitter, Brahmi finds some affinity with the planet of intellect and healing - *Mercury*. Brahmi is sweet in post digestive action, yet builds strength of voice, improves blood flow to the brain and promotes youthfulness, all attributes of Mercury (called the green healing planet).

5. Brihaspati / Jupiter



Bala / *Sida cordifolia* appeases and is ruled by Brihaspati/Jupiter. Bala literally means strength and is another time honoured Ayurvedic remedy, used in the treatment of debilitation or loss of strength. This plant has a strong ability to strengthen or bulk up the tissues. Bala also has some connection to children and childhood illness, and has potency to bring forth progeny. Bala is a rasayana herb (promoting youthfulness and longevity), hence its inclusion in the list of must-have herbs for convalescing patients. Bala also aids the immune system and our ability to fight against pathogens to sustain health. Being sweet and oily, Bala finds affinity with the planet of corpulence, wealth and comfort - *Jupiter*. Being sweet in post digestion, this herb helps build stamina, resistance and overall stature, promoting healthy bones, teeth and hair. The use of Bala is said to promote faith, patience and fortitude.

6. Shukra / Venus

Padma / Kamal / *Nymphaea caerulea* appeases and is ruled by Shukra (Venus). The lotus is the national flower of India, sacred to Hinduism and Lakshmi (goddess of wealth and beauty). Padma / Kamal is an aquatic medicinal herb seen in a variety of colours ie: red, pink, white and blue; of these the white



variety is the most venerated. The lotus has strongly cooling properties, removing excess heat (Pitta), while calming the mind (Vata) without disturbing Kapha (water). All parts of the plant are favoured, from its petals (said to promote progeny) to its purgative roots, removing toxicity from the body. Having both sweetness and lightness, Padma shows an affinity with the planet of beauty, comfort and pleasure - *Venus*. The lotus is seen to have aphrodisiac qualities, great beauty and splendour, while emerging from dark muddy depths to grow towards the light. These attributes were seen to mimic its planetary ruler - *Venus*, who is also of great beauty. The shadow side of Venus was his tutelage of the demons (forces that promoted earthy pleasure, enjoyment and over indulgence).

7. Shani / Saturn



Guggulu / *Camphora mukul* appeases and is ruled by Shani / Saturn. The name Guggulu means medicinal balm. This popular resinous exudate is found in the semi-arid areas of Northern India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. It is harvested from tree stems before undergoing some level of purification - firstly the removal of leaves, stones, sand and twigs. Once sifted for extraneous matter, the remaining resin is cooked in triphala decoction to extract the purest resin, leaving only a waxy resin behind. The pure resin is fried in ghee, crystallising its structure before being ground into a fine powder. In some instances freshly collected resin will be used unpurified but this is less common. Like so many of the herbs mentioned here, Guggulu has a strong Āyurvedic heritage; its use is described in many ancient medical classics, recommended for the treatment of rheumatic pain, obesity, prameha (type II diabetes) etc. Guggulu was considered a primary rasayana (tonic), aromatic nutritive and lubricating resin with digestive enhancing properties. Being bitter, astringent and scraping in action, Guggulu finds affinity with the planet of emaciation, dryness and discomfort ie: *Saturn*. Guggulu is pungent in post digestive action, helping to burn away deep toxins. Its astringency gives strength to help bind tissue. This resin is the primary antidote to overconsumption and corpulence, a kind of *anti-Jupiter* if you will, and so perfectly reflects the opposite energetic between these two distant gas giants in our solar system.

8. Rāhu (North Node)



Patola / *Trichosanthes cucumerina* appeases and is ruled Rāhu (North Lunar Node). Traditionally either snake gourd or garlic are used to propitiate Rāhu. The former obviously derived from its serpentine look, the latter having a mythological connection to the blood of Rāhu during his symbolic decapitation. It's said, where the blood of Rāhu fell, garlic and onions sprung forth. Today, Snake gourd is a cultivated vegetable in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, but is thought to be of Australasian origin. Snake gourd has some history of use in traditional medicine, preferred in cases of high fever, low immunity, diabetes, general debility, frequent urination, hair loss, obesity and diseases of the skin. Although this type of gourd has an overriding bitter taste, when cooked and flavoured may be consumed and by all accounts is quite delicious. Obviously its looks have greatly contributed to its association with the snake deity Rāhu; that being said, its medicinal indications: skin diseases and low immunity are also a telling metaphor for Rāhu type ailments. Patola finds affinity with the moon's northern node due to its dryness, lightness and slight pungency. In effect these are all opposites to qualities expressed by the Moon.

