



OUR TOP MEDICINAL HERBS TO HAVE AT HOME

A guide on growing, harvesting and using herbs.



Elle Jenkins & The Weedy Garden
Australian Medicinal Herbs
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Table of Contents



Foreword and Introduction	1-2
Lemon Balm (<i>Melissa officinalis</i>)	2-4
Tulsi (<i>Occimum sanctum & tenuiflorum</i>)	5-6
Mullein (<i>Verbascum thapsus</i>)	7-8
Passionflower (<i>Passiflora incarnata</i>)	9-10
Hibiscus (<i>Hibiscus sabdariffa</i>)	11-12
Meadowsweet (<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>)	13-14
Catswhiskers (<i>Orthosiphon stameneus</i>).	15-16
Making Herbal Tea	17
Tinctures	18
Alcohol Tinctures	19
Glycerine Tinctures	20
General principles of Medicinal Herbs	21-22
General Growing principles	23



FOREWORD

Take your family's health into your own hands...

At Australian Medicinal Herbs we invite you to rediscover the benefits of natural healing modalities. Why reach for a chemical-filled pill when you can use plants grown organically in your backyard to achieve the same results? With herbal medicine, the world's oldest healing method, you can turn plants into teas or tinctures and preserve them forever.

Plants have always been an essential part of our diet, so it makes sense for them to be used in medicine too. Our bodies have natural adaptive responses to plants that can support us in numerous ways. By using plants in simple, effective ways, such as in teas or tinctures, we are simply tapping into a natural system of healing that we have lost touch with in our modern society.

Our grandmothers knew that a cup of peppermint tea could soothe an upset stomach or that aloe vera was an excellent remedy for sunburns. However, these simple and effective remedies seem to have been forgotten over time. As modern healthcare has become increasingly expensive, instead of driving to the store and purchasing medication, we can simply step out into our backyard and pick some leaves or flowers to use.

In this e-book, I have listed some of my favourite, easy-to-grow herbs that can help support you and your family. I hope you find it useful.

Kind regards,

Elle xxx
AMH



INTRODUCTION

How to turn plants into natural, effective medicine.

There are some superstars of the plant world that we would love to see grown in every home in Australia. These are plants that can make a huge difference to your family's health and wellbeing. I will show you how to use these plants in simple preparations that can be of great benefit. These are plants that are easy to grow and maintain.

Here I have compiled some of my favourites to give you a 'how to' guide to growing, preparing and using plants as medicine.



I know that learning a new skill can feel a bit overwhelming, so just start with one of these plants.

Choose the one that you think would be most beneficial to you, and your family and go from there. You will be amazed and delighted with the results.

Lemon Balm

A must have for your family!

Melissa officinalis

LEMON BALM is the plant that if you could only grow one, this is it! As an antiviral,

Lemon Balm can help ward off and suppress viral infections, such as coughs and colds and cold sores. Because of its antispasmodic action in the tummy, Lemon Balm can help with digestive issues such as gas, bloating and constipation.

Lemon Balm is a nervine and anti-anxolitic that can help with anxiety and to alleviate nervous disorders. It helps to regulate the central nervous system to bring it into balance. It is also a mood booster that can help with melancholy. It also tastes beautiful as a delicious tea or tincture. We think that tastes and feels like a warm hug from a loved one.



GROWING LEMON BALM

SOWING SEED: Direct sow seed on top of soil, do not cover, sow in spring/summer. Growing Lemon Balm from seeds can take months, so it is advised to purchase an already established seedling.

GROWING TIMES: Lemon balm is perennial but is extreme heat and frost sensitive. It produces best in spring/summer/autumn.

SOIL: Rich alluvial well draining soil, lots of organic matter, PH 6-7

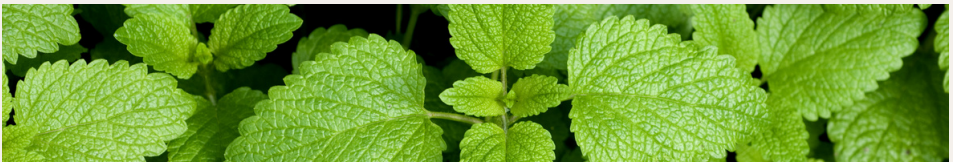
POSITION: Shade to partly shaded positions, especially the afternoon sun. Will grow in full sun but foliage gets tatty.

WATER: Once established water at least weekly for prolific growth.

FOOD: Feed every three months with organic fertiliser and a tonic after harvesting.

TEMP: It will grow in all Australian climates and can endure very low and very high temperatures if protected correctly with adequate shade and water.

PROPAGATION: Tip cutting or root division is the preferred method of propagation.



