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THE HERBALIST



Some of the featured articles in this issue:

A Letter from the Atlas • Herbal Software • Ankylosing Spondylitis Practitioner Tool Kit Series • Wood Betony • Herbal Support Treatment After Cancer • Herbal Strategies For PTSD

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

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

On looking at the content of this Journal we realised that we have more CPD and other events than ever before available. This is really exciting as it demonstrates the resurgent interest in herbal medicine education.

We were also impressed within the URHP at the breadth of CPD activities reported by our members when renewing their membership over recent weeks.

Sadly Herbfest is not happening this year, but there is an Ayurfest from May 31st to June 2nd in Somerset.

The URHP really welcomes and values the diversity of herbal practice amongst all herbal traditions and the opportunities we now have to learn from each other.

We have included details of a survey being undertaken by Lloyd Gee with regard to software he is developing for the management of a herbal dispensary. This is innovative and will enable tighter and more accurate stock control records as well as traceabaility of prescriptions should the need arise.

Please keep your articles coming in, case studies and personal experiences are always welcome, as are book reviews.

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

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A Letter from the Atlas

by John E Smith F:URHP



Atlas from square

What a relief to be in a part of the world where mule is the main form of transport and wild flowers grow between the beans and barley.

We are part of a group of 15 whose major focus is singing to mainly women's co-operatives in the Berber villages. Many of our chosen songs are in Arabic and of Sufi origin, interspersed with work songs from Northern weaving mills and the occasional Balinese Rain Forest chant. This part of Morocco had not had rain for around 4 months (it rained the night before we left – followed by a fall of snow on the mountain peaks).

The words of Anthropologist Margaret Mead, set to four part harmony, have become an "earworm" during the last weeks. "Never doubt, that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world – Indeed it is the only thing that ever has."

The Berber women responded with their own local songs and provide food for us together with the ubiquitous mint tea (it took some of our party several days to learn the Arabic for "fresh mint, without green tea and without sugar").

Food is served five times a day in the villages; the Berbers (like the Chinese) seem fond of the numbers three, five and eight - numbers which create a protective spiral energy.

Our morning and evening singing practice on the roof terrace is only punctuated by the call to prayer from the many mosques (five times a day), the flocks of egrets and the songs of bulbuls.

As a herbalist, I take every opportunity to investigate the Souk and the Berber market to get my supplies of Bishop's Weed seed heads (toothpick weed, khella, ammi vishnaga), Black Seed (Nigella – habbat al Baraka – "there is healing in black seed for all diseases except death"), *Artemesia absinthium* (wormwood, chiba) and good quality saffron. We also refresh our tea drawer with hibiscus, fresh chamomile, rosebuds and Lemon Verbena (al louiza).

Atlas River Gorge

In the Berber co-operatives we are able to watch the processing of argon seeds into oil for both cooking and cosmetic use and the harvesting of bee products for soaps, candles, high grade propolis, and of course, high mountain honey.



Atlas River Gorge

Our treks through the oasis and the higher mountain passes are an opportunity to discover local flora and fauna. Our Berber guide is an expert at identifying plants and birds, so everyone stops at the discovery of a wedge tailed kite, a stork, or a datura seed head.

Our stay in Taroudant is interspersed with various optional activities: - a visit to the Hamam, an Arabic lesson, Massage, Henna tattoos etc.

The large novel I brought remains unread, the time filled with delicious experiences. A time to remember and treasure.



Verbascum ifranensis



Bougainvillea at Oasis



Castor Oil Plant

Practitioner Toolkit Series: Herbal Strategies For PTSD

By Sarah Murphy



Sarah Murphy is a naturopath and herbalist based in Cornwall. Having lost her brother in an unprovoked attack, she is all too familiar with both the conventional and alternative methods of treatment for this disabling and life changing condition. In addition to her work as a herbalist, she has also worked with a number of victims charities to explore ways of helping sufferers heal from their trauma on both an emotional and physical level. She is also the author of "Talking about Trauma" - a personal workbook designed to be used in a safe clinical setting to allow the patient to explore ways forward in the aftermath of a life changing event.

An Overview of the Treatment of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Using Herbal Therapy and Naturopathic Methods.

Mental health is a difficult subject to address. There is still a certain amount of taboo attached to it, and it can be daunting to work with people who are struggling with conditions which cannot be

seen with the naked eye. However, as far as Post-Traumatic Stress is concerned, I can confidently say that a combination of herbal and naturopathic therapies can bring about a high success rate where allopathic medicine has previously failed. I know this both from my own personal experience (having spent four years in the terrifying grip of PTSD) and from devoting many years to working with and supporting people who through no fault of their own have experienced life changing events which have caused them severe mental distress as well as directly impacting their physical wellbeing.

Although I don't claim to be an "expert" on the subject of PTSD, I hope you will allow me to share my own insights into both the treatment and management of this disabling condition. The following are considerations which may be useful for the practitioner when dealing with patients who are primarily in phase I (the initial stages) of PTSD.

What are the signs and symptoms of PTSD?

