urhp
"at the heart of Herbal Medicine"

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2021



ITEMS IN THIS NEWSLETTER INCLUDE:

President's Summer 2021 Update • Adventures of a Floating Herbalist
Frankincense • The effects of stress and anxiety on sleep
Book reviews • The Herbal Alliance

UNIFIED REGISTER OF HERBAL PRACTITIONERS
NEWSLETTER

CONTENTS

1	Letter from the Editor
2	President's Summer 2021 Update
3	The effects of stress and anxiety on sleep
7	Website Practioner's Details
8	Herbology News
9	The Adventures of a Floating Herbalist
12	Frankincense
16	Book Review: The Business of Botanicals
17	The Herbal Alliance
18	Book Review: The Tree Dispensary
19	Information, Links and Diary Dates
20	URHP contact information

URHP Newsletter Team Summer 2021

Editors: Liz Lyden: lizlyden@msn.com

Proofreading: Trixie Vorderman

Design and typesetting: Andrew Mason info@neterapublishing.com

Our next issue of The Herbalist will be published in December. Please send your contributions by **1st September 2021** to Liz Lyden at: lizlyden@msn.com

Photographs/graphics in this issue:
Cover/Page 1: Poppy Flower Nature by Candiix. Page 2: Laura Yarham. Page 5: Google images. Page 6: Google images. Page 7: Christine Herbert. Pages 9-10-11: Kaye Angus. Page 12: Vicki Pitman. Page 16: Google images. Page 17: Lloyd Gee. Page 18: Google images.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Here we are in July 2021 with the world supposedly opening up after we have been restricted for 19 months. Some of us more so than others. We have not been able to see patients in person in this time. Now we can, if we choose to, open our clinics again. The URHP has decided to remain with virtual meetings during this year.

Spring this year seems to have been extended and we are now in a time of glorious blooming of trees and flowers. One of the most prolific I have seen for many years, perhaps a result of the lessening of pollution. I was walking through Didsbury in Greater Manchester last week and came across the Botanical Gardens which were created and donated to the community by Fletcher Moss an 18th Century author and philanthropist. The trees were so beautiful and majestic and the scents of them all so delightful that we didn't want to leave. When I looked it up on the Bury area website I found that many of the industrialists at that time had established amazing gardens which still exist today. Oases of beauty and continuity in the midst of our urban sprawl. It so demonstrates that we need to establish comprehensive herb gardens now and their usage for future generations in every community. Go out and educate children so they can carry on the traditions.

We have some wonderful articles in this Newsletter which we hope will inspire you. Please do continue to send in articles to us. Variety is everything so if it interests you it will interest others too. And if you wish to join our editorial team there is always a place for you.

Liz



President's Summer 2021 Update
by Laura Yarham

"If you find – as surely you must in this season– that the outside finds its way inside in the form of soil, grass clippings, sand, insects and the sound of a lawnmower, welcome it as you welcome the blue sky and sunshine. Let the outside in and take yourself outside."

Liz Proctor

How very welcome the sunshine and warmth has been this last few weeks, bringing all that is outside into a fast forward of green unstoppable growth and a transformation of sounds as the insects buzz, the birds sing and all in nature really comes to life. These magnificent and yet simple unchangeable cycles are certainly what keeps me in a place of joy, gratitude and love. The invincible summer (as Albert Camus refers to it) within me has also been stirred into being, from my wintry depths. May it also be so for you all, as the season turns.



Laura Yarham

I am writing this around Summer Solstice time and so the sun and light energy feels even more powerful, as well as the stillness and reflection that comes with it. There is plenty to celebrate when we turn ourselves to what is outside in the natural world, and indeed, allow its essence to come inside with us. I always feel this time of year brings into being what we might have sown in ideas and plans (as well as planting seeds!) during winter and spring: now is the time for them all to burst forth!

It feels as if there are certainly visions that were planted last year in the herbal community, that are now really coming into bloom. One of these is the Herbal Alliance. At a recent meeting, it felt as if all the hard work of the past few months is now moving forward into solid outcomes. Simon Mills spoke to us regarding the proposal for the Alliance to become a community interest company and all that this involves in creating a supportive structure. We were incredibly fortunate to have Jyoti Fernandez from the Land Workers Alliance, who is very inspirational and shared so many rich and relevant golden nuggets of information regarding what the LWA had learnt about successfully setting up their organisation. We also had a first peek into how the new website will look and the ways in which it will work. This is tremendously exciting and the plan is to launch it officially sometime in September. All the Community Action Teams continue to work extremely hard on their own particular areas of focus. The conversations around all of this work is very positive and depends, at present, on many giving their time and skills voluntarily.

Within the URHP, I am very pleased to say that members have stepped forward into roles that needed filling. Dilys Griffiths has taken on the job of Information Officer and is superb in this role, and Tina Silva offered to join our Council and has already added her intelligence and support to several council meetings. We are so grateful to these members who volunteer their time and skills to help our organisation be as effective as possible.

We are also very excited to announce that we will be having a day's webinar via Zoom, on Saturday 30th October and have secured Alex Laird and Nathaniel Hughes as the speakers. We are thrilled that these two highly esteemed herbalists will be sharing their knowledge and particular insights with us in this way. As we had made financial plans to not charge our members a conference fee this year (the conference was subsequently cancelled), the

Council have decided to offer this highly valued event free of charge to members. Please do take the opportunity to attend and save the date! Look out for more information about this webinar, as we will be sending out flyers in the next few weeks.

The Council would also like to encourage you to attend our AGM on Wednesday 6th October, 6pm-8pm via Zoom, as we so value members' discussion and feedback on the various topics that we will be covering. Those who have attended these in the past, know this is not only 'official business', but also a chance to let your voice be heard about any of our processes and how we can support and look after our members in new and creative ways.