9. Ketu (South Node)



Lasuna / Allium sativum appeases and is ruled Ketu (South Lunar Node). As Rāhu and Ketu are essentially parts of the same being, both show an affinity toward garlic, however Ketu shows a special affection for this plant. Garlic exhibits five of the six possible tastes (the name Lasuna means without *sour*). Garlic contains allicin, a pungent oily liquid that gives crushed garlic cloves its characteristic smell. Allicin has strong anti-bacterial properties due to its active sulphur content. Garlic also holds the honour of being able to detoxify liquid mercury (Hg), its sulphur content helping to bind (fix) this auspicious liquid metal. The Himalayan variety of garlic (pictured above) is particularly sweet and may be eaten wholly without

discomfort or nausea. The medicinal indications of Ketu ie: toxic blood, skin diseases, boils, bruises, lowered immunity and fever are telling metaphors for its association with this auspicious anti-bacterial, blood purifying herb.

Footnotes

1. Different regions of India assign variations to some of the herbs listed here. This seems to be based primarily on plant availability. That being said, the list of herbs given is fairly standard in their astrological associations.
2. Fresh ginger.
3. Rhizome of fresh ginger cooked in milk, dried and powdered, reduces heating properties.
4. Also known by the name *Amritaphala* ie: 'fruit of immortality' or pointed gourd.
5. The association of Shatavari with blood purification may be partly responsible for its being marketed as a potent female reproductive system booster.
6. Not to be confused with Gautama or *The Buddha*.

Supporting Deep Inspirations with Plants by Gwynnie Bran Hale

Deep Inspirations, or sighs, have been a bit of a physiological mystery, mostly considered a 'larger' breath and operating on similar neural networks, which relegated them to a less exciting or edgy field of research, until by accident it was observed via animal experiments that disabling the sigh reflex (through an unknown mechanism at the time) proved fatal. As it turns out, sighs are essential to sustaining life. The alveoli which provide the interface for oxygenating blood, require the movement of breath to help facilitate the exchange of gases. But normal, rhythmic breathing doesn't quite do the trick. It takes periodic larger breaths to ensure the alveoli don't oversaturate like little wet balloons and collapse.

They need some space to stretch out. Sighs are essential to maintaining the health and optimal functioning of the lungs. Micro-shifts in both breath and heart rate, are important physiological mechanisms of tension release. When our oxygen levels are low, sighs upregulate the nervous system, stimulating us to intake a larger quantity of air.

When our breathing is patterned the same way for too long, tension builds up and stiffness can set into lung tissue, so natural variations of both heart and breath rates occur, both of which are intimately linked with the autonomic nervous system. It is commonly understood now that poor vagal tone, poor heart rate variability, can indicate a pre-chronic illness state and is often found in folks with developmental traumas and PTSD, as well as those managing systemic injustices such as racial violence and poverty.

The mechanical movement of breath is regulated in the brain stem, receiving and sending outputs to the cerebellum, which helps coordinate muscular activity and some sensorimotor activity, the cortex where a lot of thinking happens, as well as the hypothalamus and amygdala. One area of particular interest regarding sighs is called the pre-Bötzingers complex (pre-BötzC), a grouping of neurons located in the medulla oblongata. This area is essential to the variability of our breath rhythms.

The pre-BötzC has three distinct observed patterns of neuronal firing: regular rhythmic, gasping and sighing. Neurons making up the pre-BötzC receive information from the other areas listed above, and fire off their signals to make sure that breath does not become static. The neurons alternate firing patterns amongst themselves, some of them sending more 'bursting' signals while others steadier patterns. Some neurons manage pauses. These neuronal patterns shapeshift constantly, so that no one set of neurons is always responsible for a certain pattern alone. Instead, they alternate in an infinitely variable dance. They are pace-making neurons for breath rhythms. Pace-making neurons can be found throughout the human brain for various functions,



Cornus officinalis, Japanese Cornelian (Cherry Dogwood)

as well as in the heart. These neurons are incredibly flexible and respond to changes in both our inner and outer environments. This gorgeous orchestration is being created moment to moment, ever shifting and changing, ensuring the flexibility essential to meet a wide range of demands.

From a neuronal perspective, no two breaths are ever the same. It is hypothesized that this region of the brain has allowed for complex language and vocalization development, as minute changes to our breath and ways of intaking/releasing air is an important part of complex enunciation.