- As with any condition, symptoms will naturally vary from person to person. However, there are some traits which are common to most people with PTSD. The following is a list of some of the most common observations which the practitioner should be aware of when dealing with patients.
- The person appears restless and uneasy in any given situation. They may fear the night time when they experience night terrors and flashbacks, but are equally afraid during the daytime where danger (real or perceived) could be lurking around any corner. They can be uncomfortable in company which can be exhausting for them, but neither can they bear to be alone with their thoughts. This unpredictability and inability to be free from fear and anxiety can make it difficult for family and friends to support them, making them feel isolated and alone.
- Hypervigilance makes them unable to enjoy what may seem like even the most harmless of situations. They may avoid car journeys or being in crowds in the anticipation that something terrible may happen. With depression there is a tendency to dwell in the past; with anxiety there is a fear of the events happening in the future. With PTSD both of these elements may be present, but in all cases patients are unable to be "in the moment" making enjoyment of regular activities very difficult for them. People with PTSD often report being unable to gain enjoyment from activities they once enjoyed participating in.
- Being in a constant state of "fight or flight" means that people with PTSD quickly become physically exhausted. This is often compounded by a lack of quality sleep. The person could be described as "tired but wired." Energy management, sleep and rest is considered to be a fundamental consideration in the patient's treatment plan.
- There may be many "triggers" which can send the person into a state of extreme anxiety or panic. They may avoid music, certain television shows, or being in places where they may come across something that sets off their emotions or reminds them of the traumatic event. These triggers can be difficult to identify and can vary from day to day. For this reason, avoidance is a common feature with people with PTSD.
- Attending appointments may be difficult for them. They may give excuses as to why they can't attend or arrive late. This is because it may be difficult for them to leave the house as they fear that something might happen while they are away, or they may be anxious about having to talk about events or feelings that trigger symptoms such as panic attacks. Leniency with lateness should be employed and attempts to make the patient feel at ease during the appointment are important if you are to make the most of the session.
- The nature of reality and self is lost as a severely traumatising event can make people question everything they believed in. Some people with PTSD will become unnaturally obsessed with spirituality, the meaning of life and religion, questioning everything they ever believed in. This is because the traumatic event has turned their life literally upside down.
- In PTSD the mind is trying to process information about an event which may seem unreal or unbelievable due to its shocking nature. Many people with PTSD are forgetful, unable to finish a sentence, and can even have difficulty processing familiar faces. They will often seem distracted as their mind is literally "elsewhere." This stage can pass with time

providing the person has the opportunity to process fully what has happened with the aid of counselling or talking therapy.

People with PTSD may avoid eye contact. Trust can also be an issue. From a holistic point of view, trauma can be considered a natural response to an un-natural event. The symptoms of trauma are merely the body's way of processing the information in an attempt to cope with what has happened. From this standpoint, it could be argued that trauma should be allowed to run its course in order for the body to truly heal. Therefore, in line with the universal principles of naturopathic medicine, symptoms should not be suppressed either by allopathic medication or herbs, but the body should be supported through the crisis with a combination of nourishing herbs and therapies which allow the body to work through what has happened.

It's also worth remembering that not everyone with PTSD will have depression. Although the person may on the surface appear to be depressed, mood enhancing herbs are often not recommended. This is because prescriptions designed to lift the mood, when given to people who are already literally on the ceiling, can significantly aggravate the symptoms of anxiety. It's also worth noting that the vast majority of patients who show up in your office may have already been offered anti-depressant medication for the treatment of PTSD. Both anti-depressant medication and benzo-diazapenes (which are also frequently prescribed) are heating to the liver and will eventually aggravate the symptoms. It is therefore important to work with the GP in tapering off any psychotic medication if the patient is to be able to begin the journey of true healing. Should this not be within the wishes of the patient, attention should be paid to the health of the liver and adrenals which will be under additional stress.

As with all herbal prescriptions, plants should be chosen in accordance with the patient's presentation. We are treating the person and not the condition. However, in addition to bringing the whole person back to balance, I have found the following botanicals of particular use in managing the symptoms of PTSD. As establishing a routine is always of paramount importance for the healing process of patients with PTSD, remedies should be taken at regular, set times of the day.

For Stress management:

Adaptogens: These remarkable plants have been shown to have a measurable effect on stress levels, sleep, energy and endurance. Of major consideration are *Withania somnifera*, *Eleutherococcus senticosus*, *Rhodiola rosea* and *Centella asiatica*.

Mood balancing:

The following mood balancing remedy is useful for sensitive patients who have a need to take back some control over their health situation. The patient can be given the recipe to make and take themselves.

Fill one jar with fresh dandelion flowers, and another (separate) jar with seeded dandelion heads. Cover with vodka and macerate using the traditional folk method. Leave to steep for four weeks before decanting into dropper bottles. When the patient is feeling low they should take 3 drops of the "sunny" dandelion tincture under the tongue. If they are hyper vigilant and anxious, the seeded dandelion remedy should be taken in its place. Dandelion drops can also be used as a pre-prepared flower remedy by adding to a large bottle of water and sipping continuously throughout the day.

Flower remedies are of immense value to people with PTSD, and can be added to the main herbal prescription to add a further energetic dynamic to the formula.

Tincture of dandelion given as a simple clears the stagnation which causes brain fog and stimulates the digestive system - getting rid of the sluggishness that can sometimes bring on melancholic feelings of doom and gloom. This is particularly recommended in cases where there is obvious liver qi stagnation contributing to a picture of melancholy and depression.

Grief:

Albizia julibrissin: Albizia has a reputation as a mood tonic that is especially suited to grief or deep



Albizia julibrissin

sadness. In traditional Chinese medicine both the bark and flowers are used. The bark is believed to have a stronger, more grounding effect, and is of value in cases of physical trauma. The flowers have a more uplifting energy. Both are used to assist with stress and anxiety. Use as an extract (avoid in pregnancy) 30 – 60 drops up to three times daily.



Melissa officinalis

Melissa officinalis: Lemon balm is wonderful when grief has been ongoing for a long period of time. It can help bring back feelings of the inner child, taking away the seriousness of adult world. John Evelyn, a writer of the 17th-century, said of Melissa "It comforts the heart and driveth away melancholy and sadness." A combination of Lemon balm and Linden (*Tilia europea*) is a useful tonic for the heart, lifting sadness and offering a brighter outlook to patients who express a lack of interest in their day to day activities.