I am happy to say that we will be continuing our very much appreciated Zoom gatherings. Many of our members have found these sessions extremely valuable, both in sharing herbal wisdoms and also for the support network they provide. The plan is to recommence these in September, and to have them bimonthly, alternating our own sharing and support sessions with a speaker or member who wishes to share a particular area of knowledge. I would like to thank Louisa Hallowes and Sarah Murphy for their huge help in planning and facilitating these sessions.

As Summer continues, may you find joy, calm and continued inspiration by immersing yourselves in the delights of the season. Our intrepid companions in the plant world are there to offer us all we need, whether it be in the beauty of their form, the way they move in the sunlit breeze, or in their medicine, with which they so unselfishly provide us. Let us grow and blossom as they do, acknowledging our own very special gifts we have within us to share with each other and the planet.

Laura

The effect of stress and anxiety on sleep

by Christine Herbert

Sleep problems caused by stress and anxiety are very common and most people have probably experienced them at some point in their life. If stress and anxiety only affect sleep for a few days then it's not a problem, but for some they become a chronic issue and can severely affect their quality of life. It also becomes a vicious circle with sleeplessness causing its own stress and anxiety about not sleeping.

Chronic sleep issues raise cortisol levels in the body – these are supposed to be high in the morning and low in the evening to allow sleep to take place. Cortisol is the primary stress response hormone in the body, and any stress results in more cortisol being released, leading to a higher level of cortisol than is desirable in the evening, preventing sleep. Cortisol secretion is controlled by the hypothalamus H, the pituitary gland P and the adrenal gland A – these glands are often referred to as the HPA axis.

Because most body cells have receptor sites for cortisol it affects many different functions in the body. Cortisol is important in managing the way the body breaks down carbohydrates, fats and proteins, and in controlling blood sugar and blood pressure. It also plays a role in managing inflammation. Proper levels of cortisol are very important for well-being, and many of the

diseases of modern life – cardiovascular disease, diabetes and metabolic syndrome - are a result of excess cortisol due to stress.

Stress is not just the result of overwork, or other people's actions, or fear of what is on the news. It can also be the result of what we eat.

Imagine someone who has just had a terrible night of sleep, they are tired, stressed and anxious because they know they will have to perform well at work today. They know they should have a good breakfast but it's just too much trouble and there isn't enough time. So they grab a piece of white toast with marmalade and put several spoonfuls of sugar in their coffee to keep their energy levels up. What they have forgotten is that within about two hours they will experience low blood sugar with irritability, fatigue and nausea. This creates a need for cortisol to raise blood sugar which creates a stress response in the body. If this happens daily, maybe several times a day, the body becomes less sensitive to cortisol, and if the amount of cortisol is already much higher than normal the body will have to release a stronger hormone – adrenalin. Adrenalin compensates for a lack of cortisol and is accompanied by panic and anxiety. This is the downward spiral into type two diabetes, cardiovascular disease, obesity and metabolic syndrome, and is most often accompanied by sleep problems.

A very common issue for those whose sleep is affected by stress is the sudden awakening in the night feeling alert and ready to go. That awakening is very linked to the tone or balance of the vagus nerve.

The vagus nerve controls the parasympathetic nervous system – so it is vital in winding down from any sympathetic nervous system activity. The sympathetic nervous system is activated by increased cortisol in the fight or flight response created by a stressful situation. Keeping this balance between parasympathetic and sympathetic is vital for health. Back in the stone age it was a matter life or death to have that sympathetic response when we were out hunting, or being hunted, but those who don't deal well with stress and anxiety find themselves in sympathetic mode more or less constantly and unable to revert back to relax mode, that is with parasympathetic dominance. The sympathetic response releases hormones such as adrenalin and cortisol resulting in a raised heart rate, tense muscles (ready to run), sweating, slowed digestion and a feeling of increased energy due to gluconeogenesis. It also releases the hormone renin from the kidneys, which increases blood pressure and increases metabolism. Certainly none of these are conducive to restful sleep – in fact it is pretty much impossible. This is also another vicious circle – the less sleep the more vagal tone is reduced.

Generally the parasympathetic response is anti-inflammatory and the sympathetic response, especially if out of control, is pro-inflammatory, which also has an effect on health, and will create more sleep problems such as more pain.

Stress results in the release of inflammatory cytokines through the effect on sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system pathways. These cytokines have been found to interact with neurotransmitter metabolism and neuroendocrine function.

Poor sleep results in increased inflammation, and inflammation results in poor sleep. Pro-inflammatory cytokines IL-6 and TNF alpha daytime secretion is increased in insomniacs which causes more inflammation and contributes to the chronic inflammatory diseases so common today – type two diabetes, cancer, osteoarthritis and cardiovascular disease.

What can be done to help stress and anxiety, and improve sleep?

Going over and over worries with a racing mind is never going to help. Certain flower remedies can be helpful here – white chestnut and chamomile are especially helpful for a racing mind preventing restful sleep, they both help to give peace of mind. White chestnut is for

persistent worrying thoughts that can't be stopped, and continuous mental arguments. Dandelion flower remedy is specific to help relax those tense muscles. Agrimony flower remedy is for mental worry, and is specific for those who put on a facade of cheerfulness throughout the day, but underneath they are torturing themselves with worry – the remedy will help them to put their worries into perspective. Chamomile flower remedy is for emotional turmoil causing stress and sleeplessness, to give an easing of tension and deep relaxation. Flower remedies are a really useful first step in this context because they start working within about twenty four hours, and they are not contraindicated with any medication.

Diet is also very important in helping the body to cope with stress. Inflammatory foods create stress in the body – the most inflammatory food for an individual is anything they are personally intolerant to. There are also foods that are inflammatory for everyone, these include wheat and gluten grains, animal milk products, alcohol, sugar, tea and coffee, oranges and pork. Maintaining a stable blood sugar also prevents stress. Avoiding stimulants, mostly caffeine or chocolate, may also be necessary.