One thing that has been noted in studies of anxiety and trauma, is that disordered breathing patterns are often present. Most often, sustained shallow breath. There is even a pattern of breathing called 'irrepressible sighing' that is usually preceded by a trauma. Changes in structures of the brain change what information is sent to the brainstem, and consequently the pre-BötzC region regulating rhythmic tension release cycles. Information can be coming from the cortex which has assigned meaning to neuro-emotional states, the amygdala which might be on heightened danger alert, the hypothalamus which can be sustaining sympathetic excess, the thalamus which can be over or under sensitized to sensory information, and so on. Folks with increased sympathetic arousal levels, tend to have less flexibility in the autonomic nervous system, more shallow breathing with less transition into and restoration from relaxation states or parasympathetic activity. With chronic anxiety, this can become normalized, we become habituated to heightened tension. Shifting out of hyperarousal becomes increasingly difficult. Though subtle, focused attention on our sighs as they happen, can help us monitor our more observable neuro-emotional tension levels.

Folks with panic disorder might struggle with increased vulnerability to hyperventilation (breathing in too much/too fast) and some studies have shown that the increased urge for larger breaths can become normalized, so that attempts to 'relax the breath' or 'slow down' trigger the suffocation response causing gasping or terror, even when there is sufficient oxygen. This is happening from excess excitation and activity in the brainstem, and can persist even when pharmaceutical interventions reduce the 'feelings' of anxiety. Excessive sighs have been noticed in folks with panic disorder, which may be a response by the system to try and release the tension/change the arousal state, but in this case the excessiveness of the sighs culminates to create an increased state of hyperarousal. The sighs are unable to release the tension and instead can subtly maintain or increase it, because the sensation of not getting enough air gets worse as the system tries to calm itself down via lowered respiration. With long held tension patterns resulting from developmental traumas or sustained hyperarousal/chronic stress states, the shape and length of the muscles supporting the diaphragm can change, resulting in less flexibility, and typical suggestions to 'focus on the breath' or 'take a deep breath' can induce states of panic, flashbacks, anxiety and dissociation. Sighs, however, are part of our innate tension release system already in operation, something we can harness gently, even just starting with observation.

Plants can play an incredible role in both inducing sighs and helping non-productive sighs become a bit more effective. I am curious if this is how many plants that might not be traditionally considered nervines become referenced as such over time through various writings and blog posts.

In my work with folks who have been experiencing long held patterns of hyperarousal due to trauma and/or chronic stress, developing an intention of noticing and welcoming sighs periodically throughout the day, has been a great help in building momentum to lessen the intensity of the hyperarousal, as well as



A selection of prepared potions

recruit neuroplasticity in re-bonding to the pleasure of the relaxation response. This can also help support someone who might be measuring their progress, as having anxiety vs. not having anxiety, to celebrate the smaller milestones along the way. Increases to the quality of life and decreases in the severity of the anxiety are incredible wins, though sometimes lost when we feel distraught at still having anxiety patterns at all. An anxiety attack that feels utterly paralyzing is different from one that feels mostly overwhelming, which is different from one that feels draining but manageable. It is the focus on subtle quality which I have seen build the best momentum and regularity of finishing herbal formulas for folks (myself included), who otherwise feel legitimately exhausted by cycles of uninvited hyperarousal. Focusing on noticing and welcoming sighs has felt more doable than the full eliminating of anxiety as the measure of success.

Bitters and mint family plants as tinctures are quite reliable sigh makers, though it seems any plant causing a pleasurable shift in perception cycles into a satisfactory sigh, works as well. This can be fun to test for in a consultation and sometimes leads to using a plant that otherwise I wouldn't have included in a formula. Warm, stimulating and aromatic plants such as *Angelica archangelica*, *Acorus calamus*, *Thymus vulgarus,* as well as elixirs or tinctures made from Pine needles, have been favorites for folks who are showing the physiological signs of hyperarousal, but experience their anxiety attacks more as sudden freeze, stuckness, loosing speech and feeling shaky. Whether or not a separate formula for practicing sighs is created, depends often on what herb seems to provoke the desired sigh response and how that fits into the rest of their formula. Some like having a specific 'sigh' formula meant to be taken in small doses throughout the day, and other folks prefer less to-do about it all and want one bottle for all the things.

For those who experience panic patterns such as not being able to catch the breath or 'get enough air,' small jars of cotton balls with essential oils or aromatic herbs can be used in a similar way, preferably frequently throughout the day to increase a pleasure response as opposed to only during an acute attack. This would usually be in addition to the therapeutic herbal formulas supporting their unique needs. I've noticed it hasn't mattered if the oils chosen are considered 'calming' for this effect, only that they stimulate pleasure, which is a state change and thus likely to trigger some shift in breath patterns. I really love tree oils and citrus oils, sometimes combined with a more earthy or grounding plant for this. The consistent checking in and providing some pleasurable experience for the autonomic nervous system, while not in full panic mode, can be really helpful in loosening some of the existential grip panic has on a spirit.

