

CERTIFIED ADVANCED HERBALISM COURSE - SESSION 2: Herbal Products

- HOME PHARMACY
- HERBAL TEA (INFUSSION)
- HERBAL SOUP (DECOCTION)
- HERBAL SYRUP
- TINCTURE
- APPLE CIDER VINEGAR
- OIL EXTRACTS
- OINTMENTS & CREAMS

In this session of the course we will introduce you to preparation of the herbal products. We will address the different ways herbs can be used and we will explain in detail how to prepare herbal teas, syrups, tinctures, vinegars and oil extracts.

Home Pharmacy:

Since the beginning of civilization people have used herbs to fight illness and to speed up the healing process. Not so long ago, most households possessed several kinds of herbs, which were used to deal with many physical problems which occurred in everyday life. It was only when a member of the family became seriously ill, that they would seek the help of a doctor. In those days people took responsibility for their own health and were proactive in trying to prevent ill health.

All that started to change in the middle of the twentieth century. The pace of life increased beyond recognition and people sought “quick fix” solutions to their problems. The responsibility for our health was taken out of the home and transferred to the local General Practitioner (GP).

People started to deal with the consequences of illness. Most people know that if you have a headache your body is trying to tell you something. There are many problems for which a headache is a symptom, but the common approach to deal with the headache is to take a painkiller. The message the body is sending to us remains, but the painkiller allows us to ignore it.

One of the main objectives of this course is to try and change that. In this course you will be introduced to the basic knowledge of herbs, how to properly make a herbal tea, “what to do when”. It is important to know that, with little knowledge, many herbs can be used in everyday life without posing any risk to ones health. However, there are some herbs that need consultation with a professional prior to use. This is similar to getting prescription drugs after your GP has examined you and determined exactly what kind of drugs you need. Using herbs in the home is not the same thing as practicing herbal medicine professionally; in the same way as taking a painkiller is not the same as practicing medicine. Now that we understand a few home truths, we will start to explain in detail how to prepare herbal teas, syrups, tinctures, vinegars and oil extracts.

Before we start, it is important to know that there are three main mediums that we use to extract the required properties.

- Water
- Alcohol
- Oil

Water

By using water as the medium we can make:

- Herbal Tea
- Herbal Soup (Decoction)
- Syrup

The main difference between herbal tea and herbal soup is in the preparation.

When making tea, we mix herbs with boiling water and then leave it to cool down. When making herbal soup we mix the herbs and COLD water and then boil together for a period of time.

Herbal Tea (Infusion)

Almost all herbal teas are prepared in the following way.

Ingredients:

25g of dried herb or 50g of fresh herb
500ml boiled water

Method:

Step 1.

Chop the herb:

Do not use a metal knife for chopping, as it is better to use your hands. In the case of dried herbs, it is best to crush the herbs between your palms. Before doing this wash your hands with lukewarm water. Remember not to use soap or any washing cream when washing your hands.

Step 2.

Put the herb into a ceramic tea pot:

Try to avoid metal or aluminum pots, and ensure the pot has a lid.

Step 3.

Pour boiling water over the herbs and put the lid on.

Step 4.

Leave it in the pot for the time specified below:

- a) If using herb flowers – 1-3 minutes
- b) If using leaves – 2-4 minutes
- c) If using bark, root or kernel – 4-10 minutes

N.B.

Always prepare herbal tea in a covered container or else much of the medicinal effectiveness will be lost through evaporation.

Dosage:

Adults:

- 1 teacup 2 to 3 times per day if used for prevention, or for chronic disease i.e. arthritis.
- 1 teacup 3 to 6 times per day if used as a cure for acute illness i.e. flu or cold.

Children between 5 and 12 years of age:

- 1/2 adult dosage, if not recommended otherwise.

If you want to sweeten the tea, use honey instead of sugar.

Herbal Soup (Decoction)

Preparation of herbal soup is as follows:

Ingredients:

25g of dried herb or 50g of fresh herb
500ml (1/2 liter) of boiled water

Method:

Step 1.

Chop the herb:

Do not use a metal knife for chopping, as the best way is to use your hands. In the case of dried herbs it is best to crush the herbs between your palms. Before preparing the herbs, wash your hands with lukewarm water. Do not use soap or any washing cream when washing your hands.

Step 2.

Put the herbs into a cooking pan

Step 3.

Pour COLD water over the herbs and cover the pan with a tight lid.

Step 4.

Bring to the boil.

Step 5.

Reduce the heat and simmer at a low temperature for 20 minutes.

Step 6.

Pour it through a sieve into another bowl

Step 7.

Add fresh water to get 500ml of Herbal Soup

Dosage:

Adults:

1/2 teacup 2 to 3 times per day if used for prevention, or for chronic disease i.e. arthritis.

1/2 teacup 3 to 6 times per day if used as a cure for acute illness i.e. flu or cold.

Children between 5 and 12 years of age:

1/2 of adult dosage, if not recommended otherwise.

Herbal Syrup**Step 1.**

Take a previously prepared herbal soup and simmer in an open dish at a low heat until the volume of liquid has reduced to one third of the starting volume (i.e. by evaporation).