Herbal treatments for stress and anxiety affecting sleep are often based on the adaptogenic herbs which regulate the production of cortisol. Some adaptogenic herbs can be stimulant, so may be better taken in the morning – but that stimulation is not the same as the caffeine stimulation of coffee, it is a far more tonic effect. Overall, adaptogens will create much more relaxation which will allow sleep to be deeper and more rejuvenating.

Adaptogenic herbs that might be useful for sleep include:

- Ashwagandha *Withania somnifera*, traditionally used in India as a bedtime drink mixed into warm milk (animal or plant) and honey, for insomnia and anxiety. It can be too heating for some, but is excellent for anyone who is not already hot.



Withania somnifera (ashwagandha)

- *Eleutherococcus senticosus* can improve sleep quality for young stressed people but it can be too stimulant for older people
- Reishi mushroom *Ganoderma lucidum* is a gentle adaptogen with a sedative and calming effect, very useful for stress and anxiety, and good for all ages and constitutions. It is also a heart tonic which helps vagal tone.
- Holy basil or tulsi *Ocimum sanctum* is a gentle adaptogen that lifts the spirits, normalises the HPA (hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal) axis and is useful when someone is worn down by stress.
- Vervain *Verbena officinalis*, is a parasympathomimetic adaptogenic herb, that is it helps to put the body back into parasympathetic dominance. It is a bitter herb, it lifts the spirits and is a nervine and antispasmodic.
- *Schisandra chinensis* is a sedative adaptogen useful for insomnia, especially where there is sweating and heat. It should be taken in low dose only as high dose, or if used alone, can cause restlessness and insomnia.



Ganoderma lucidum (Reishi)

Herbs with a toning effect on the vagus nerve include [1]:

- Volatile oil rich herbs, often used as essential oils. These can be diffused in the air, used as massage oils or applied to the skin as a perfume. Some are rich in esters which calm the central nervous system and induce parasympathetic tone – such as lavender Lavandula species, ylang ylang *Cananga odorata*, Roman chamomile *Anthemis nobilis*, bitter orange flower *Citrus aurantium flos*. Oils rich in phenyl methyl ethers include fennel *Foeniculum vulgare*, *Angelica archangelica*, aniseed *Pimpinella anisum*, basil *Ocimum basilicum* and holy basil *Ocimum sanctum* are more warming and stimulating but will improve both sympathetic and parasympathetic tone in small to moderate doses. Large doses can induce too much sympathetic stimulation. Non toxic ketone containing oils Jasmine and *Helichrysum italicum* can have a marked effect on parasympathetic tone.
- Bitter herbs are excellent at improving vagal tone, as well as digestion and the liver, both of which will interfere with sleep if not functioning well. Within 20 minutes of taking bitter herbs the digestion is able to move into parasympathetic dominance – it will be relaxed and able to digest food much better. It is important to choose the right bitter for the individual – a warming bitter such as angelica *Angelica archangelica*, or bitter orange peel *Citrus aurantium* for those who go cold when vagal tone is poor; a cooling bitter such as burdock *Arctium lappa*, vervain *Verbena officinalis*, gentian *Gentiana lutea*, centaury *Erythrea centaurea*, or artichoke leaf *Cynara scolymus* for those who get hot or sweaty under stress; or a balancing bitter such as chamomile *Matricaria recutita* for those who get temperature fluctuations when stressed.
- Cayenne *Capsicum annuum* is able to shock the vagus back into tone
- The heart is the organ that has the strongest effect on vagal tone so herbs for the heart are also helpful, for example hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and lemon balm *Melissa officinalis*.



Valeriana officinalis

Herbs can reduce sympathetic stimulation (sympatholytic) and increase parasympathetic tone (parasympathomimetic) thus rebalancing the autonomic nervous system including the vagus nerve.

Sympatholytic herbs include black horehound *Ballota nigra*, passionflower *Passiflora incarnata*, valerian *Valeriana officinalis*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, linden tree *Tilia europaea*, lavender Lavandula spp., lemon balm *Melissa officianalis*, bugleweed *Lycopus virginicus*. Essential oils that are sympatholytic include lavender, angelica, chamomile, basil and rosemary[2].

Parasympathomimetic herbs include *Calendula officinalis*, mistletoe *Viscum album*, vervain *Verbena officinalis*, orange blossom *Citrus aurantium flos*, wood betony *Stachys officinalis*. Essential oils that are parasympathomimetic include clove, mint, neroli, rosemary and oregano.[2]

Fresh nettle leaf *Urtica dioica*, as a tincture, according to US herbalist Jim McDonald, is able to act as an autonomic switcher, moving someone who is stuck in sympathetic stress state towards a more balanced parasympathetic/ sympathetic state. He says regular use is able to relax the sympathetic nervous system.[3]

Then there are the nervine tonics – some are in the above classifications, but it is also useful to look at them in their own group. Nervine tonics strengthen and restore the nervous system where there is stress or anxiety. Nervine tonic herbs can also be relaxing or stimulating, and it is the relaxing nervine tonics that will be useful to aid sleep when under stress. This is not a quick fix, nervine tonics need to be taken long term for good results.

Some examples of this group are skullcap *Scutellaria lateriflora*, St John's wort *Hypericum perforatum*, chamomile *Chamaemelum nobile* and *Matricaria recutita*, lavender Lavandula spp., lemon balm *Melissa officinalis*, passionflower *Passiflora incarnata*, wood betony *Stachys betonica*, Linden tree *Tilia platyphyllos*, vervain *Verbena officinalis*, valerian *Valeriana officinalis*, hops *Humulus lupulus*, California poppy *Eschscholzia californica*. The last three on the list are probably the most powerful.

There is one other herb worth mentioning, *Avena sativa*, oat seed harvested at the milky stage, which is neither relaxing nor stimulant but is an excellent nervine tonic herb taken long term.

References:

1. Darrell, Nikki personal communication.
2. Kenner Dan, and Requena, Yves, 2001 Botanical medicine.
3. McDonald, Jim personal communication.