What seems essential to the journey towards deeper restoration and flexibility is the person's desire to strengthen their sigh capacities deliberately, as a means to shift the energy already in motion towards fear or hyperarousal, into the direction of tension release and pleasure. The goal then becomes recognizing and welcoming subtle tension releases, marked by these plant interactions, which become cumulative over time. This can be especially helpful for those who struggle with panic and the constant background noise of "I am not ok" emotionally and physiologically. Or, for those of us bringing people and plants together through herbalism, a lovely way to make sure we are also exercising our own subtle tension releases throughout the day, maintaining the beautiful flexibility necessary to enjoy the deep inspirations offered to us by the plants and the labor we invest in sharing them with others.

Bio:

Gwynnie Bran Hale is an Herbalist currently living on the unceded territories of the Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi in Burlington, Vermont, USA. Their practice is dedicated to folks navigating the forests of complex and developmental traumas.
www.gwynniebird.com

Alpine Plants
"Meeting with Le Sanglier Philosophe"
by Celine Konwinski



Benoit Claude harvesting herbs in the Alps

Benoit in the Bauges - "Le Sanglier Philosophe"

One morning, I meet Benoit, a local herb producer in the Bauges mountain area (Savoie, French Alps), not far from where I grew up. As far back as I can remember, a small flask of genepi alcohol would find a place in many a mountaineer's bag. Genepi, is the local sagebrush from the Artemisia family which grows between c. 2000 and 3000 meters and is mainly used as a digestive, but also soothes altitude sickness. A group of young snowboarders I met a few years ago, on a particulary cold day, gave us a cheerful round of genepi in a cable car.

Benoit, is riding the wave of a herbal revival that is occuring in France. He decided to establish himself as an organic herbal grower in 1997 and created the brand *Le Sanglier Philosophe*, making and selling herbal liqueurs, syrups and teas via organic shops in the area. Everything is made by hand, with respect and love. His best sellers are the Genepi liqueur and Pine liqueur (surely that must be good for the lungs?)

He grows aromatic and medicinal plants in a small village at the bottom of a mountain, on a 2 hectares plot. He forages gentian (*Gentiana lutea*) from nearby areas, which represents around 5 kilos of dried roots per year and he typically changes spot every three years. Gentian or yellow gentian grows in abundance in the departments of Haute-Savoie and Savoie and the harvest is not regulated. He grows genepi in a secret location at altitude, because there is very little in the wild due to over-harvesting.

Benoit growing genepi at altitude - Le Sanglier Philosophe

It has even disappeared completely from some nearby areas. In Haute-Savoie and Savoie, where it still grows, picking is highly regulated and people are only allowed to take a handful per day (c. 10 stems) and nothing from within National Parks or Natural Reserves.



While Benoit is balancing on a chair, his head above the stainless steel barrel checking his gentian liqueur, he tells me about growing up in the area, his interests in local plants, working outside all summer and running the harvest in the local hills. He spends his winter mixing his tisanes, doing admin and sales jobs and thinking about new products…This year he launched wild garlic pesto - a success! Wild garlic (*Allium ursinum*) grows easily in the Alps. Many of the local families pick it and will consume it as part of a salad during the month or so they are blessed with it. Next year, Benoit is thinking of making, from a self penned recipe, his version of Chartreuse; a regional digestive liqueur



created by Monks in 1737, of which the recipe has remained a secret 'til this day. It is made with no less than 130 plants and alpine herbs, so they say.

Typical of France, our conversation turns political. Benoit is a grower and producer of herbal products, sold as food & beverage. His products aren't labelled with any health benefits or advice, though some of his products have a self-explanatory names "Detente Digestion" (relaxing digestion), "Coup de Froid" (hit by a cold). He relies on people's knowledge of the plants to experiment with his range.

There is no longer a '*Diploma of Herboristerie*' in France and only a few herboristeries are still open, generally run by a bunch of old timers. The Pharmacist association successfully lobbied the French government, and in 1941 the profession ended and herbal medicine became the property of French pharmacies and pharmaceutical companies.

On the 18th April 2018, after many previous attempts, the French Senate opened a national consultation to re-start the profession, with the idea to create a national Herboriste diploma fit for the 21st century (the consultation ended 31 July 2018). It could mean that herboristes would gain the right to give health advice and have a therapeutic function outside of a pharmacy.