Panic attacks:

Anemone spp. *Anemone patens*, *A. tuberosa*, *A. occidentalis* and *A. multifida.*

Panic attacks come on suddenly and flood the person with feelings of fear and dread. They can occur as a result of trigger situations, or appear out of the blue, and are a common feature in people with PTSD. Both Michael Moore and 7Song use a variety of Anemone (pulsatilla) species for the treatment of this condition. The whole plant is tinctured fresh while in flower at a 1:2 ratio in 80 – 95% ethanol. This is a potent low dose plant and so drop dosage should be employed starting at one drop while the panic attack is in full force. The remedy is best employed in cases where the panic comes on suddenly, without obvious provocation, and the person experiences a sense of impending terror.

Anxiety support:

For generalised anxiety support, the following neuro-trophorestoratives are well known allies: *Scutellaria lateriflora*, *Passiflora incarnata* and *Verbena officialis.*

Sleep and sedatives: Jamaican dogwood
California poppy (may be helpful for children).

Magnesium supplementation in the form of an Epsom salts bath before bedtime is a soothing aid to sleep, as are the following remedies which should be taken one hour before retiring: *Valeriana officinalis*, *Lactuca virosa*, *Humulus lupulus* (avoid where there is depression)

Summary:

For the sufferer of PTSD it is important to know there is light at the end of the tunnel and that, given time, it is possible for them to gain relief from their symptoms. Although they may never be able to fully come to terms with what has happened, it is important for them to acknowledge that trauma has happened in order for them to tentatively take steps forward.

Although this may seem like a mountain to climb, suppressing feelings to the point they are driven deeper into the depths of one's being will only lead to further depletion of physical resources and inevitable ill health of both body and mind. For this reason a good practitioner will also seek to signpost the patient to supportive adjunct therapies such as counselling, EMDR, Shirodhara, yoga and such as part of the treatment protocol.

References:

Adaptogens - 75+ Herbal Recipes and Elixirs by Agatha Noveille.
Anemone for Panic Attacks: An herbalist's view Article by 7Song.
Further information about Sarah and her work can be found on her website at:
http://thefreelancenaturopath.com/

Herbal Support Treatment After Cancer Therapy

By Dilys Griffiths



During May 2018 my sister had extensive surgery to remove ovarian cancer tumours. She had been diagnosed several weeks previously after various tests, scans and biopsies. During the surgery she had a full hysterectomy, her spleen was removed as well as part of the bowel - this was successfully re-sectioned. The surgeons told her that they had removed all the cancer. She initially agreed to have chemotherapy, although, at her consultations prior to the surgery, she had discussed at length the pros and cons of this as she didn't feel it was for her.

She was discharged a week after her surgery and they were very pleased with her improvement. She was put on antibiotics (which they told her she should be taking continuously now that she was without a spleen). She was getting on well after going back home to her ground floor flat.

As it happened, I had booked to attend Herbfest 2018 at Dartington during June. One of the speakers (as you will have read in the Summer 2018 Newsletter) was Dr Christopher Etheridge and one of his workshops was about Herbs to support patients during chemotherapy and radiation. This was an answer to our prayers as a family, not having much experience with cancer. After Chris' workshop I had a word with him about my sister and he suggested I send him an email after going home and we could discuss her situation further.

I would like to mention here that I am grateful to all fellow herbalists who were so kind with their offers of assistance and advice during this time and also those who have included us in their prayers. It's so wonderful that we have a close 'family' of herbalists (not only from the URHP) who willingly put themselves out with offers of healing, advice and support. My sister is also grateful and is happy for me to share her case here as she feels that any herbal treatment and other natural healing which assists with cancer surgery should be publicised.

By mid June Chris Etheridge (who is an Integrated Cancer Specialist and has clinics in Central London and Epping, Essex for Integrated Cancer Healthcare and Herbal Healthcare) and I had collaborated on my sister's case. We came up with an agreed treatment plan, together with nutritional supplements and herbal medicines that she needed. As mentioned, at this point my sister was thinking of having chemotherapy, so her first medicine was based on immune support prior to having chemotherapy and as she was now without

a spleen. Once on chemotherapy this would need to be changed depending on the type of chemotherapy she would be given.

The initial tincture prescription she received contained:

Centella asiatica (Gotu kola) which has traditionally been used in Ayurvedic ovarian cancer treatments. It is a strong healer, a tonic for the nerves and good for detoxifying the body.



Centella asiatica

Ginkgo biloba (Maidenhair tree) stimulates the circulation; it is an anti-inflammatory and an antioxidant.

Rehmannia glutinosa (Chinese foxglove) is a tonic for the adrenal glands and very useful in treating inflammatory diseases.

Withania somnifera (Ashwagandha) is a tonic for the immune system; it's anti-tumour, a nerve tonic, an adaptogen and again has traditionally been used in Ayurvedic ovarian cancer treatments.

Zingiber officinale (Ginger) is an appetite stimulant, a tonic for the gut, is anti inflammatory, a carminative and a stimulant for the circulation.

This mixture was taken as 5ml diluted with water twice daily with food for the first four days, then increased to 7.5ml twice daily with food.

She was also prescribed Sun agaric (mushroom) capsules as a supplement to support the diet – two capsules to be taken three times a day 30 minutes before food. She was already taking one Quest Kyolic Garlic 1000 tablet per day which she carried on taking.