Christine Herbert FAMH, Dip AET, BA(Hons) qualified as a herbalist in 1997 and has been practicing and learning herbal medicine ever since. During the years of her practice she added many skills including nutrition, aromatic medicine and flower essence therapy in order to be best able to help the many people who came to see her. She retired from practice in 2019 so that she could teach and write using all the knowledge she had acquired.

She served on the council of the Association of Master Herbalists for several years and was awarded an Honorary Fellowship on retirement. Previous to this she worked as a senior biomedical scientist for nineteen years for the NHS.

Her book "Sleep, the Elixir of Life; how to restore it with herbs and natural healing" was published by Aeon Books https://tinyurl.com/ufayvn5m in May 2021 and looks at all the possible reasons for poor sleep and suggests ways of dealing with them which involve herbs, diet, essential oils and flower remedies.

You can also see a short video about this topic here: https://youtu.be/vTftpPo7Gko

WEBSITE – PRACTITIONER'S DETAILS

Please check your details on the website and let Trixie know if you need anything updating. If you would like to have a photograph with your information please email it to urhpregistrar@yahoo.com
https://www.urhp.com/find_herbalist.php



Couldn't find our jam-packed, tasty copy of
Herbology News
in your inbox this month?

Don't forget to...
Subscribe
It's free!
No cost, no catch, just community.

To make sure you get your copy, just send an email to
herbologynews@gmail.com
with the subject
'Add me'

We will not share, sell or analyse your data, but having subscribers helps us attract advertisers, support, and charitable funding.

Thank you.

In our last issue of The Herbalist we published Sarah Murphy's article on sausage tree cream. Sarah had published an earlier version of this article in ***Herbology News*** and we would like to acknowledge this.

THE ADVENTURES OF A FLOATING HERBALIST.

MY FLOATING HOME

will be full of flowers and leaves drying in satisfying bunches as this gets published, tagged accordingly with name, date and location. These will be graded and blended for teas which I sell online and at floating markets.

Herbal teas are the real deal

in my opinion, and the first step to building a faith in herbal medicine. If I can sell a packet of herbal tea, the customer is more likely to try other remedies at a later date. Herbal teas are now a common purchase in superstores and the high street. Each flower and leaf sings it's own song having been found, chosen, picked, dried, graded and blended creating a harmonious taste of the wild.

In the furthest reaches of the Llangollen canal

I found a new-to-me Square-stalked St. John's Wort * (Hypericum tetrapterum) and more chamomile than I could possibly gather



Spring heralds a new relationship with plants every year,

a growing excitement that fills many of my waking hours. The value of my freedoms has grown exponentially as I explore the waterways. I'm always on the lookout for the perfect plant triage; weather, time, location. Will I reach the wild garlic patch seen last year, before I find the bottom of my final garlic pesto jar? Will I find enough Ground Ivy blooming? Does that Green Fingers salve I make need tweaking with more Elder leaves?

The peace of the canal is the ideal place for my busy mind as I plan, plot and question the development of a new skin product or a social media marketing conundrum. I always think big in spring and as the season rolls on, re-configure my goals and expectations. 2020 was the year I learned to let go





Kaye Angus, AMH member, Iridologist,

Reflexologist, Tui Na Chinese massage practitoner, has just finished a three year extended period of study in Acupuncture at the City College in London.

- She runs a micro-clinic on board narrow boat *Evanthia,* trading at floating markets. She uses her own products in practice.
- She is also an experienced beekeeper and is on the lookouot for a canal-side location to move her apiaries.
- Her long term goal is to move back to the West Coast of Scotland, where she forages seaweeds during spring tides. These are air dried and packaged for sale. Seaweeds are part of both Asian and Western Traditional Medicine, systems, being highly concentrated medicinal food forms and a tonic to immune and cardiovascular systems.

web; www.littlehouse.garden

Instgram;@kayeslittlehouse

"there is nothing-absolutely nothing-half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats"

of fixed ideas and plans. I am now hesitant to give up this new fondness for living more in the moment and truly going with the flow!

It is healthier for me, having passed the half century mark, to slow down to appreciate treasured moments of my constantly changing life; smiles and waves from complete strangers or gongoozlers** at the locks. Interest in seeing me gathering nettles -"don't you get stung picking without gloves?", "yes, but it's actually quite good for my circulation?", or "oh can you eat those, what are you making?", to the passers-by near my kitchen window as the smell of simmering spicy hawthorn ketchup wafts onto the towpath.

The foragers idea of heaven -

a sense of anticipation at what might be growing around the next bend, or the pleasure in adding that big patch of watercress to my mental map. I have travelled from Paddington station to Pontcysllte Aqueduct at 3.4 mph, and cruised beneath the towers of Ratcliffe Power station marvelling at the precarious existence of folks' lives on the riverbanks.

Surrounded by nature I feel at home and easily trade this off against the disadvantages of nomadic life; no postal address,



lack of privacy, patchy signal and ruthless re-homing of tools, coats, shoes and books from my previous life! I haven't been a liveaboard for three years yet but I would find it hard to give up the access to forage that I rely on to bring wild food and medicine to my table and continue the work of integrating these to my customer's lives.

2021 is an exciting year, for my flora and fauna watching. Having been left to their own free will for half of the previous year, I am hoping to find a new abundance or special treat - mooring under lime trees in blossom or heaving to on the offside for a basket of dog roses.

I'm blessed to be a herbalist on the UK canals, and appreciate my place in the Traditional Medicine calendar, revelling in the privilege of our heritage transport system and bringing CAM healthcare to boaters and villagers along the way.









facebook.com/LittleHouse

floating markets please see

facebook.com/rctabuyitoffaboat

**Gongoozlers - people who stand watching boats at the locks.

* Although the Hypericum flowers look almost identical to *perforatum*, I have not found anything conclusive about their comparitive medicinal value.