Step 2.

Add 1kg of honey for every 500ml of liquid.

Pour the produce into a clean dark bottle. Place a label on the bottle and clearly state the type of herb(s) used in the preparation of the syrup and also note the date it was prepared. Store the bottle in a cold dark place (not a refrigerator).

Dosage:

Adults:

2 teaspoons, 3 to 6 times a day.

Children between 5 and 12 years of age:

1/2 adult dosage, if not recommended otherwise.

Other uses for herbal tea and herbal soup:

Gargling Liquid:

To prepare a gargling liquid we can use herbal tea or soup, diluted with fresh water. Adding a pinch of salt to the glass of gargling water will improve the healing process. Gargling liquid is prepared in the same way for children, but it is important to know that children younger than 6 years usually do not know how to gargle.

Compress:

Compress is a pad of gauze or lint soaked in an infusion or decoction and bandaged to the skin. The temperature of the tea or soup varies depending on the type of compress used.

If compress is used for inflammations, COLD herbal tea or soup should be used. If however it is to be used for swellings or swelled joints HOT herbal tea or soup should be used. For muscle spasms and cramps warm herbal tea or soup is desirable.

Instructions for the use of compresses are as follows:

Submerge the compress thoroughly in herbal tea or soup. Apply it to the affected area. Cover and leave it for approximately 10 to 20 minutes. Repeat as necessary.

Use the same method when applying to children or babies.

Herbal Bath:

1 to 2 liters of herbal tea can be added to bath water or 1/2 to 1 liter of herbal tea for a baby's bath.

Adults should spend approximately 20 minutes in the bath. For children and babies 10 minutes is satisfactory.

Alcohol

Alcohol is used in the preparation of herbal tinctures. Tinctures are usually stronger than teas or soups. We can also use tinctures for preparing herbal creams.

Tincture:

Preparation of tinctures is as follows:

Ingredients:

200g of dried herbs or 400g of fresh herbs

1litre of Liquid Mix

Liquid Mix is prepared from 3 parts of colorless alcoholic drink (vodka, grappa etc.) and 2 parts of water. Whisky or cognac should not be used.

Method:

Step 1.

Put the herbal mix in a large glass jar and add the pre-prepared liquid mix.

Step 2.

Close the jar tightly and leave it in a cold and dark place (not a refrigerator) for two weeks. Shake occasionally.

Step 3.

Squeeze it through muslin cloth until all the liquid is squeezed.

Step 4.

Pour it into a clean dark bottle. Put a label on the bottle and clearly state the type of herb(s) used in the preparation of the tincture along with the date of preparation. Store the bottle in a cold, dark place (not a refrigerator).

Dosage:

Adults:

- 1 teaspoon 3 times per day if used for a chronic disease e.g. arthritis.
- 1 teaspoon 6 times per day if used as a cure for acute illness e.g. flu or cold.

Children between 5 and 12 years of age:

- 1/2 teaspoon 3 times a day, or mix thoroughly with a similar amount of honey and administer 1 teaspoon of the mix.

Vinegar:

Apple Cider Vinegar can be used in the preparation of tinctures as an alternative to alcohol for a number of reasons e.g. illness, age etc.

The preparation is the same as with alcohol, only instead of using the Liquid Mix, we use the same amount of Apple Cider Vinegar.

Dosage:

Adults:

- 1 tablespoon in 200ml of water

Children between 5 and 12 years of age:

- 1 or 2 teaspoons mixed with water

This type of tincture can also be used in bath water, disinfectant or as a refreshing drink.

Also, tinctures can be used to make herbal creams.

The simplest way is to add the tincture to basic creams (emulsions). These creams can be found in most pharmacies. For situations where this type of cream cannot be found, we can also use normal un-fragranced hand cream.

To prepare herbal cream, we add 1 part of the tincture to 3 parts of basic cream.

Add the tincture drop by drop, while whisking continuously. The tincture needs to be thoroughly mixed with the cream. The best way to determine if the tincture and cream have been adequately mixed is to leave it for 20-30 minutes. If after this time the cream and tincture have not separated, then it is reasonable to conclude that they have been mixed correctly. It should be noted that the slower the tincture is added to the cream, the more likely it is that the herbal cream will be made correctly. For babies and people with sensitive skin, only chamomile or marigold tincture should be used. Alternatively, we can test the reaction of skin to any other herbal cream before use. The best way to test it, is to apply the herbal cream to a small area on the wrist (the best part is the inner side, where you can feel your pulse). If there is no reaction on the skin to the applied cream (usually expressed as redness or itching) then it is safe to use it. It is important to note that herbal creams are for external use only.

Preparation & Use of Apple Cider Vinegar:**Ingredients:**

- 10kg of organic apples*
- 100g sugar

*wild apples are preferable, but any type of apple is suitable provided they have not been exposed to any kind of insecticide or chemical substances.

The preparation process is as follows:

Step 1.

The apples should be washed thoroughly and the stems removed.

Step 2.