By the beginning of July my sister had decided not to have chemotherapy. She had already been taking the previously detailed herbal medicine and supplements which she carried on taking. For the next bottle of tincture we replaced the Rehmannia with *Glycyrrhiza glabra* (Liquorice root) as her blood pressure was normal and this is also good for the treatment of ovarian cancer.

My sister was 66 years old at this time; her lifestyle had always been fairly good and she was not overweight. She took plenty of healthy walks and was now retired, having been a Welsh tutor for adults for the last few years. Family bereavement and loss had recently featured in her life as well as an estranged daughter. She had suffered with fibroids during the menopause with heavy blood loss, but had refused a hysterectomy and had been treated briefly by a local herbalist during that time. Her diet was already fairly healthy, with plenty of fruit and vegetables, fish, white meat and eggs, but it did include dairy and bacon as well as coffee, which is very acidy. She now removed all dairy, bacon and the coffee from her diet. She also decided to include some good quality fish and organic chicken and eggs, as previously taken, as she needed plenty of protein after the extensive surgery. She would include plenty of seeds and nuts and remove acidy fruit. Over the months she ate less and less chicken and fish as she found she did not fancy eating them. She had found in recent times she would eat and do what her body told her it needed.



Ginko biloba

For the first few months after the surgery she regularly made smoothies for energy. These also included various cleansing-containing fruit

and/or vegetables - carrots, apples, kiwi, ginger, pears, spinach and beetroot were used in various recipes to take mainly in the morning. She had started making these smoothies several weeks prior to her surgery to strengthen her and ensure plenty of nutrition. She also continued to eat blueberries at breakfast.

After a few weeks of rest, she felt that she was improving both physically and emotionally. She started to do some small, very light jobs around the flat and took some short walks around where she lives near the harbour of Burry Port. She could not believe that she was doing so well and everyone saw her looking well. Of course, she didn't have the strength and stamina that she had previous to her illness, but was working on it.

In July she had a check up with the surgeon and a scan which showed that all the cancer had been removed and no further growths had occurred. She would have another check up after three months - in October.

By August she was also taking one capsule of Bromelain three times a day 30 minutes before food and one capsule of R-Plus curcumin (turmeric) three times a day with food.

By this time, she had been in contact with a Holistic Cancer Support Centre – The Old Mill Foundation at Penclawdd which is within a few miles of her home. They are a charity who offer various complimentary therapies and counselling for those who have suffered from cancer and for their families. All this is provided without charge, but they ask for donations if possible towards the Centre. All the practitioners give their time and treatments free of charge, are all qualified in their field of work and have extra training in order to deal with cancer patients and their families. After a thorough consultation she was booked in for weekly reflexology treatments. She finds these are very beneficial and also help to clear toxins from the body, but of course they do bring emotional feelings to the surface.

In October she stopped taking the antibiotics as she felt that they were not good for her and she was having good immune boosting medicine, supplements and food and didn't want any drugs. She had already refused the flu injection and vaccinations which the doctor had advised her she should have a few months previously.

For her three monthly check-up the specialist gave her an internal examination as she had not been given a scan or a blood test prior to the appointment. He said things were fine, and as she had refused chemotherapy they would have to find another way of monitoring her. It was decided he would see her in three months time and she would have a blood test a week prior to that to check for any cancer markers.

November saw my sister suffering from annoying irritation so she had some Gentiana lutea tincture (Gentian root) - 2ml to be taken three times a day until her next prescription. The next bottle of medicine was changed a week later to include *Phytolacca americana* (Poke root), which would improve the cleansing of the lymphatic system and is also useful as an anti-cancer herb. The irritation gradually disappeared over the weeks.

In December we also gave her one capsule per day of Vitamin D3 to be taken with food.

By this time she didn't feel she had as much energy as she had soon after her surgery. She was feeling very emotional, which was probably as a result of all that had happened to her physically several months before and the resulting emotional impact. During her reflexology sessions she discussed this and was told she had been running on adrenaline when she felt better following the surgery. Now things were settling and she needed to gradually build up her stamina and not push herself too much.

The Support Centre suggested that she would benefit from counselling sessions, so by January she was booked in for these as well as the reflexology.

She had initially booked to have hyperbaric oxygen therapy back in November, which is a good treatment against the recurrences of ovarian cancer, scar tissue and many other illnesses. It is available at a centre in Swansea but had to be postponed as she felt that it would be too much for her to travel there during the winter. She is now in the process of booking it again as she knows it would be of benefit and is feeling stronger and less emotional.

Over the last few months she has developed a hernia on her right abdomen which is not painful, but creates a bulge. This was diagnosed by her GP because her muscles have weakened. She is now doing some gentle exercises which will help with this problem; she is also going to have useful breathing exercises by a voice trainer friend of mine.

Overall, she is doing well on her herbal support after cancer surgery without having any chemotherapy, with a change in her diet and trying not to stress about things which she cannot change and a positive outlook.

On 4th March she was due to have her overdue three monthly check-up, which she should have had in January but unfortunately was cancelled at the last minute due to an emergency. As she'd had a blood test the previous week, she managed get the result which showed that there were no cancer markers in it. She was told that she would probably get another appointment within the next few weeks to see the specialist. The main thing is that the blood is clear and we are so happy with this result.

I cannot thank Chris Etheridge enough for his help and support over the last few months. He has so much experience and a wealth of knowledge in this area.

Wood Betony

By Laura Yarham



Laura Yarham

Wood Betony intrigued me as a student herbalist years ago: it conjured up all sorts of pictures in my mind of a precious and magical herb being carefully collected in the woods and used by our ancestors for all manner of efficacious reasons. It draws me in still, with its ancient and modern use, its folklore, its beauty and the reasons why it was so revered in days of yore.