LEMON BALM

Behold Lemon Balm, the charming herb that will captivate you with its sweet scent and helpful benefits! Hailing from Europe and Central Asia, this herb is part of the mint family and is the bee's knees, luring in those buzzing friends with its white flowers and citrus aroma. Lemon Balm flourishes in all sorts of environments, from soil to containers and even under the shade of larger plants. Here in Australia, it'll need a weekly watering and afternoon or all day shade to keep its leaves looking sharp (depending on your temperatures). Frost can be a pesky enemy, but Lemon Balm is a fighter and will make a comeback in spring, especially with a bit of TLC. It can be brewed into a lovely tea, whipped up into a salve, or turned into a powerful tincture.



HARVESTING

When your plant is sufficiently established, Lemon Balm can be harvested by removing the top arial of the plant, about 3 inches above the root. Continually tip harvest new growth to get a lush green bushy habit and a continuing yield. Harvest before flowering as the energy of the plant is in the leaves. Replenish the plant with a light fertiliser and watering or a tonic, depending on your feeding schedule.

To dry the plant to store for future use, dry out of direct sunlight using a fan or in an area with consistent airflow. Using a dehydrator degrades the plants medicinal quality so avoid if you can.

You will know when the plant has completely dried as it will crunch when you touch the leaves. When storing medicinal herbs you can place them into an airtight glass jar, such as an old coffee jar or an airtight plastic bag. Ensure that you have labelled the container with the herb name and the date. They generally store well for 2 years or until it no longer smells like lemonade.



Tulsi, the adaptogenic mind, body and spirit stress regulator.

Ocimum sanctum, Ocimum tenuiflorum

Tulsi, also known as the "mother medicine of nature," is a beneficial herb that can help alleviate the negative impacts of an overactive mind and tired body. Recognized as an adaptogenic plant, Tulsi is widely employed globally to address the stressors of daily life while simultaneously reinvigorating one's immune system and naturally warding off illnesses and germs.

In addition to these benefits, Tulsi can help normalize blood glucose levels and metabolic disorders, aid in digestion, prevent weight gain by stabilizing lipid levels, and provide protection to the heart, brain, and liver from damage and ageing. It also aids in reducing cell and tissue damage from sun rays and radiation therapy and may be helpful for women experiencing menopause or menstrual pain.



Tulsi is a member of the basil family and shares many of its traits, including a fondness for warm climates and temperatures. Tulsi is an adored adaptogenic plant and is also known as 'Holy Basil'. It is revered by Hindi culture as being sacred and of the gods. It is often seen at the entrances to temples.

In India it is widely used for spiritual and lifestyle practices, often worshipped and cherished.

In Ayurvedic medicine Tulsi is held in the highest of esteem, called "The Incomparable One," and is considered to be a tonic herb to be used regularly for the benefit of mind, body and spirit. Consumption is encouraged daily as a preventative for many diseases.



GROWING, HARVESTING AND USING TULSI

PROPAGATION: Direct sow seed on top of soil, do not cover, sow in spring/summer. Growing Tulsi from seeds can take months, so it is advised to purchase an already established seedling or propagate from cutting.

GROWING TIMES: Tulsi is perennial but is frost sensitive. It produces best in spring/summer/autumn.

SOIL: Rich alluvial well draining soil, lots of organic matter, PH 6-7.5

POSITION: Full sun, afternoon shade in very hot positions

WATER: Once established water at least weekly for prolific growth.

FOOD: Feed every three months with organic fertiliser and a tonic after harvesting.

TEMP: It will grow in all Australian climates and can endure very high temperatures if protected correctly with adequate shade and water. Tulsi does not like the cold, It can be grown in a sunny indoor position in colder areas.



HARVESTING

When your plant is sufficiently established, Tulsi can be harvested by removing the top 1/4 of the plant attached to the centre stem. Never take more than 1/4 of the plant to ensure it remains healthy. Continually tip harvest to encourage a bushy habit. Harvest before flowering. Replenish the plant with a light fertiliser and watering or a tonic, depending on your feeding schedule.

To dry the plant to store for future use, dry out of direct sunlight using a fan or in an area with consistent airflow. Using a dehydrator degrades the plants medicinal quality so avoid if you can. You will know when the plant has completely dried as it will crunch when you touch the leaves. When storing medicinal herbs you can place them into an airtight glass jar, such as an old coffee jar or an airtight plastic bag. Ensure that you have labelled the container with the herb name and the date. They generally store well for 2 years or until it no longer smells fresh.

USES:

Tulsi can be made into a tea, tinctures and used as a salve.

Mullein, the remarkable respiratory herb!