Until then, herbal growers and producers like Benoit will continue as food & beverage artisans.

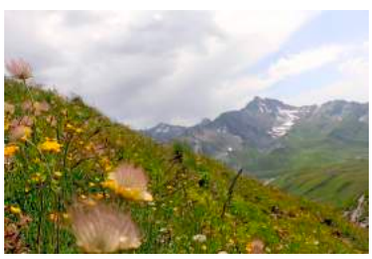
I can't leave without asking him how he came up with the name '*Le Sanglier Philosophe*'. The wild boar is the local Druids symbol, but really the name came after locals warned Benoit against cultivating genepi at altitude, as he would certainly have unpleasant encounters with the local beasts. Being philosophical about it, Benoit was sure no wild boar would dare step on the genepi, a local gold.

Genepi: *Artemisia glacialis*, *Artemisia genepi Weber*, *Artemisia umbelliformis*, *Artemisia mutellina* grows in the wild between 1800 and 3200 metres. Nowadays, it needs to be manually grown at altitude for commercial purposes as it is against the law to sell any wild specimens.

It was used traditionally as a digestive bitter, to reduce fever, a lung tonic for bronchitis and other pulmonary infections. Mountaineers have also used it against altitude sickness effectively.

Benoit Claude

www.plantes-biologiques.com (French only)
Facebook: ***Le Sanglier Philosophe***



NB: While walking the European Alps, please check the law on wild-harvesting alpine plants. In France the law will differ from one departement to the next. Don't assume it is ok to pick something you see.

Bio

After travelling the world for work, Celine decided to study and qualify as a Naturopath/ Herbalist. Currently she runs a clinic in South East London as a family herbalist, where she also lives. She is particularly fond of working with children, helping them make sense of what's going on physically and emotionally. Celine also helps run a community garden.

The Herbalist Subscriptions
Annual subscriptions are available for £15 in the UK, £20 for Eire and Europe and £25 overseas.

Contact Kelly Holden on
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HERBWATCH
by Hannah Seyfert

Effect of *Rosa canina* on cold incidence and symptoms during winter season:



A study investigating whether a liquid standardised preparation, Hyben Vital, derived from Rose hip (*Rosa canina*) husks, reduced the incidence and symptoms of the common cold in Danish middle-aged to elderly healthy male and female volunteers.

Volunteers were randomly allocated to daily treatments with either 40 ml of liquid Rose hip (RH) (equivalent to 2 g of Rose hip powder) or placebo (P) daily for six months during winter. 107 volunteers completed the trial.

31 out of 58 patients (53.4%) in the placebo group reported cold symptoms versus 24 out of 55 patients (43.6%) in the Rose hip group. The authors estimated the decline in reported colds as a result of active treatment to be 18.4% (based on the percentage of volunteers in the placebo group that may have responded to active treatment.)

Evaluations from the volunteers' diaries of symptoms of cough, headache, muscle stiffness and fatigue also differed between the two groups: Coughing: 23 (P) vs 18 (RH), ($p < 0.422$), Headache: 26 (P) vs 17 (RH) ($p < 0.112$), Muscle stiffness: 27 (P) vs 15 (RH) ($p < 0.027$) and Fatigue: 29 (P) vs 20 (RH) ($p < 0.115$).

The results suggest that administration of liquid Rose hip reduces the incidence of colds and lowers the number of patients reporting the different symptoms of cold.

Winther, K. Effect of *Rosa canina L* (Rose-hip) on cold during winter season in a middle-class population: A randomized, double-blinded, placebo-controlled trial. Journal of Herbal Medicine. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hermed.2018.04.003

A formulated Ayurvedic botanical combination found to be a safe and effective treatment for reducing menopausal symptoms.

This study involved 117 healthy women, aged 40-65 years and examined a formulated Ayurvedic medicine composed of 75 mg Tinospora cardifolia, 100 mg Asparagus racemosa, 100 mg Withania somnifera and 225 mg *Commiphora mukul* per capsule, administered as one capsule twice per day over a period of 12 weeks.

The primary outcome measure was menopausal symptoms assessed by the validated Menopause-Specific Quality of Life (MENQOL) questionnaire. Secondary outcome measures included a patient-reported diary of vasomotor symptoms, serum hormone levels and health indices (body weight, blood pressure, haematological and biochemistry markers).

A significant difference was demonstrated for the total MENQOL score and the vasomotor ($p < 0.001$), psychosocial ($p < 0.001$), physical ($p = 0.02$) and sexual domains ($p < 0.001$) between the active treatment and placebo groups after 12 weeks.