This colourful herb, which belongs to the mint family, happily grows in the UK in open woodland, meadows and shrubby slopes. It's also known as bishopswort, bishop's weed, lousewort, purple betony and high heal-all, to name a few [1,4].

It is a very ancient and important nervine herb and its qualities have been held in high repute dating back to the Greeks, who extolled its many properties. Stachys is a Greek word, signifying a spike, from the mode of flowering. Betonica is thought to have come from the Celtic 'bew' (a head) and 'ton'(good), as it was and still is a herb good for complaints of the head [5]. The physician Antonius Musa, of the Roman emperor Augustus, claimed that Betony could cure at least 47 different ailments[4]. Throughout history, it has been a popular and highly valued herb, and many had faith in its ability to cure many illnesses. An old Italian proverb states, "Sell your coat and buy Betony." A saying of the Spanish was, "He has as many virtues as Betony." [5]

It was largely cultivated in physic gardens, both of apothecaries and monasteries, and may still be found growing about the sites of these ancient buildings. One of its names, bishop's weed, may have come from the fact that it was often planted on holy ground.[5,6] It was also said to have power against evil spirits and was carefully planted in churchyards and hung round the neck as an amulet or charm. This was supposed to protect the wearer from unwanted visions and dreams, and drive away devils and despair.[4,5]



Wood Betony: *Stachys betonica, Betonica officinalis*

These applications are not without merit, as Betony has a strong influence on the stomach, brain, head and nervous system generally, improving gut-level instincts, thinking and groundedness. (7)

So, having had a taste of its history and folklore, let's explore Betony's modern uses and applications. In making teas or tinctures, the dried aerial parts of the plant are used (2). It's phytochemistry, which includes, tannins, alkaloids, betaine, choline and saponins, may give us a clue to how we may use it as a treatment.(3,4)

Betony's main uses come from its ability to feed and strengthen the central nervous system. It is used in nervous debility associated with anxiety and tension and also has a sedative action.(2,6) It is a great remedy for chronic headaches and migraines, as well as for all head and face pains (such as neuralgia) when they are of nervous origin.(1,2,3) Betony helps with hysteria, nervousness and insomnia, and works well in combination with other nervines.(3,5) It is also a uterine stimulant and can be used for menopausal problems, menstrual cramps and leucorrhoea. Betony is an especially important remedy for the frail and elderly and for people who are thin, intellectual and disassociated from their body and instincts.(7)

Its astringent action, from the tannin content, makes it a suitable compress for wounds and bruises as well as being helpful in treating diarrhoea.(4) It is a tonic for general digestive disorders and is an efficient alternative in cleansing impurities from the blood. It aids in conditions such as rheumatism and jaundice. It helps clear the liver and spleen and is recommended for liver and gallbladder complaints. It stimulates the heart and circulation, helping to reduce hypertension. (1,4) It is recommended that high doses are avoided in pregnancy(6) and there are no known drug interactions.

The description of this multi-talented herb that I like best comes from Mathew Wood. This epitomises for me how we should take time to observe herbs in their natural environment, regard them with the due reverence and respect they deserve and then wait for them to tell us their magical secrets. Mathew is a herbalist who does this in all his interactions with medicinal plants. This observation of Wood Betony resonated deeply within my heart and brings me back to why I was attracted to it in the first place. I hope you can feel the same and enjoy reconnecting to this ancient plant, as I have done, and once again value all the qualities that it holds within it:

"Betony grows in a neat clump, close to the earth, the leaves radiating out from the ground. After it has established itself securely, it sends up long slender flower stalks. This is the signature: Wood Betony is a remedy which helps establish rootedness, connectedness, earthiness and groundedness. It is a plant for people who are cut off from the earth or their bodies. It strengthens the solar plexus - the place which helps us feel connected - and through the solar plexus it strengthens the rest of the nervous system, including the brain. Through this general strengthening property, Wood Betony enhances the action of diverse organs - lungs, liver, gall bladder, intestines, kidneys and uterus. By strengthening the solar plexus (one of the most significant nerve centres in the body) and helping people to feel grounded, it has an impact on psychological health which helps to explain its magical uses." (7)

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PhytoUnique Cookies

By Judy Evans



Judy Evans

At the beginning of last year I wrote a newsletter explaining how I had noticed how much more women's health is being discussed regarding steroid hormones and the debilitating symptoms that can happen when they become imbalanced. It also seemed that more and more celebrity figures are taking on the cause as they themselves are now reaching menopause and suddenly understand how much women in the past have suffered in silence. I wrote about how these feisty women are no longer prepared to keep it a taboo subject, are speaking quite candidly about their experiences and offering to help in various ways. I still believe this is to be applauded as they have the means to reach many women who are left in the dark, particularly about certain treatments that are much more natural and safer than the conventional types.

Of course, this will always be good news, but many women are still receiving confusing and conflicting information especially via the internet. It seems more and more websites are dominating the main pages of Google showing natural progesterone 'cream' in a negative light, while simultaneously promoting natural progesterone only if it is given at very high doses in a tablet form (in conventional HRT) which you have to eat. Also, it is only given with oestrogen mainly to protect the uterus from cancer, which is a risk if oestrogen is given alone. It is known that women can tolerate natural progesterone much more than the synthetic versions. If you do not have a uterus, oestrogen is given alone and all the other benefits of progesterone, like protecting against breast cancer, are overlooked. Most of the proponents of this type of HRT argue that the progesterone in a cream form is not absorbed well when applied to the skin. Many, many times this has been disproved by simple saliva tests (which are more accurate than blood tests) which show that when progesterone is applied to the skin, high levels are present in the saliva. As Dr Lee had explained in his very informative books, progesterone does not travel very well in the blood serum and this is where the testing is done by most doctors. Instead it reaches the saliva via another route which shows that progesterone in a base cream given at the small physiological doses of 25mg – 30mg is very well absorbed. The progesterone tablets are given in doses of 100mg – 200mg a day. Could this mean that women are being grossly overdosed when blood testing is showing low levels? Of course, high doses will not harm you, but the body may shut down receptor sites for progesterone as it tries to regain the balance. This means that it will not do you any harm but will not do you any good either.