EDITORIAL TEAM:

We would love to have someone join our Editorial Team to help with the production of The Herbalist and Newsletter. This involves a few hours three times a year. Please contact our Editor, Liz Lyden, if you would like to find out more.

Frankincense

by Vicki Pitman M.Phil., F.URHP, IFA, AoR


Vicki Pitman

One of oldest medicinal plants in human use, the name of this highly prized ancient aromatic commodity derives from the French 'frank' meaning pure, of high quality. Historically ithas been called in olibanum or oil of Libanum, from the Arabic Aribil al-luban meaning 'milky'. It is known as guggulu in Sanskrit and kundar in Arabic.

Frankincense is in the family Burceraceae, plants typically found in desert or arid habitats with intense sunlight (an exception being Elemi native to tropical forests of Philippines). The tree forms oelo-resins in the bark which have strong antiseptic, antiputrescent and decay or age-inhibiting properties.

The main species used in herbal medicine and aromatic medicine-aromatherapy are: *Boswellia sacra* (Fluck. synB. carteri) native to Somalia, Yemen, Oman; *Boswellia serrata* (Roxb., Syn *B. glabra*) native to Assam, India, West Himalayas. B. sacra is cultivated more widely, e.g. China. *Commiphora mukul* (Hook. ex Stocks)is native to India and Pakistan.[1] *B. sacrasyncarteri* is also used in TCM.[2]

It is a shrub-sized small tree, with oblong, serrated (toothed) pinnate leaves, flowers of four petals, white or pink, with orange centres, in racemes. The fruit is a pear-shaped capsule with 3 stones. When injured the bark secretes an oleo-gum resin, known as 'tears'. The tears are harvested in the dry season by making repeated incisions to the trunk, and collecting the exuding resin, which is initially milky white, turning to yellow, or yellow-brown, or green on drying - depending on species, habitat, and other factors.

History of use

Ancient cultures from India to Mesopotamia to Greece, Rome, Northern Africa, Egypt Arabia to the Near East, Greece and Rome have valued and traded frankincense. Many of their uses of the extracted and dried gum have continued into the modern era. The primary additional use of Frankincense today is as a distilled essential oil, and as pharmaceutical supplement, based on a plethora of scientific research. Among the many historical uses we find: religious rituals, sacraments, and to enhance prayer and meditation, as ingredients for cosmetics, perfumes, as a key embalming agent, as well as for medicine. Modern studies support ancient wisdom that Frankincense induces calm and clarity in the mind and emotions and regulates breathing.

Hippocrates, in the book Epidemics 2.2, 18 (Loeb, vol. VIII, trans W. Smith, p 35, 1994) describes "A woman carrying [a child] in the third or fourth month" who "had eruptions on the lower left leg and on the right hand next to the thumb, eruptions of the sort for which we give frankincense."[3] Dioscorides, in his first century AD De Materia Medicaalso distinguishes two kinds, one "produced in Arabia, the land called frankincense-bearing', and the other an "Indian one… yellowish and dull". Interestingly, even at that time, probably indicating its great importance, he cautions, "All frankincense is adulterated... being treated with *pitys* (pine resin) and gum." He goes on, "it is easy to determine whether it has been adulterated, because gum does not blaze up when set afire and the resin vanishes into smoke, but frankincense flares up. Smell too betrays frankincense that has been adulterated." He explains its uses for skin conditions, haemorrhage and pneumonia, among others.

In Al-Qanun, the Canon of Medicine (11th c) Ibn Senna describes Kundar (Olibanum/ Franincense) as a well-known drug and highlights adulterations to be wary of, repeating in essence Dioscorides' test of observing for smouldering vs catching fire, and Dioscorides' preference for "male" frankincense which is white and best. He describes an Indian version as being greenish in colour, another variety as becoming red on storage. Not only the gum, but the "flour, scrapings and smoke" can be used. (I am deducing the flour is the powder residue from processing, and scrapings are very small broken bits.)

Ibn Senna next details its temperament (qualities according to Galen's system), properties and uses. Under temperament he distinguishes between the scrapings, which are drying to the 2nd degree but slightly colder than the gum, Frankincense gum itself, which is hot in the 2nd degree and drying in the 1st degree, and the 'peel' which is drying 'approximately in the 3rd degree'. He states the gum is 'coctive'. To me this means it helps mature or beneficially alter disturbed humours to restore proper function, i.e. alterative. Frankincense stops bleeding and its smoke is highly drying and astringent. It can be applied mixed with clay to hot swellings of the breast, to ulcers, and for skin problems such as whitlow, warts and the pain called 'markaba'. It may be taken as an infusion 'regularly' to help memory, and for certain ear and eye conditions. While in modern times frankincense aerosol diffusion is used to help respiratory conditions, Ibn Senna does not refer to this method here, which would have been via 'smoking'. But other interesting uses he includes are: as both a laxative and to stop diarrhoea (i.e. correcting both extremes of dysfunction); for bleeding of the uterus and anus, and as a suppository for anal ulcers; for phlegmatic fevers. Finally he cautions that excessive oral intake with wine is fatal.[5]

In Ayurvedic medicine, *Commiphora mukul* is likewise is heating in energy (virya), light, penetrating and drying in guna (quality), affecting all dhatus (tissues) and circulatory, digestive nervous and respiratory srotas (channels)[6].

The ever reliable Bartram (1998) cites the gum's historic for leprosy in China, and ulceration and tumours by (Ibn Senna). He interestingly observes that frankincense is "the chlorophyll of the ancient world"[7]. If we follow this up we find that chlorophyll, which in plants enables photosynthesis, is a catalyst that speeds or maintains a reaction, enhances metabolism of vitamins and minerals, and promotes tissue building and the granulation of tissue in wound healing. Thus these actions are associated with frankincense's renowned healing powers, and correlate with uses historically, and through research.

In summary: Energetically, Frankincense is warming and drying. It clears congested phlegm, cools choler or pitta dosha, calms melancholy and vata dosha, and regulates prana. It moves and tonifies qi and yang, moves blood and dries damp[8].