Verbascum thapsus, *Verbascum densiflorum*.

Mullein leaf is an expectorant meaning it can help your body remove excess mucus and phlegm sitting in your chest and airways. Mullein is known to be a very safe herb and is great for children with chesty coughs and head colds with a lot of mucus. Mullein is also very helpful for asthmatic and chronic respiratory conditions as it helps to open the bronchioles of the lungs, allowing a deeper, clearer breath. Mullein is also a demulcent meaning it displays anti-inflammatory qualities which can soothe your respiratory system.

It is known as a mood booster when used regularly. The whole plant is useful, with the flowers being used to create earache oil and antiseptic honey and the root can be decocted for back pain.



Mullein originated from Europe and has naturalised in Australia. It was introduced by the first European settlers and was brought to Australia because it is so medicinally beneficial. It now grows in many places as a weed, especially high altitude granite country that has similar climatic conditions to Europe. They can often be located on the roadside in compacted, poor soils that receive a lot of water. Mullein plants are biodynamic accumulators that help to repair and improve soils with their large biomass. They are also an emergent species, being first to emerge after fires and clearing events and create biomass to improve soils for other species to grow. They stop erosion, holding together banks with their strong spreading root system. Mullein spread prolifically as one seed stem will contain thousands of seed.



GROWING, HARVESTING AND USING MULLEIN

GROWING MULLEIN

SOWING METHOD: Direct sow the seeds on top of the soil in early spring. Do not cover the seeds over after sowing.

POSITIONING: Mullein likes to be placed in a full sun position in temperate climates, but will grow in part shade in subtropical climates.

SOIL: It will tolerate many soils however rich alluvial soil with organic matter will form a great plant. Mullein is extremely hardy and will literally grow out of a rock cliff face. Great soil will create a larger, more robust plant, however it is very adaptable. Mullein prefers to be deep rooted.

WATERING: Water well daily to get germination going. Do this for at least 2 weeks until you see germination occur. It needs to be watered regularly when fully established to create a large healthy plant.

GROWING IN POTS: Ensure that if you are growing in a pot it has at least 40cms of soil.



HARVESTING

When your plant is sufficiently established, Mullein leaf is harvested by removing some of the large fluffiest outer leaves. Always ensure to take the outer leaves as if you harvest from the centre, it will halt growth of the plant, and potentially kill it. The fluffier the leaves, the more medicinally beneficial. Never take more than 1/3 of the plant.

To harvest the flowers, hand pluck them from the stem whilst in full bloom. To dry the plant to store for future use, dry out of direct sunlight using a fan or in an area with consistent airflow. Using a dehydrator degrades the plants medicinal quality so avoid if you can. You will know when the plant has completely dried as it will crunch when you touch the leaves. When storing medicinal herbs you can place them into an airtight glass jar, such as an old coffee jar or an airtight plastic bag. Ensure that you have labelled the container with the herb name and the date. They generally store well for 2 years or until it no longer smells fresh.

USES:

Leaf: Tea, smoke and tincture. Flowers: Antiseptic honey or earache oil.



Passionflower, the renowned relaxation herb.

Passiflora incarnata

Medicinal passionflower is not the same as an edible passionfruit plant. They are a different genus of the same species.

Passiflora incarnata is the herbal sedative and nervine used in herbal medicine. It works with the central nervous system to help you to

get to sleep and if used regularly it promotes longer and deeper sleep, without making you wake up groggy. All of the aerial parts of passionflower are used, and both the leaves and flowers promote the nervine response.

Passionflower can help to relieve feelings of nervousness or agitation and is also very useful for anxiety.



Also known as 'Purple Maypop', *incarnata* originated in America and was used by Native American Indians as a staple food and medicine. The plant is deemed to be culturally significant and has been used by the Cherokee tribe, who were known to eat the new shoots and fruit of the plant. The roots were also utilised as medicine, being macerated and used for injuries and inflammation. Modern uses of the plant are primarily medicinal as the fruit of the plant is edible, however is not as tasty as the cultivated Passionfruit plants available commercially. The flowers are edible and in modern society often used as decorative pieces. Passionflower is also important in the ecosystem to support many butterflies and insect life due to its prolific flowering.



GROWING, HARVESTING AND USING PASSIONFLOWER

GROWING PASSIONFLOWER

PROPAGATION: Seed germination has a low success rate of about 20%. Root cuttings is the preferred propagation method.

POSITION: Passionflower likes to be placed in a full sun position and requires something sturdy to climb on.

SOIL: It will tolerate many soils however rich alluvial soil with organic matter will form a great plant. Passionflower has a highly invasive root system and will travel out of a pot into the soil and grow wherever it desires, If you do not want it to take over as a very useful weed consider growing in a pot on concrete.