PhytoUnique cookies

A more sensible approach for women suffering from the usual menopausal symptoms would be to first try progesterone cream as it is so safe. It has been shown to be effective when used as a single hormone in a cream form for 80% of women. This is due to the fact that it can make a certain amount of oestrogen. It comes very high up in the hormones pathways and makes almost all of the other steroid hormones.

If after a few months of using the average dose of progesterone symptoms have not improved much, the average physiological dose can be brought up or down depending on each individual. It is very much trial and error at this stage as everyone is different. However, sometimes the oestrogen has fallen so low that progesterone alone is not enough to bring it back up again. This is where a little oestrogen supplementation can help, and I would recommend the safe plant oestrogens which

can be very effective when the right amount needed for each individual is achieved. They are commonly known as phytoestrogens which are found in certain foods and herbs such as soya, chickpeas, flaxseed, lentils, sage, red clover and so on. They are very healthy and safe. The strongest and most effective of these phytoestrogens are found in soya beans and I often recommend my clients to take soya products. It may be that only a little is needed such as one soya yoghurt a day or some may need more.

I have developed PhytoUnique cookies which provides a measured amount of the strongest types of phytoestrogens. I have made the formula to be quite pleasant tasting and ideal to have as a healthy snack a couple of times a day. The bonus is that they are very filling so can be part of a diet plan which provides a healthy source of protein. They are made with natural calorie-free sugar so no worries there. You would need to nibble on them slowly with a drink of some sort as they are quite dry. I have found that most of my clients find them effective at two – four a day. If more are needed, I would then suggest the concentrated tablet form of phytoestrogen which can be taken with the cookies. I can give you more information regarding this if you contact me.

This is the most natural and safe why to alleviate menopausal symptoms which can be even more effective if you have a reasonably good diet and lifestyle.

The herbal cookies provide phytoestrogens which can help those that need a little topping up. They not only taste good but can be part of a healthy diet which may also help with weight loss as a bonus.

PhytoUnique Cookies:

Each 310g bag contains 30 cookies. Cost £6.00 per bag. Postage is £3.45 for 1 – 3 bags or £5.30 for 4 bags.

For orders, please contact Judy with name and address at Nature's Healing 01935 474343 or email at: info@progesteronelink.com

Herbal Software

By Lloyd Gee



Lloyd Gee

Lloyd Gee is looking into developing a web-based software system for managing herbal dispensaries. If this goes ahead it will be an invaluable resource for herbalists.

Please follow the link below to a survey. Your views will help enormously in making sure that the needs of herbalists are met in this software system. It will only take 5 minutes to complete.

https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/8CX6DRB

Ankylosing Spondylitis

By Barbara Wilkinson



Barbara Wilkinson

Ankylosing spondylitis/AS, can trigger a cascade of worry for the patient, and for the practitioner. I would like to share some of my findings.

It can occur at any age and is an inflammatory condition, mainly a genetic problem with HLA-B27 being in 96% of the time the missing link. In its active phase there is elevated igA, suggesting a microbe in the bowel is acting across the gut mucosa.

Patients can of course be tested, but if it shows up on an x-ray or other test is it necessary? In my patient, a chiropractor diagnosed it from her x-ray - it was clear enough to show the damage to the spine - and explained that it also affects eyes, lungs and bowels. Her recommendation was to remove gluten from the diet to assist the gut healing.

The problem with that is it only goes so far and, as we know, switching to 'free from foods' is not the answer, as they contain many ingredients that we don't really want to consume.

I came across an article in What Doctors Don't Tell You magazine in July 2018, about Sean Codling, who had consulted Professor Alan Ebringer, who was once at King's College, London, and had a private clinic in London. Ebringer explained that in 96% of patients with AS, they carried the gene HLA-B27 and that a gut bacteria becomes overgrown triggering an autoimmune response.

The bacteria is Klebsiella; his answer is to starve the food the bacteria feeds on, which is starch. Klebsiella has molecular sequences resembling HLA-B27 that confuses the immune system, causing it to produce antibodies to its own tissues, or 'molecular mimicry' causing AS.

To eradicate starch, potatoes, wheat, rice, oats, grains, root vegetables, and obviously everything made with them i.e. cakes, bread, pasta and biscuits etc. must go. When explaining what to remove for patients it's essential to say what is 'allowed'. Lots of green and coloured vegetables and fruit that grow above ground, dairy products, good fats, protein foods and dark chocolate 75-80% cacao. Anyone that has cut out starch will know it's a strict regime and you will lose weight, but you also bring that all important inflammation down.



I contacted Sean and asked about his regime, which he has lived by now for over 18 years. He is in remission, and has been for years, taking no medication and encountering no symptoms. If he deviates from his regime, he feels stiffness, especially in the mornings, which he says is to remind him.

He exercises regularly, playing squash, racketball, skiing and cycling, and does yoga and Wing Chun kung fu. He also has added probiotics and has regular colonics, and recently added fermented cider

vinegar. He was not aware of herbs that help but is keen to learn about anything that fights the bacteria. Klebsiella likes sugar too, so avoiding that in all its forms is also good. Drinking green and herbal teas are good options, whilst avoiding coffee and alcohol.