Composition and main actions

Research has found Frankincense to be composed of resins containing boswellic acids, polysaccharides, and an essential oil containing monoterpenes, boswellic acids, olibanoresene, Arabic acid, bassorin, pinene, dipentene, alpha and beta phellandrene.[9] Exact composition will depend on species and provenance. Its recognised anti-inflammatory actions are attributed in research primarily to the boswellic acids.

Actions include blood purifying, anti-inflammatory, anti-arthritic, analgesic and pain relieving, lipid reducing, and anti-cancer activities. Indications for use include skin conditions, psoriasis, osteo and rheumatoid arthritis, asthma, bronchitis, colitis, Crohn's disease, cancer. Tillotson 2003 reports it may be used as an alternative to NSAIDs and steroids for many – though not all – sufferers and that it

affects certain mediators of inflammation along the leucotrine pathway to ease both pain and oedema. Since then many studies have been conducted for effects on RA and osteoarthritis and other conditions. In one human trial for osteoarthritis a 'novel' extract of *B. serrata* was effective for relieving pain and stiffness or arthritis in the knees of the subjects.[10] In regard to its use for cancer, Yance (1999) states, "Studies have shown positive effects on cell-mediated and humoral components of the immune system and its ability to increase body weight, total leukocyte count and humoral antibodies".[11]

Aromatherapy

The essential oil is extracted by distillation and is pale yellow to greenish, liquid, with a dry, fresh intense or penetrating, slightly camphoric odour and is considered a base note.[12] It is used in massage, dermal applications, and inhalations primarily. It can be used in massage, local skin applications – usually added to a clay for a pack, and inhalations.

In 2009 Shebaz Kahn founded the Frankincense Store - now the House of Frankincense. https://www.houseoffrankincense.com

I attended an online workshop with Shebaz in 2020 and learned many fascinating details of the production and uses of frankincense today. Shebaz described his experiences treating himself with frankincense for sciatic pain of longstanding, and how he has continued to educate himself on the frankincense of Oman and its history, cultivation and harvesting, and properties.

When sourcing frankincense the grade is important. In general tears are graded according to criteria including colour, clarity, fragrance, as well as source. Shebhaz grades the tears, carefully sourced from Oman, according to their qualities and characteristics such as aroma, proportion of boswellic acids, mental- emotional effects. He further differentiates them according their best actions for internal or external application, as well as potential use for perfumes and ritual practices. An important consideration as with any medicinal herb, is provenance – the kind of habitat, climate, altitude in which the trees are cultivated, time and skill of harvesting and drying. I would add the importance of checking the chemical composition of products we purchase, i.e. wholesalers should be able to document their quality controls and of assays of the composition of sample batches. Shebaz emphasized that because there has been such growth worldwide in demand for frankincense, producers have been over harvesting to a dangerous extent. He has joined a global alliance to work on this acute problem. CITES, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, is also engaged.[13]

Shebaz relates frankincense can be used for Crohn's disease, cancer, skin conditions, osteo and rheumatoid arthritis, pain, e.g. sciatica, muscle strain, toothache (a small piece placed near the site), ulcers, to promote regeneration of cells, for respiratory conditions, coughs, as an aid in menstrual pain and imbalances, to promote conception, to help build collagen, strengthen bones and muscles, purify both red and white blood cells and aid memory. It also, consistent with Pole 2006, lowers cholesterol and helps remove plaque therefore finding a place in prevention and treatment of certain heart conditions.[14] I would suggest frankincense definitely be considered for treating female reproductive problems, menstrual pains, excessive bleeding and other conditions, especially if other formulations have not resolved the condition - though I have no experience of using it for this to date.

A great thing I learned from Shebaz, something that natives of, or travellers to the Middle East probably know, is that some grades of resins can be taken as a tea or ingested. Shebaz suggests a novel method, to me, of putting a few tears into a bottle of water which can be sipped during the day. Fresh water can be added as needed and the

frankincense slowly dissolves over time. I have tried this and found it very pleasant to drink. I like the sense of a gradual, daily, manageable means of purification and regeneration of blood and tissues. These methods are all demonstrated in very helpful videos on the "how to" page of the House of Frankincense website, along with more information of the history and provenance of frankincense.

Inhalation of Frankincense

Both the essential oil and the resin can be used to diffuse the aromatic molecules in frankincense. This method greatly benefits respiratory conditions such as asthma, COPD, congestion and coughs. For those not familiar with this, a how-to video by Shebaz is again available. The charcoal should smoulder for about 20 minutes as the amazing experience of the fragrance surrounds one, entering the respiratory system to act locally at a physical level before circulating to all cells and tissue through blood and lymph. It also induces a sense of calm and wellbeing. To use the essential oil, 3-6 drops can be placed in water in a good quality 'ultra-sonic' diffuser (preferred because the water need not be heated). This avoids having to bend over a bowl of steaming water, which may be not be suitable for patients chronic conditions, though it is certainly effective in other circumstances, e.g. minor cough, cold or flu.[15] A client reported to me that her mother who had COPD gained great relief using inhalations with Frankincense essential oil. An aromastick offers an added convenient method for inhaling the essential oil both for physical and mental-emotional conditions and situations.[16]

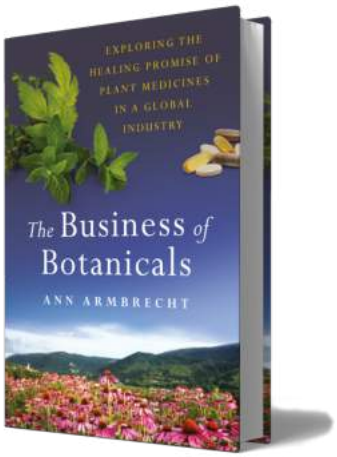
Indeed, inhalation is the ideal route to benefit from frankincense's powers of spiritual uplift, and mental calm and clarity. This has been probably its main use throughout historyin religious rituals and meditative practices. It is no less needed today. Used regularly through a difficult period or at special moments of need, it enhances self-awareness, helping us discern what is truly needed in a situation, showing a way forward. It promotes positivity, and that deep sense of fundamental security that overcomes anxieties and fears, and opening us to change and growth.