There was a significant reduction in total hot flushes, daytime hot flushes and night sweats in the active treatment group compared to the placebo group ($p \leq 0.001$). There were no significant changes observed in serum hormone levels or health indices between the active and the placebo group.

Steels, E. A double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled trial evaluating safety and efficacy of an ayurvedic botanical formulation in reducing menopausal symptoms in otherwise healthy women. Journal of Herbal Medicine. March 2018; 11:30-35. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hermed.2018.01.001

***Melissa officinalis* supplementation may improve echocardiography results, cardiovascular serum**



Melissa officinalis / Lemon Balm

biomarkers and blood pressure in patients with chronic stable angina.
In this trial eighty patients with chronic stable angina (CSA) received either 3 g *Melissa officinalis* daily or placebo for two months.

Anthropometric measurements, echocardiography and exercise stress tests were performed before and after intervention. Two cardiovascular serum biomarkers – lactate dehydrogenase (LDH) and nitric oxide (NO) – were also measured.

Post intervention, the mean levels of Ejection Fraction (EF) in the echocardiography and maximum workload in the exercise test were significantly higher in the intervention group compared with placebo ($p < 0.01$).

The mean serum level of LDH was also significantly lower in the intervention group compared with control group ($p < 0.001$). Additionally, the mean serum level of NO was higher in the intervention group compared with placebo ($p < 0.01$). Systolic and diastolic blood pressure readings were also decreased in the intervention group compared with placebo ($p < 0.05$).

Ahmad, Z. J. The effects of *Melissa officinalis* on echocardiography, exercise test, serum biomarkers, and blood pressure in patients with chronic stable angina, Journal of Herbal Medicine. March 2018; 11:24-29. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hermed.2017.10.002

***Vitex agnus-castus* extract appears to be a safe and effective herb for promoting fertility in women with premature ovarian aging.**

This four-month study involved sixty-one patients with premature ovarian aging. The women in the control group received 5 mg of letrozole from day 3 of their menstrual cycle for a total of 4 days. In addition to similar treatment with letrozole in the control group, patients in the experimental group received 40 drops of *Vitex agnus-castus* extract throughout their follicular phase.

Ovulation days, endometrial thickness, estradiol levels on ovulation time, serum concentrations of FSH, AMH, and estradiol, as well as the average time of serum positive ß-HCG test, chemical and clinical pregnancy rates were investigated in both groups throughout the four months of the study.



Vitex agnus-castus

Despite an increase in AMH levels after treatment in both groups, serum concentrations of FSH and estradiol were significantly decreased in patients receiving *Vitex agnus-castus*. Treatment with *Vitex agnus-castus* significantly decreased estradiol levels on ovulation day and the average time of serum positive ß-HCG test. Ovulation days, endometrial thickness, chemical and clinical pregnancy rates in the experimental group were significantly higher than the control group throughout course of treatment.

The results suggest that *Vitex agnus-castus* extract is a fertility-enhancing herb, acting on the secretory functions of the pituitary-gonadal axis and improving the reproductive potential of patients with premature ovarian ageing.

Batool, H-R. Effects of *Vitex agnus-castus* extract on the secretory function of pituitary-gonadal axis and pregnancy rate in patients with premature ovarian aging (POA). Journal of Herbal Medicine. December 2017; 10:24-30. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hermed.2017.10.003

Artichoke leaf extract shows beneficial effects in patients with non-alcoholic fatty liver disease.

In this study 100 subjects with ultrasound-diagnosed non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) were randomized to receive either 600mg of Artichoke leaf extract (ALE) daily or placebo for a two-month period. Ninety patients completed the study (49 ALE and 41 placebo) with no side effects reported.

NAFLD response was assessed by liver ultrasound and serological markers including the aspartate aminotransferase (AST)/alanine aminotransferase (ALT) ratio and AST to platelet ratio index



Artichoke Leaf

(APRI) score. ALE supplementation was found to have beneficial effects on all parameters.
Doppler sonography showed increased hepatic vein flow ($p < .001$), reduced portal vein diameter ($p < .001$) and liver size ($p < .001$), reduction in serum ALT ($p < .001$) and AST ($p < .001$) levels, improvement in AST/ALT ratio and APRI scores ($p < .01$), and reduction in total bilirubin in the ALE group compared with placebo. ALE supplementation also reduced total cholesterol, low-density lipoprotein cholesterol, high-density lipoprotein cholesterol, non-high-density lipoprotein cholesterol, and triglyceride concentrations ($p = .01$).