Zinc is required, as is vitamin A, C, and D, magnesium and the yeast Saccharomyces boulardi, discouraging Klebsiella. Other helpers include: Hydrastis canadensis, Thymus vulgaris, Oregano, Andrographis, ginger, turmeric, Krill oil, and Coenzyme Q10. I am sure there are others, including garlic, which it would be good to share within our group's expertise.

Kefir and fermented foods help the gut bacteria and should be part of the regime to eradicate the Klebsiella. Hydrotherapy and colonics can also be used as with 24 hour fasting.

There is a web site - www.stopas.co.uk - that Sean is involved with and an active Facebook page.

As with all conditions, everyone is individual, and it should be said not all this information is right for everyone. It serves only as a collection of thoughts on how it has helped others and is continuing to do so.

How to Gain Continuing Personal Development (CPD) Without Breaking the Bank

By Ghislaine Headland-Vanni

Ghislaine has been a Clinical Hypnotherapist for almost 20 years. She has also had a very keen interest in natural health and herbs, so when she relocated to Lincolnshire in the summer of 2014 she found herself in a position to study for the BSc (Hons) in Medical Herbalism at Lincoln College.

This article may be of benefit to those of you who have not long qualified or are looking for a way of gaining CPD on a budget.

I joined the URHP in August 2018 after I graduated from my Medical Herbalism degree in Lincoln. When I submitted my CPD log to renew, I was asked by this magazine if I would write an article explaining how I achieved so much benefit at so little cost. Not including travel costs and a few relevant books, I spent £125 last year: a workshop on CBD oil (£75); and 2 great workshops put on at the college for students and graduates: Aromatherapy for Herbalists (£25) and Medicinal Mushrooms (£25). All of these enhanced my knowledge in topics I am interested in and I can see the benefits of using this knowledge with my patients. The rest of my CPD was directly as a result of my being one of a team of three at Fenland Natural Health.

Fenland Natural Health started in the summer of 2016 when Lois Campbell, a URHP member and student at Lincoln College, asked local herbalists/students if they wanted to form a group in order to help run a monthly meeting to promote herbs and natural health. Emma Barker,



Herbal teas and syrups sold at local events

MNIMH, who had just graduated and myself were the only two who came forward and luckily, given that we live in such a rural area (South East Lincolnshire), we all live within about 30 minutes of each other. One of our tutors, Katie Dobiesz, MNIMH, also lives locally and she offered the support we needed in order to believe in ourselves enough to actually get ourselves off the ground.

Our first monthly meeting was held at a local village hall, and it is still there today. Right from the start we regularly get 12-20 attendees, which again given our location is pretty good. We talk about herbs and how they can help with minor health conditions and general health. We also get guest speakers such as Katie to come and talk about related topics such as the Vagus nerve and health. We all deliver part of the session which has built my confidence in public speaking. I started out really nervous, avoiding speaking to an audience whenever I could. By delivering part of each meeting I find I have honed my delivery skills and my confidence in my abilities as a speaker. Delivering part of the meeting also means that we need to use the research skills learned at college so that we can deliver our section. For example, I have delivered talks on various body systems, the microbiome and herbs to help with various conditions.

Last year we decided we wanted to offer more than just monthly meetings. We started running local wild medicine identification walks and wild medicine workshops. Again as these involve all of us I have found both my own confidence and my herbal knowledge/herbal identification skills have grown. We also obtained a Food Hygiene License which has enabled us to make some products such as herbal teas and syrups. We research our products so that they are safe and taste pleasant but also have therapeutic benefits which we can talk about to our potential customers. We take these products to local health and food related events as well as our monthly meetings.

For the past three years we have also been paid to have a stall in the Heritage Tent at the Heckington Show (the largest village show in the country). Not only do events generate some sales but we also get people asking if we do talks. This has resulted in us being paid to talk to several local Women's Institute groups, a couple of horticulture societies, and an arthritis group. We have several more bookings taking us into 2020 already. So far I have spoken about herbs which can assist arthritis; herbal 'first aid' and how gardeners can view weeds as allies rather than the enemy. This exposure has really helped us all grow in confidence and knowledge but even more importantly it has enabled us to share our passion for herbs with our community. Wanting to share this passion is probably the best way for me to have come out of my comfort zone as I have to get out there and deliver.

Whilst Fenland Natural Health is not something which generates a large income, it certainly covers our costs and it increases local awareness of us as Medical Herbalists as well. Ultimately we'd love to see a network of Natural Health groups spreading the word around the country so if you'd like to know more about how much time is involved etc then please drop us a line: fenlandnh@mail.com

URHP - New Information Officer



North Wales based herbalist Cassie Sherriff is our new Information Officer. Sadly, Andy Roche no longer has the time to devote to this role. We are all grateful to him for the work he has done and wish him well for the future.

Cassie can be contacted via email at urhpinfo@gmail.com. If you need to contact the office please ring Trixie, our Registrar, on 07340 979214.

Association of Master Herbalists AGM / Conference

September 7, 2019 Town Hall & Corn Exchange, Hungerford

Venue
Town Hall & Corn Exchange in Hungerford, Berkshire, located in a small market town with antique shops, country pubs and B&B's. Canal boats are docked on the Kennet canal that winds through the town. Grain farms surround the town which is minutes away from the ancient woods of Savernake Forest. Situated near the border of Wiltshire it is only a 15 minute drive to the famous market town Marlborough and from there another 10 minutes to the village of Avebury and the standing stones. Hungerford railway station is across the street to the town hall and about an hour's journey from London central and links to the West Country, Oxford and Reading. Excellent road connections from all areas and easy parking.