1. Kew Science: http://plantsoftheworldonline.org/boswelia
2. Frankincense (Boswellia Species): From the Selection of Traditional Applications to the Novel Phytotherapy for the Prevention and Treatment of Serious Diseases. Rafie Hamidpour, Soheila Hamidpour, Mohsen Hamidpour, and Mina Shahlari. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3924999/
3. Hippocrates, Loeb edition vol. VIII, p 35, translated by W. Smith, 1994.
4. Dioscorides' Materia Medica, p 49-51, Lily Beck 2005.
5. Canon of Medicine, volume 2, p 399-401, online at https://www.naimh.com/canon-of-medicine-texts
6. Ayurvedic Medicine, p 191-192, Sebatian Pole 2006.
7. Bartram's Encyclopedia of Herbal Medicine, p 190, Thomas Bartram 1995.
8. Aromatherapy A Practical Approach, p 211-212, Vicki Pitman 2019.
9. Hamidpour et al.
10. The One Earth Herbal Sourcebook, p 108-109, Alan Tillotson, 2003 [see also M.L. Sharma et al. "Immunomodulatory Activity of Boswellic Acids (Pentacyclic Triterpene Acids) From *Boswellia Serrata*" Phytotherapy Research 10: 107 – 12 (1996)].
11. Herbal Medicine, Healing & Cancer, p 129-130, Donald R. Yance Jr, 1999.
12. Aromatherapy, A Practical Approach, p 212, Vicki Pitman 2006.
13. https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/cop/18/inf/E-CoP18-Inf-053.pdf
14. Ayurvedic Medicine, p 191-192, Sebatian Pole 2006.
15. Pitman p 159-160.
16. Pitman p 160.

BOOK REVIEW

by Lorraine Love M:URHP

The Business of Botanicals:
Exploring the healing promise of plant medicines in a global industry
by Ann Armbrecht



Dr. Ann Armbrecht is a writer and anthropologist living in Vermont whose work explores the relationships between humans and the earth. She has published two other books about her time in Nepal working with Tibetan refugees and studying for her doctorate in anthropology.

This book is an exploration of the supply chains that most of us herbalists depend upon. Few of us are able to grow our own herbs and make our own medicine in sufficient quantities for our herbal practice. Ann Armbrecht takes us on her journey as she delves into both US and UK supply chains in this wide ranging and detailed look at the issues from contamination of the herbs, exploitation of the people growing and picking, sustainability of supply. The pros and cons of wildcrafting and farming herbs is covered in a couple of different chapters and examples of good and bad practice are provided to illustrate the general issues faced.

Ann's style is highly, perhaps overly, descriptive and she takes the reader with her on her journey into the businesses supplying botanical products. I felt that the book required a good editor to trim some of the detail such as what clothes people were wearing and how high the ceiling was although I appreciate that some people would enjoy the scene setting. Her personal story is intertwined with the research she does into the industry and the book may have been better had it been more tightly focused on the business topic.

It was reassuring and heartening to see that the well-respected Sebastian Pole and Pukka Herbs put so much time and effort into the ethical underpinnings of their business despite the myriad challenges they and other ethical suppliers face in trying to ensure the quality of the product and fair treatment of the suppliers through the whole supply chain.

There is an interesting section on the history and revival of American herbalism and Ann's time training with the renowned Rosemary Gladstar, and Rosemary's involvement with origins of the current industry in the US which serves to set the scene.

In the centre of this paperback book there are 16 pages of black and white photographs which I felt would have been of more interest and relevance had they been inserted in the text to which they related.

Thought provoking musings on the effects of combining herbs from multiple sources in order to achieve the scales required by wholesalers. What effect does this mixing of 'terroir' have on the final product's medicinal values? As consumers we often have no information at all on how and where the herbs we buy are grown.

This is such an important topic for the herbal community. We need to be 'conscious consumers' not solely driven by price but to that

end we need more information from our suppliers on the provenance of the product. I think most herbalists do try to use local herbs as much as possible and care very much about sustainability and quality, but sometimes in the struggle to source the medicines we believe our patients need we don't ask enough questions.

The problem with a book like this is that like all works of investigative journalism it can quickly become a historical artefact or a snapshot in time so I was pleased to see that Ann has a Facebook group following the topics raised with a good programme of events to keep this topic current. I highly recommend joining the "The Business of Botanicals Book Club" if you are a Facebook user.

The Herbal Alliance

By Lloyd Gee

There is definitely an air of collaboration and cooperation happening in the herbal community this year which I hope will benefit all of us.

This started with collaboration with URHP, NIMH and CPP to create a herbal CPD and events calendar as the Herbal Alliance website.

Then Sebastian Pole instigated Herbal Unity to bring professional associations and individual herbalists together and these activities have now merged as The Herbal Alliance. Though progress is a bit slower than at first hoped, you will be able to access a new website soon which replaces the herbal event calendar using the same domain at herbalalliance.uk. This will have many more functions in addition to the calendar to allow all herbalists to get involved as well as create their own online groups, forums etc.

The main purpose of the Herbal Alliance is to facilitate communication and collaborations between herbal practitioners and professional associations in taking action that benefits the profession and the health of the public. Participation of professional associations is crucial, but individual herbalists can also directly participate via the website or by joining CATS (Community Action Teams) where they have skills, experience and importantly time to work on these action areas. Most of the professional associations in UK and Ireland have agreed to participate.

It is not being set up as an umbrella group and will not have a central group doing the work, but instead has CATS working on different areas.

Currently there are five Community Action Teams

- Education
- Communication
- Supply
- Research
- Shaping the future (dealing with internal structures and coordination).