Panahi, Y. Efficacy of artichoke leaf extract in non-alcoholic fatty liver disease: A pilot double-blind randomized controlled trial. Phytotherapy Research. July 2018; 32(7):1382-1387.
https://doi.org/10.1002/ptr.6073

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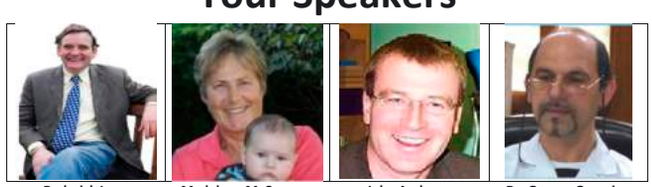
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Take the Piccadilly line to **Holloway Road tube station**. On leaving the station, turn left and walk that direction, under the railway bridge for five minutes. **Resource for London** in on the opposite side of the road and can be reached by using the pedestrian crossing.

By bus
Buses 4, 17, 29, 43, 153, 253, 259, 271, 279 and X43 stop within a short walk of Resource for London. Also there are mobility buses available in the area; these are numbered 920, 921, 923 and 927.

Good Thinking and Bad Faith

by Peter Jackson-Main, MSc, FAMH, FGNI

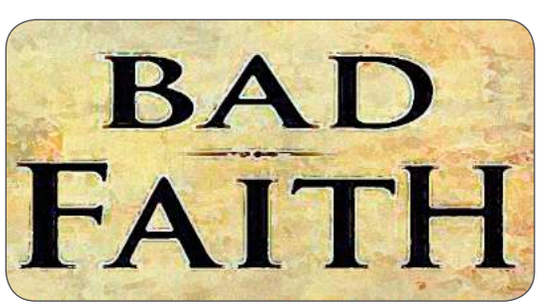
Following the threat in 2016 by The Good Thinking Society (GTS) to judicially review the UK Charity Commission if it continued to register CAM charities, the Commission opened a consultation on: "The Use and Promotion of Complementary and Alternative Medicine: Making Decisions about Charitable Status."[1] It was expected that the Commission would rule on the consultation this summer, however at the time of writing (early September) nothing has been heard.

GTS was founded by science writer and campaigner Simon Singh, and is itself a charity, registered as such in 2012, a primary focus of which appears to be the pursuit of Singh's well-established and long-running campaign of opposition to alternative medicine. Albeit that other less contentious subjects are represented in the rubric on its home page, campaigns against various forms of "quackery" populate its advertised list of projects and pursuits.

Singh has distinguished himself on previous occasions for his scepticism towards all forms of Complementary and Alternative Medicine, most notoriously in co-authorship with Professor Edzard Ernst.[2] Following this publication, Singh singled out Chiropractic in another full-frontal attack in an opinion piece in the Guardian[3], which resulted in him being the subject of a personal libel suit at the hands of the British Chiropractic Association. With the Guardian itself offering to pay Singh's legal costs and any settlement, Singh was eventually cleared and vindicated. The suit is widely thought to have been a landmark trial that itself resulted in changes to UK libel laws that require proof of "serious harm" to be established in any claim.[4]

Over the last few months I have teamed up with charity lawyer Robert Meakin[5] to research and write an article in response to the GTS/Charity Commission challenge, which will be published shortly in the legal literature.

The article argues that if a sufficient section of the public derives benefit from CAM, then unless they can be proved to be actually harmful they should continue to be registered as charities. We also argue that if the Charity Commission refuses to register or removes from the register CAM charities, then it would be open to legal challenge. The Charity Commission will also be open to challenge if it attempts to use its powers to apply CAM charitable property for other purposes, under the Cy Prés doctrine which affords that upon cessation of activities, charitable assets must be used for purposes as close as possible to those for which they were originally intended.[6]



Additionally, assertions that the evidence base for CAM is scientifically inadmissible, or even entirely lacking, revolve around a definition of evidence that uniquely serves the pharmaceutical and medical industries and unfairly disadvantages CAM, whose methodology is predicated upon alternate philosophical and epistemological foundations.[7] We call for qualitative findings, from subjective, narrative and ethnographic research, to be admitted to the evidence base alongside quantitative, "gold standard" clinical trials, and for a pluralist approach to evidence to be embraced as part of a politically and socially responsible commitment to the real-life needs of patients, as indeed current initiatives within the World Health

Organization suggest is appropriate in a contemporary health-care environment.[8]

Our article represents a counter-offensive in responding to mainstream authors and commentators who, by dint of their own professional orientation and status, have ready access to media platforms in order to promote views that are sold to their readership as beyond reasonable critique. We believe that an open forum needs to be established in which such views may be subjected to public scrutiny, and where closely reasoned alternative perspectives can be explored. And we suggest that a debate on the real meaning and impact of "science" is long overdue.