There are a variety of accommodations in the town which would only be a few minutes walking distance to the venue. The venue is an attractive building and priced very reasonably.

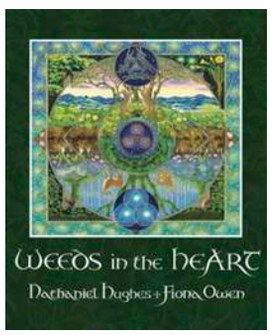


Guest Speaker: Nathaniel Hughes

Brief Bio
Nathaniel Hughes trained initially as a chemist and then as a Medical Herbalist (NIMH) before exploring the wider realms and potential of spiritual healing. He runs an Apothecary and clinic near Stroud and has devoted his professional life as an herbalist to the exploration of gnosis, both in the form of learning from plants directly and as an aspect of the client-practitioner dynamic. He has written two books exploring this: 'Intuitive Herbalism' and 'Weeds in the Heart'. He is the founder of The School of Intuitive Herbalism, which offers a range of trainings including a seven year long, highly plant and student centred, apprenticeship.

Nathanial is very excited about this event and its many opportunities to teach, develop new friendships and network with the AMH.

Nathaniel's Offering for our Conference:



"When we gather in September I hope to rekindle and celebrate your own relationship with plant and clinical intuition. Drawing on a wide range of experiences, exercises and stories we will look at how we can systematically and robustly nurture these aspects of ourselves as herbalists, and how to avoid the numerous pitfalls. I believe that these skills, as expressed today, are echoes of the skills of hundreds of generations of healers from the past, and that as we walk this path we both honour this heritage and are supported by thousands of years of implicit wisdom."

The lecture will be a very interactive talk with samples and testers of plants. He will be bringing his books and they will be on sale.

For updates on this event please visit:
https://associationofmasterherbalists.co.uk
or contact: aliciasawaya.uk@gmail.com

Demonstrations & Herbal Walks

urhp
Unified Register of Herbal Practitioners



This year's URHP conference is a dynamic weekend of workshops, talks, walks, market and discussion groups in the beautiful grounds of Purley Chase. There will be stands and sessions from Herbal companies including Avicenna, CBD Brothers and Spagyrics. As a knowledge exchange, this is an opportunity to learn from the wealth of experience of other Herbalists as well as letting others gain from your own ideas and understanding. Along with a set programme there will be open space for spontaneous discussion and skill sharing.

Diverse and Expert Teaching from Herbal Practitioners

- CBD Brothers - Ben Birrell
- Avicenna - Joe Nasr
- Phylak Spagyrics - Liz Lyden
- Herbal Walk - Barbara Wilkinson

For booking see: https://tinyurl.com/y4wjuklj

DIARY DATES

April 17, Wed: **Spring Webinar**: Immune Support, Chanchal Cabrera, Innisfree Farm Online
www.innisfreefarm.ca/clinical-training

April 27- 28 Sat – Sun: **Magical Herbal Spring Retreat** with Fiona Morris and Elisabeth Brooke, Edinburgh.
Day1: Magical Herbalism Workshop, Day 2: Elemental Herbalism Workshop.
Elisabeth Brooke, Brighton
June 1 Sat: Magical Herbalism Herbs of Mercury
June 29 Sat: Magical Herbalism: Herbs of the Moon
July 27 Sat: Magical Herbalism: Herbs of the Sun
Aug 26 Mon: Magical Herbalism: Herbs of Saturn
Sept 21 Sat: Magical Herbalism: Herbs of Venus
Oct 26 Sat: Magical Herbalism: Herbs of Mars
www.elisabethbrookemagicalherbalism.com

May 15 Wed: **Spring Webinar**: Detox, Liver support and tissue cleansing, Chanchal Cabrera, Innisfree Farm Online www.innisfreefarm.ca/clinical-training

May 20, Mon: **Balens CPD Conference** 'Resilience in Healthcare – coping with clients with chronic or life limiting conditions' NEC, Birmingham. events@balens.co.uk

May 31 - June 2, **Ayurfest** Earth Spirit Centre, Somerton, Somerset.
info@apa.uk.com

June 29 Sat: **Understanding CBD**: A Masterclass for CAM practitioners Karin Mallion and Emma Dalton Hove info@chantryhealth.com

July 5 - 7 Fri - Sun: **Congress on Naturopathic Medicine**, London, www.icnmnaturopathy.eu

July 5 - 7 Fri - Sun: **URHP Herbal Gathering,** Purley Chase Centre, Atherstone CV9 2RQ
For booking see: https://tinyurl.com/y4wjuklj

July 13 Sat: **Herbal History Research Network**: Distillation Day, Joe Nasr and Christina Stapley, London.
denham.alison@gmail.com www.herbalhistory.org

September 7, **Association of Master Herbalists**, AGM/Conference, Town Hall & Corn Exchange in Hungerford, Berkshire. Guest speaker Nathaniel Hughes https://associationofmasterherbalists.co.uk

Oct 18-19 Fri – Sat: **The Essence of Clinical Aromatherapy**: An international seminar for hospital and hospice care Rhiannon Lewis, of Essential Oil Research Consultant The Royal Marsden Education and Conference Centre, London https://www.royalmarsden.nhs.uk/essence-clinical-aromatherapy

The Nutrition Network offers free CPD lectures website also has a wealth of articles and e-zines which can be accessed by members. To join visit the-nutrition-network.com

Solgar Academy is an online learning hub which runs regular webinars on a host of herb related topics. It's free to join and the video library can be accessed here: https://solgaracademy.co.uk/

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