Others will be formed as the need arises as well as "subCATS" to take on action for specific projects or issues. Keep visiting herbalalliance.uk to see herbal events and soon you will see other functions added as well as an invite to join the Herbal Alliance community online.



Lloyd Gee practices in London and is vice president of URHP as well as sitting on the EHTPA council. He has been active in setting up the original herbal alliance website and is part of the group setting up the structures of the Herbal Alliance.

BOOK REVIEW
by Vicki Pitman



The Tree Dispensary, The Uses, History and Herbalism of Native European Trees
Author Christina Stapley, Aeon Books, £24.99

[Disclaimer of bias: The reviewer has known and worked with the author over several years through the Herbal History Research Network]

The Tree Dispensary presents, as the introduction states, a "personal appreciation" of thirty medicinal trees of the Western herbal *materia medica*. Many members will recall Christina's presentation at the URHP conference in 2010, in Winsley near Bath. She is not only a medical herbalist (CPP), but also a researcher into historical uses of herbs and how medicines were made and prepared. Christina has explored in a hands on way the practicalities of medicine making in prior centuries. For many years at the Weald and Downland Living Museum in Sussex, Christina has led workshops, demonstrating for herbalists and lay persons, which bring to life just how historic recipes – which even for a herbalist are often puzzling in their language and execution - would have been created and used. Much of that knowledge is included in this book, but much more as well.

The book is structured from spring through winter, with a full page colour image opening each season. As in Diorcorides' *De Materia Medica*, each tree is given its own chapter. Each chapter again begins with a full page colour image and includes two or more small images of perhaps a useful or significant detail, which the author has described in the text. A chapter is divided into three parts. First comes a presentation of the tree's usefulness, any dangers associated with its use, a "getting to know" section, legends and folklore about the treeand reference notes. Second comes a history of not only its medicinal use, but also past practical, or domestic uses (such as basketry, or wood turning), including an historic recipe or two and again reference notes. Third comes a herbalist's reference section, detailing the parts used for medicine, dosage and forms of prescription (infusion, tincture, etc), constituents, actions and uses, precautions and contraindications, again with the relevant reference note(s). A bibliography and index complete the work along with a biography of the author.

Christina has infused the chapters with anecdotes of her personal encounters with each tree, or perhaps how she discovered aspects of its historic use in the "Getting to know" paragraphs. Here she describes the origins of the tree's name, its botanical features, how to distinguish it from close relatives, the appearance of the blossoms or leaves for example, and its reproductive morphology. She relates the trees to other forms of wildlife that co-exist with it, for example butterflies, moths or other insects that rely on it for reproduction or food. These are not formulaic, each description is unique, and while accurate, very lively and personal in style. In writing of getting to know Elder, she relates, "It has a very distinct character, which came to me most strongly when I first harvested the inner bark of a branch from a tree in my garden. I found it an intense experience to slip my hand inside the incision, opening the branch to part the bark from the wood." Or writing of the Ash, even"…the deadwood of the ash supports the lesser stag-beetle…" These details lead the practitioner to a richer understanding of each tree.

For the historian, the sections tracing the tree's history of medicinal use are fascinating, informative and highly useful for anyone researching a herb. Christina has collected her own library of historic texts to draw on and made use of online text now available. She searches for the earliest mention of the plant's use and then traces it use through mentions in historic documents. For example, Barberry's first mention appears to be in the Pharmacopoeia of Paul of Aegina (7thc AD), it is included in Hill's Elizabethan gardening book,

Culpeper's English Physician Enlarged, Cole's The Pardise of Plants, and others up to works of the 19thc when it fell out of use with what became 'mainstream' medicine, but was retained by herbalists. Often this review reveals what herbalists today would see as novel applications. Hawthorn for example, was historically used rather for urinary stones in some periods, later for pleurisy as well but by the end of the 1700s seems to have fallen out of use - Stapley concludes probably because other remedies were more effective. Then it reappears in an English government pamphlet of 1916 as a cardiac tonic. Stapley then investigates to discover where this new use originated. I'll leave the reader tantalised as to what she found out!

The Tree Dispensary is full of detail, reflects a close and thorough knowledge of historic as well as modern uses for each remedy, and reveals a wealth of information through a wide range of what constitutes a tree medicine, all in a personal and vibrant style. No dispensary should be without it.

Information, Links & Diary Dates

NEW COUNCIL MEMBER:
Tina Silva, a practising herbalist based in Swanage, has joined the URHP Council. Tina qualified from Lincoln three years ago and is a welcome addition to our diverse Council membership.

HERBAL HISTORY RESEARCH NETWORK:
A fascinating blog from the HHRN with categories ranging from Ancient Medicine to Modern is available online at: https://www.herbalhistory.org/home/blog/. Well worth a browse!

SAVE THE DATE - WEBINAR:
We are thrilled to announce our upcoming Zoom Webinar on Saturday 30 October with Alex Laird and Nathaniel Hughes as speakers. This will be free of charge to URHP members and we will be circulating more information about booking etc over the coming weeks.

AGM:
Our AGM will be held online at 6 pm on Wednesday 6 October. We will be discussing a range of topics apart from the normal AGM business so please make every effort to attend. The meeting will last no more than two hours and we will make sure all members receive all the necessary information in plenty of time before the meeting.

SHARING CIRCLE:
After a summer break these gatherings will begin again in September and will take place every two months. We will be in touch with dates and times when they have been agreed.

A reminder that back copies of The Herbalist and Newsletter from 2015 are available in the member's area of the URHP website.

So many courses and webinars are now available online. Ghislaine Headland-Vanni told us about Future Learn which offers many free courses on a very wide range of subjects, including healthcare and medicine. https://www.futurelearn.com

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2021

URHP Office

22 Pendre Avenue
Prestatyn
Denbighshire
LL19 9SL

Tel: 07539 528857 / Email: URHPinfo@gmail.com

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/URHPUK

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/unifiedregisterherbalpractitioners