WATER: It enjoys a lot of water, water at least weekly.

FOOD: Feed to promote growth with an organic fertiliser or manure.

Follow recommendations on the packet.

GROWING TIMES: The plant grows in Spring, Summer and Autumn. The arial parts will die off over winter but it grows back the next Spring.



HARVESTING:

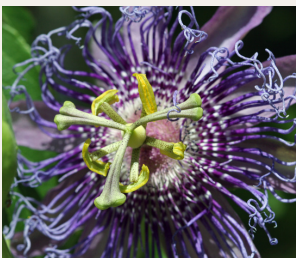
When your plant is sufficiently established, Passionflower can be harvested by removing the leaves and flowers of the plant attached to the centre stems. Never take more than 1/3 of the plant to ensure it remains healthy. Continually harvest throughout the season.

Replenish the plant with a light fertiliser and watering or a tonic.

In winter the arial parts will die off so harvest all leaves and flowers before winter. To dry the plant to store for future use, dry out of direct sunlight using a fan or in an area with consistent airflow. Using a dehydrator degrades the plants medicinal quality so avoid if you can. You will know when the plant has completely dried as it will crunch when you touch the leaves. When storing medicinal herbs you can place them into an airtight glass jar, such as an old coffee jar or an airtight plastic bag. Ensure that you have labelled the container with the herb name and the date. They generally store well for 2 years or until it no longer smells fresh.

USES:

Use the leaves and flowers as a tea and tincture.



Hibiscus, supportive and delicious.

Hibiscus sabdariffa

Hibiscus is a versatile plant that offers a range of health benefits. Its fruiting calyx is rich in Vitamin C and antioxidants, which help to protect your cells from damage caused by free radicals. The leaves are high in Iron and are eaten in curries and stews.

Hibiscus assists with:

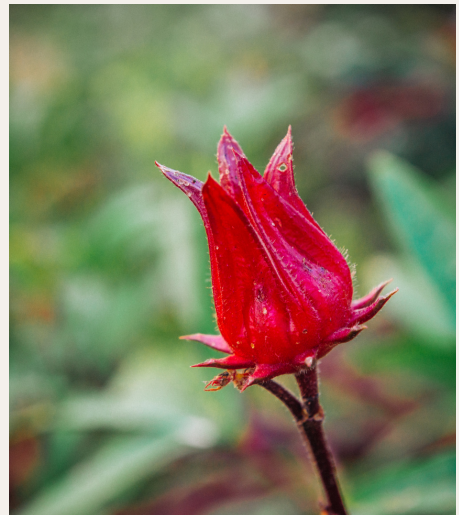
- Bolstering liver function
- Reducing blood pressure
- Providing diuretic benefits, which help to protect against UTIs and chronic inflammatory diseases
- Assisting with weight loss and preventing obesity
- Slowing down the ageing process
- Lowering inflammation throughout the body
- Antibacterial and anti-fungal properties. Additionally it can help prevent diabetes, heart disease, and lower cholesterol levels.



Hibiscus, also known as Roselle, originated in Africa however has naturalised in Australia, growing wild in the tropical Northern areas. It is valued as a useful plant medicinally however the leaves and fruiting calyx are edible and the stems are a useful fibre for ropes and textiles.

The fruit calyx can be used as a tea or made into a preserve, such as jam or chutney. In Australia it is best known as being used for “Rosella Jam”.

Hibiscus thrives in warm, humid, tropical areas. It is known to be very tolerant plant, tolerant of droughts, floods, heavy winds and pest invasion. It can survive in soils with a ph of 4.5 - 8.



GROWING, HARVESTING AND USING HIBISCUS

GROWING HIBISCUS

PROPAGATION: Hibiscus is a summer annual that dies off every year when it gets too cold. Direct sow the seeds into soil in early spring between 0.8 - 1cm depth. Water well daily to get germination going. Do this for at least 2 weeks until you see germination occur. It needs a long growing season to produce the best yield so sow the seeds as soon as it warms up in early spring.

WATER: To create a large healthy plant, water regularly. Hibiscus are very hardy though and can endure drought like conditions.

FOOD: Feed before fruiting and after the first flush of fruit. It will generally provide a second flush of fruit.

POSITION: Hibiscus likes to be placed in a full sun position.

SOIL: It will tolerate many soils however alluvial soil rich with organic matter will form a great plant.