Put the apples in a blender (including the cores) and blend into a paste. If there is not enough juice, it is advisable to add 250ml of cold previously boiled water. The best results are achieved by using still bottled spring water.

Step 3.

Add 100g of sugar.

Step 4.

Mix thoroughly and cover with a muslin cloth, which should be tied around the pot with a rope.

Step 5.

Store in a location where the temperature is between 18°C and 25°C. The fermenting process will take between 25 and 30 days.

Step 6.

After this time has elapsed, the vinegar is filtered through the muslin cloth. The process is repeated until the vinegar is clear, without any visible particles in it. Good quality vinegar has a light yellow color.

Storage

After the filtration process has been completed, the vinegar is poured into dark bottles, corked and stored in a cool, dark place. There is a risk that a thin skin can form on the surface of the vinegar, even after it has been poured into bottles. Also, vinegar can lose its clarity and become misty. However, this does not mean that the vinegar has lost any of its qualities, quite the contrary in fact. The main reason for this occurrence, is that the fermenting process is still on going and it is perfectly normal. Scooping it with a tablespoon or filtering it again through muslin cloth will remove the skin. It is important to know that the skin formed on the surface is not harmful in any way to human health and misty vinegar has exactly the same qualities as clear vinegar.

The ideal daily dosage is 2 tablespoons of apple cider vinegar, taken with 100ml of warm, previously boiled water, and 2 tablespoons of honey.

This elixir can be used as a preventative measure against many illnesses such as:

- Throat diseases
- Digestive problems
- Blood circulation
- Heart problems
- Kidney problems

The following is a list of common problems encountered in everyday life, along with recommended recipes of how to treat them:

Tiredness:

3 teaspoons of apple cider vinegar mixed with 200ml of honey.

Put this mixture in a jar and 2 teaspoons should be taken nightly before going to bed.

Headaches:

2 tablespoons of apple cider vinegar

2 tablespoons of honey

Mix with 200ml of water and drink.

Note: If headaches persist seek medical advice

Burns:

Put the apple cider vinegar mixture on the burn. This will prevent blistering and reduce pain.

High Blood Pressure:

2 teaspoons of apple cider vinegar added to 200ml of water.

Drink 3 times a day.

Sore Throat (Gargling Water):

1 teaspoon of apple cider vinegar added to 200ml of water. Gargle every 2 hours.

Diet:

With each meal, drink 2 teaspoons of apple cider vinegar mixed with 200ml of water. This therapy should continue for 2 months. Apple cider vinegar helps to burn excess fat.

Swollen Veins:

Every morning and evening, massage the veins with pure apple cider vinegar. Additionally, drink 200ml of water mixed with 2 teaspoons of apple cider vinegar. This therapy should continue for one month.

Oil Extracts

To prepare oil extracts, only vegetable oils such as sunflower oil should be used. It is not advisable to use olive oil, as its aroma can sometimes overpower the aroma of the herbs.

Preparation of oil extract is as follows:

Ingredients:

100g to 200g of dried or fresh herbs.
Clear unflavored vegetable oil.

Method:**Step 1.**

Using a cooking pan with a light lid, place half the herbs into the pan and cover completely with oil.

Note: The herbs should be spread thinly in the pan and therefore the size of the pan should reflect the quantity of herbs being used

Step 2.

Put the covered pan into a larger pan filled with boiling water and cook for 2 hours.

Keep adding water to the larger pan if required. Do not put the pan containing the herbs and oil directly on heat.

Step3.

Pour it through a sieve and dispose of the used herbs.

Step 4.

Repeat the process with the remaining herbs, but this time use the oil produced in Step 3.

Step 5.

Pour it into a clean dark bottle. Put a label on the bottle, clearly stating the type of herb(s) used in the preparation of the oil extract and also include the date. Store in a cold and dark place (not a refrigerator).

Dosage:

Adults:

½ a teaspoon 1 to 3 times per day, used as tonic.

½ a teaspoon 3 to 6 times per day if used as a cure for an acute illness e.g. flu or cold.

Children between 5 and 12 years of age:

Half of dosage for adults, if not recommended otherwise.

Ointments & Creams:

Ointments and creams are usually used externally.

The preparation of ointments and creams is as follows:

Ingredients:

40g of bee's wax (An alternative to bee's wax, is an equivalent amount of lanolin or unsalted organic lard)
150ml of herbal oil

Step 1.

Mix the herbal oil with the bee's wax.

Step 2.

Simmer gently on a low heat for 10 minutes, while constantly stirring the mixture.

Step 3.

Strain through muslin into a wide top container. Put a label on the container, clearly stating the type of herb(s) used in the preparation of the cream and the date of preparation.

CERTIFIED ADVANCED HERBALISM COURSE - SESSION 2 – QUESTION & ANSWERS

NAME: _____

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1. What is the difference between herbal tea (infusion) and herbal soup (decoction)?

2. Why is it important to prepare herbal tea in a covered container?

3. Describe the method of preparation for herbal tea

4. Describe the method of preparation for herbal syrup

5. Describe the preparation of herbal creams