There are indeed very cogent critiques of "Evidence Based Medicine", and no matter that journalists such as Singh and Goldacre[9] present their views as "common sense" ("good thinking"), there is a pressing need to defend increasingly beleaguered alternative perspectives robustly and academically, and to bring forward ontological, epistemological and methodological arguments that can hold their own against the onslaught of "sceptical" thinking and so-called "scientific" truth claims.

At the time of writing I have also just been made aware of a new and dangerous initiative on the part of Facebook, masquerading as a part of their campaign against "fake news", to start closing down content that promotes alternative and natural medicine[10], and of YouTube, to ban video content that promotes natural remedies.[11] It cannot be ignored of course that the ultimate beneficiary in all of this will be the pharmaceutical industry, but we (you and I, our patients, and the human race as a whole) stand to lose the freedom to manage our own health naturally once and for all, unless we do something very soon. Make no mistake, friends and colleagues, we are at war, and to paraphrase John Pilger[12], the first casualty of war is free speech.

Bio

Peter Jackson-Main MSc is a practising Master Herbalist, Iridologist and Naturopath working in Cambridge and London. He is also the Academic Director and Course Director for Herbal Medicine at the College of Naturopathic Medicine (CNM). His book Practical Iridology is now in its fourth imprint and has been translated into 12 languages. His current research interest is to define and develop appropriate and robust research strategies for Herbal and Natural Medicine that are not enslaved to the EBM/RCT model.

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Blueberry & Banana Pancakes

by Kelly Holden



This recipe comes from Jason Vale, aka "The Juicemaster" and is a delicious breakfast or dessert recipe, particularly good at this time of year with the abundance of Blueberries available (mine are just maturing and turning a deep blue in my garden!)

What you need

- 1 x cup Oats
- 1 x cup Almonds
- 1 x cup Banana
- 2 x Tbsp Honey (or alternative sweetener)
- 1 x cup Water
- 1 x cup Blueberries + extra for serving
- 2 x Tbsp Coconut Oil (for cooking)

1. Add the Oats and Almonds to a blender and blend to form flour.
2. Add Bananas, Honey and Water and blend to a smooth batter.
3. Pour into a bowl and stir in Blueberries.
4. Melt Coconut Oil in a pan and add a spoonful of the batter.
5. Cook for 2-3 minutes and flip to cook other side.
6. Put on serving plate and add more Blueberries.

For an extra special treat, make some Coconut Cashew Cream and pour over the pancakes, or add a generous spoonful of Coconut Yogurt.

Coconut Cashew Cream

- Ingredients:
- 1 cup cashews, soaked 2+ hours
- ¼ cup maple syrup or raw agave nectar
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- ½ cup water
- 3 Tbsp coconut oil, melted
- pinch of Himalayan pink salt

Preparation:

1. Place cashews in a bowl and cover with 3 cups of filtered or bottled water.
2. Soak for 2+ hours, drain and discard the soak water.
3. Blend everything except the coconut oil.
4. Gradually add the melted coconut oil through the lid of the blender and continue blending until smooth and creamy.
5. Pour cream into a jug and chill in the fridge for at least 30 minutes before serving. It will keep for up to a week in the fridge or can be frozen.

The Herbalist Subscriptions
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DIARY DATES

GNI *21st* International Symposium on Iridology: Saturday 13th October, 9.30-5.30pm
356 Holloway Road, London N7 6PA. For more information see: www.gni-international.org

Please note: John Andrews will be offering individual Iridology training on Sunday 14th to any interested parties. For more information please email: johnandrewsiridology@hotmail.com

The 4th UK Medicinal Mushroom Conference, 3rd & 4th November 2018, Stanton House Hotel Stanton Fitzwarren, Wiltshire: Enquiries: beesandmushrooms@gmail.com

Bursting the Bubble: Challenging the Misconceptions and Misdiagnoses of Neuropsychiatric and Pathogen-Triggered Disorders by the Academy of Nutritional Medicine. Sunday 18th November 9-6pm Holiday Inn, London Regent's Park, Carburton Street, London W1W 5EE.

Phylac Spagyrics Seminar with Dr Naidu, 25th November 2018, Regents College, London.
www.spagyricmedicine.com

Rio Health, offering online seminars every 3 months.
https://riohealth.co.uk

Ingrid Naiman offers online webinars through: https://invisibleepidemics.com/education

The Association of Master Herbalists

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