HARVESTING

When your plant is sufficiently established and the fruit are large, red and ripe, Hibiscus can be harvested by removing the fruit calyx and leaves of the plant attached to the centre stems. Never take more than 1/4 of the plants leaves to ensure it remains healthy, however there is no limit on fruit calyx removal, and continual harvesting of the calyx is encouraged to promote new growth. Peel the fruit from the seedpod before drying. Replenish the plant with a light fertiliser and watering or a tonic. To dry the plant to store for future use, dry out of direct sunlight using a fan or in an area with consistent airflow.

Using a dehydrator degrades the plants medicinal quality so avoid if you can. When storing medicinal herbs you can place them into an airtight glass jar, such as an old coffee jar or an airtight plastic bag. Ensure that you have labelled the container with the herb name and the date. They generally store well for 2 years or until it no longer smells fresh.

USES: Leaf: Edible, tincture, curries, tea.

Fruit: Tea, Tincture, Jam, Jelly, Chutney.

Stem: Fibre for rope, textiles.



Meadowsweet, the sweet, delicious, tummy tamer!

Filipendula ulmaria

Meadowsweet is used for digestive disorders such as heartburn, stomach ulcers and inflammation of the digestive tract. Meadowsweet acts as an anti-inflammatory and can soothe and protect the mucose membranes of the stomach lining. Meadowsweet can also inhibit pain as it contains chemicals similar to aspirin and anti-inflammatory properties. Meadowsweet is also antibacterial and can inhibit growth of harmful bacteria in the gastrointestinal system. Meadowsweet can also be used externally on the skin as an antiseptic wash or a salve to promote healing.



Also known as Mead-wort and 'Queen of the meadow,' Meadowsweet is native to Europe. It is in the rose family and grows in boggy and wet conditions. The plant is not only used medicinally, the flowers are used to make wine, beer and can be eaten. The flowers are decorative and can be used as flavouring or used in jams, desserts and edible arrangements. Not only is it useful for humans, but also useful for other animals including horses and pets to assist with pain and inflammation.

Meadowsweet was believed to have magical properties for peace, love, happiness and divination and often used in love spells. It is a hardy perennial with the red stems and dual coloured leaves, darker on top and silvery underneath, making it both a useful and beautiful plant for your home.



GROWING, HARVESTING AND USING MEADOWSWEET

GROWING MEADOWSWEET

PROPAGATION: Sow seeds as seedlings, 3mm deep. Spring/Autumn. They take 3-4 weeks to germinate at 20-22 degrees. Transplant when established.

POSITION: Meadowsweet prefers a full sunlight or partial shade position.

SOIL: While Meadowsweet will grow in many soil types, alluvial soil enriched with organic matter is ideal for robust growth.

WATER: This plant thrives in wetland areas where it can absorb the necessary nutrients. Ensure you place it where it has a continual water source for best results.

ONGOING CARE: To ensure a contented plant, regular feeding and proper hydration of the roots are critical. Employing wicking beds or self-watering pots can help regulate moisture levels.



HARVESTING

When the plant has sufficiently matured, it's time for the harvest. All aerial parts of the Meadowsweet plant can be used for medicinal purposes. The leaves should be harvested before the plant flowers, taking only a few stems while ensuring not to take more than one-third of the plant to maintain its health. The Meadowsweet flowers should be harvested just as they begin to bloom since they wilt quickly. After harvesting, it's advised to replenish the plant with a light fertilizer and adequate watering or tonic. To store the plant for future use, dry it out of direct sunlight using a fan or an area with consistent airflow. It's important to avoid using a dehydrator as it may degrade the plant's medicinal quality. When storing medicinal herbs you can place them into an airtight glass jar, such as an old coffee jar or an airtight plastic bag. Ensure that you have labelled the container with the herb name and the date. They generally store well for 2 years or until it no longer smells fresh.

USES:

Tea, tincture, edible flower, base for wine and beer.



Catswhiskers, the toxin flushing herb.

Orthosiphon stamineus, aristatus

Cats Whiskers helps to flush toxins from the kidney, bladder and liver and remove them from the body. It is best known as being used to assist with preventing and cleansing kidney stones.

It is anti-inflammatory, diuretic and in conjunction with a water based preparation, helps to flush the kidneys. It is helpful for conditions such as cystitis, urethritis and gout. It can help with fighting bad bacteria, reducing swelling and helps to improve blood circulation.

It is very helpful to the urinary tract in preventing and helping with urinary tract infections.



The Java Tea Plant, also known as the Cats Whiskers plant, is native to Southeast Asia

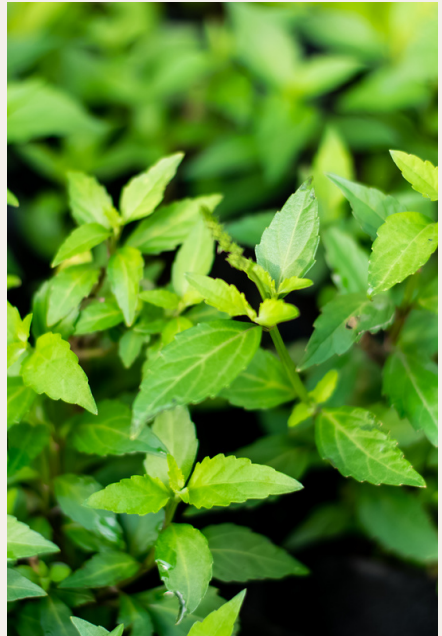
Indonesia and tropical Australia. Its resilience and adaptability make it a hardy perennial shrub. The plant's striking

flowers, with their unique white and purple display, resemble the whiskers of a cat. The flowers are a favourite of pollinators and also make a unique cut flower arrangement.

Indonesians use the leaves of the plant for flavouring rice dishes, curries and in soups, as well as in traditional medicine. It's worth noting that while the roots and seeds of the plant are toxic, all aerial parts of the Java Tea

Plant can be utilised for medicinal purposes. The plant's various uses in local communities caught the attention of

European botanists in the 16th century, who were the first to formally document it in pharmacopeia form .



GROWING, HARVESTING AND USING CATSWHISKERS

GROWING CATSWHISKERS

PROPAGATION: Cats Whiskers is very easy to propagate from cuttings, we recommend that you purchase one plant and propagate from cuttings as required. Autumn is the best time to take and propagate cuttings.

POSITION: Catswhiskers enjoy a full sun position.

SOIL: Cats Whiskers grow natively in ditches in Northern Queensland and thrive in wet boggy, nutrient rich soil. While Catswhiskers will survive in most soil types, alluvial soil enriched with organic matter is ideal for vigorous growth.

WATER: This plant thrives in wetland areas where it can absorb the necessary nutrients. To ensure a contented plant, regular feeding and proper hydration of the roots are critical. Utilising wicking beds or self-watering pots can help regulate moisture levels.

GROWING: They are perennial but do lose leaves over winter. Give it a trim in early spring for to promote new growth.



HARVESTING

To harvest the Catswhiskers plant, the leaves should be taken before flowering, and the flowers should be harvested just as they begin to bloom. Harvest starts 10 weeks after planting. Every 2-3 weeks pluck the upper 4-10 leaves of the plant by hand. It's important not to take more than one-third of the plant to maintain its health. After harvesting, replenish the plant with light fertilizer and adequate watering or tonic. To store the plant, dry it out of direct sunlight with consistent airflow, avoiding the use of a dehydrator to maintain medicinal quality. When storing medicinal herbs it is preferable to place them into an airtight glass jar, such as an old coffee jar for optimum freshness. Ensure that you have labelled the container with the herb name and the date. They generally store well for 2 years or until it no longer smells fresh.

USES:

Tea, tincture, ornamental flower and food flavouring



MAKING HERBAL TEA



With most herbs, and with all of those that are listed in this ebook you can make a herbal tea using both fresh plant matter or dried plant matter. The difference between a fresh herbal tea and a dried herbal tea will be the taste of the tea, the amount of time to dry the plant matter and the amount of plant required to make a tea.

As fresh plant matter is full of water, more of it is required to make a strong herbal infusion.

Herbal tea can be consumed warm or can also be chilled and consumed throughout the day instead of water, which is a great for summer when it is too hot to drink tea. You can add honey, sugar, lime, ginger or lemon to try different flavour profiles, to your taste.

MAKING FRESH HERBAL TEA

1. Head out to the garden and select your desired herb. Choose healthy, fully-formed leaves and flowers that are free of pests and disease.
2. Rinse the plant matter to remove any dirt or dust.
3. Infuse a handful of fresh plant matter in a tea infuser in boiling water for 15 minutes, or until the water is tepid.
4. The amount of plant matter can vary depending on your preferences and needs. A larger person may require more herb than a smaller person. Adjust accordingly to your taste.
5. Add honey, lime, or lemon to enhance the flavor. Enjoy your freshly brewed herbal tea!



DRIED HERBAL TEA:

Did you know that dried herbal tea is stronger than fresh?

This is because the concentration of active compounds increases when water is extracted from the plant matter. To make your own, use two tablespoons of dried herbs, steep them in boiling water using a tea infuser for 15 minutes or until it cools down. If you want to enhance the flavor, add a touch of honey, lemon or lime.

Often you can use the same tea leaves twice to make another tea later in the same day and have a less strong infusion, but really make the most out of the plant matter and ensure you are not wasting any goodness.



TINCTURES

There are different types of herbal tinctures that can be created using different mediums.

People create tinctures using alcohol, food grade Vegetable Glycerine and Apple Cider Vinegar. At Australian Medicinal Herbs we prefer to use alcohol as it is the most effective extraction method and it lasts longer.

Alcohol is the most widely used tincture solvent because it extracts fats, resins, waxes, most alkaloids, some volatile oils, and other plant components, which it preserves indefinitely. Vegetable glycerin, a sweet, syrupy liquid, dissolves mucilage, vitamins, and minerals but does not dissolve resinous or oily plant constituents.

Apple cider vinegar does not break down plant constituents as effectively as alcohol or glycerin, but it extracts sugars, tannins, glycosides, bitter compounds, alkaloids, vitamins, and minerals.

WHAT ALCOHOL ARE YOU USING?

If you are using fresh herbs (as in straight out of the garden and not dried) you need to have access to a high ABV alcohol, almost pure alcohol of around between 90 - 100 percent. This is because the plant is still full of water and when mixed with a lower concentration of alcohol, such as the 37-40% alcohol that are generally available from Australian stores it will not be enough to adequately extract all of the plant goodness.

It is for this reason that most of us should use dried herbs as we only have access to the lower percentage of store bought alcohol with 37-40% ABV. When the plant matter has no moisture in it the alcohol will be able to act as a more effective solvent liquid extraction.

We recommend:

Any type of Vodka with the highest alcohol percentage that you can obtain from the store, preferably 40% or higher. If it is lower than 37% it may be of some benefit but it is not ideal.

As you become more proficient with making tinctures, you can also experiment with other alcohols such as white Rum and Gin if you like, as long as they are the higher percentage of alcohol. These contain other botanicals and will change the taste profile of the tincture, and if it is just for personal at home use, use what you enjoy.



MAKING ALCOHOL HERBAL TINCTURES



With most herbs, and with all that are listed in this ebook, you can make a herbal tincture using both fresh plant matter or dried plant matter. The reason that you would make a fresh tincture would be trying to obtain certain phytochemicals from the plant that are not available at the lower solvency or not having facilities to dry the plant matter. Making tinctures are the same using both fresh and dried plant matter, the only difference is the ABV of alcohol used, as previously discussed.

TO MAKE A TINCTURE (BOTH FRESH AND DRIED):



1. Ensure your herbs have no mould or errant bugs and use only the best quality plants that you have. This is medicine that should last you and your family a long time, use top quality produce.
2. Fill a glass jar with plant matter, leaving about a centimetre from the top.
3. Cover the plant matter completely with alcohol, place the lid on and shake it to ensure there are no air traps. Check that the alcohol level has not gone down after dispersing the air bubbles. If required, add more alcohol until it is completely covered.
4. Label the tincture with the date, the plant used, the alcohol used (ABV and type i.e. Vodka).
5. Place it in a cool dark place where you will see it and remember to shake it daily or every other day.
6. After 8 weeks, strain out the plant matter using a muslin cloth and retain the alcohol infusion.
7. Label your tincture and store in a cool dark place out of direct sunlight. Discard the spent plant matter. Use the tincture as needed, starting with 1ml for an adult as required.

ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT STEP FOR FRESH HIGH ABV TINCTURES:

For a fresh plant tincture before bottling and labelling, check the ABV using an alchometer. Reduce the ABV with water down to 40%.



MAKING GLYCERINE HERBAL TINCTURES



Making a Vegetable Glycerine or Apple Cider vinegar tincture may be preferable to some people and is often used for children, pets, religious reasons or personal preference. These tinctures do not last as long, usually between 1-2 years if placed in a cool dark place and are not as medicinally beneficial as an alcohol solvent tincture, as the Glycerine and ACV does not extract all available plant benefits. They are still of some medicinal benefit though and popularly used for their more palatable taste.

MAKING A GLYCERINE TINCTURE:

1. Fill a clean glass jar 3/4 full of fresh plant material or 1/2 full of dried plant material.
2. For dried plant material: cover with vegetable glycerine and water in a 3:1 ratio (or 75% glycerine and 25% water).
3. For fresh plant material: cover with 100% vegetable glycerine.
4. Apply lid and gently shake the contents of the jar, adding more glycerine if required after removing air bubbles.
5. Let the jar sit in a cool, dry place away from light for 8 weeks. Shake every day or two.
6. After 8 weeks, strain out the plant matter using a muslin cloth and retain the glycerine infusion.
7. Label your tincture and store in a cool dark place out of direct sunlight. Discard the spent plant matter. Use the tincture as needed, starting with 1ml for an adult as required.



MAKING AN ACV TINCTURE:

Use the same method as the dried herb alcohol tincture,

Use only dried herbs or else the preparation may ferment or mould. You will need to consume a higher amount of vinegar for the same medicinal benefit as an alcohol tincture.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF MEDICINAL HERBS

DO YOUR RESEARCH:

Herbal medicine should be treated as a medicine. It is a natural product and mostly completely safe when used in the appropriate manner, however autonomy needs to be taken by an individual to ascertain if a certain herb is right for them.

Individuals must take responsibility for determining if a particular herb is suitable for them. This self education is empowering and gives people the power of informed choice.

For healthy adults without health issues or medications, many herbs may be safe to use. However, those with certain medical conditions must take caution and conduct thorough research on the herb they plan to take.

For instance, individuals with low blood pressure should avoid consuming large amounts of Hibiscus as it may lower blood pressure levels. Similarly, people with thyroid issues need to be mindful of the doses of Lemon Balm they take, as it can impact the thyroid.

Ultimately, common sense and education are critical when using herbal products.

HERBS AND CHILDREN:

Generally herbs are not considered to be safe for children under the age of two.

If your little one is over the age of two and has no significant health issues, some medicinal herbs may be used, however please ensure that you research the plant to ensure that it is right for them. When using medicinal herbs for children, we suggest reducing the dosage based on the size of the child. The dosages we suggest are for an adult, so you should reduce the quantity needed for a child considerably. If you are unsure if a little one has health issues, err on the side of caution and consult a doctor or naturopath and obtain professional advice.

PREGNANCY AND HERBS:

There are certain herbs that **MUST NOT** be used during pregnancy as they can cause birth defects and are abortative.

There is also often conflicting advice about the use of herbs during pregnancy and there are limited studies due to the potential risks involved in those studies. Each person will need to make their own assessment as to what they feel comfortable with. We advise pregnant women and those breastfeeding to err on the side of caution and consult a doctor or naturopath and obtain professional advice.



GENERAL PRINCIPLES CONTINUED.....

USING HERBS AND MEDICATION TOGETHER:

If you are on medicine prescribed by a doctor it is imperative to check with your specialist or medical professional to ensure that the herbal medicine is not contraindicated. You may be able to do your own research online, and we encourage this, but the final word should be from your medical professional.

SWAPPING MEDICATIONS FOR HERBS:

It can be very dangerous to discontinue medications without appropriate supervision from a consulting medical practitioner. Medicinal herbs can be utilised to assist with many health issues, however it is not safe to simply replace bio-medicines with medicinal herbs. It is imperative that any change of medication is done in consultation and under supervision of a treating doctor or appropriately qualified natural health practitioner.

MIXING HERBS:

It can be tempting to mix some beautiful herbs together to try different tastes and colours, however would you start using three or four or several new medications at once? No, neither would we. We believe it is best, if you are just starting out, to work with one herb at a time.

Some people cannot tolerate certain herbs and if you have a tea containing several herbs, how do you know what one is working for you and which one is negatively affecting you? Only start mixing herbal blends when you have done your research and have confidently worked with herbs individually before making combinations.



GROWING PRINCIPLES

THE THINGS ALL PLANTS NEED TO LIVE

In order for a plant to live they need light, air, water, nutrients and the proper temperature. Supply these and you are on your way.

FOR A PLANT TO THRIVE

These carefully selected plants are easy to acquire and grow in Australia's subtropical and temperate regions. They all thrive in soil enriched with organic matter and organic fertilizer.

A soil conditioner or tonic solution will give your plants the best possible start when transplanting seedlings.

When it comes to feeding, follow the instructions on the fertiliser package or a general rule if you are using manure is to give a feeding every three months or before flowering/fruiting. With a little maintenance, your plants will flourish, creating a symbiotic, mutually beneficial relationship between you and your plants.

ONGOING CARE

Ensure that you do not overharvest your plants to the point that you damage them. Ensure that when you harvest, you give back to the plant in the form of a light feeding, a watering or a tonic solution. Some other animals, such as 'pests' may also find your plants attractive. It is in the best interest of you, your family, the ecology and your environment that you try not to utilise sprays on these other animals if possible. If you have a plague decimating all of your hard work, I can understand the need to take some action and we would suggest utilising a pyrethrum or neem spray as those are organic pest deterrents. This should only be as a last resort because you will be deterring other beneficial ecology as well.

If you run into trouble growing your plants or have any questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch via our website australianmedicinalherbs.com.au. We would love to help every family in Australia grow at least a little of their own medicines.

Goodluck and happy growing.

Kind regards,

Elle xxx

