

Simple herbal remedies for enjoying the outdoors

Guido Masé RH(AHG) 2009

www.grianherbs.com

Antiseptic Salve:

Infuse in a double boiler:

10 fl.oz. Sweet Almond (or Grapeseed, or Olive) oil

1 TBS Coconut oil or 1 TBS Lanolin

5 TBS chopped Calendula flowers (fresh or dry)

2 fresh Comfrey leaves, chopped finely

2 TBS chopped Thyme

1 TBS Barberry root powder (or Goldenseal root powder)

1 tsp. Propolis or Propolis extract

After at least 30 minutes, strain through a double steel mesh. Return to the clean double boiler. Add:

1 oz (by weight) beeswax

Allow all ingredients to melt. Pour melted hot salve into a measuring cup. Add:

60 drops Myrrh essential oil; 2 tsp. Ti Tree oil; 2 tsp. Vitamin E oil. Stir quickly and well. Bottle into small containers.

Arnica infused oil:

Arnica flowers make great oil infusions, but you must either purchase dried flowers at the herb store or dry your flowers well if you're harvesting them yourself. When in doubt, dry your herbs first for at least 3 or 4 days to ensure that most of the moisture has evaporated and won't get trapped in the oil, because this leaves pockets for anaerobic bacteria to thrive in (thereby spoiling your oil). Make sure your herbs are properly cleaned and garbled, and that only the best parts are being used. Place them in a glass jar, about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way to the top, and cover them completely in the oil of your choice. Allow the infusion to steep for 2-3 weeks, ideally in a sunny windowsill, and shake the jar often.

Once strained, you may add a little pure Vitamin E oil as a preservative. Your Arnica oil is excellent for all manner of bumps and bruises, but also for sprains and twists that affect the ligaments in your body. Its primary indications are sprains and trauma with bruising.

Chamomile essential oil:

This mild, though expensive, essential oil is indeed very precious. Not only can a drop of (high quality, food grade) essential oil in a glass of water provide almost immediate relief for digestive pain and spasming induced by gas and bloating, but it is most excellent at stopping the itching that accompanies bug bites and rashes. Apply one drop to the bite and just let it soak in; or place a few drops on a moist cloth and apply to areas that are irritated and itchy (including from poison ivy rash).

Yarrow flower powder

This herb requires minimal processing to serve as the best first-aid remedy for deep, bleeding wounds. It immediately staunches the flow of blood and is also an amazing disinfectant; there is no risk if a small bit of the powder remains in the wound.

Take yarrow flowers in bloom or just before, dry them thoroughly, and powder them using a mortar and pestle or a blade-style coffee grinder (one not used for coffee...).

When powdered, store in an airtight vessel and apply liberally to wounds and cuts.

Yarrow often is all you need, but if necessary seek medical attention ASAP.

Aloe and Lavender sunburn spray

After spending too long out in the sun, I use this simple spray for near-instant relief. Simply find a spray bottle, of the type used to mist houseplants, and fill it with Aloe vera juice. Depending on the size of the bottle, add some Lavender essential oil, at the rate of about 5 drops per fluid ounce. Stored in the refrigerator, it keeps indefinitely and goes on nice and cool! Shake well before using.

So what if you forgot your first aid kit? Improvising in the woods and field:

For **wounds with bleeding** a variety of astringent plants are available, and it is good to learn what they look like. **Yarrow** is the best, but **Cinquefoil** and **Meadowsweet** (**Spirea** too) are often found in fields and work in a pinch. You can also use the versatile **Plantain** for minor wounds, bug bites, stings, and scrapes. Chew all of the above and apply to the wound as a poultice. For **puncture wounds**, no agent is better than the flowers of **St. Johnswort** if you can find them.

In the forest, **Goldthread** makes an excellent antiseptic if you can find it. The branches of the **Red-osier dogwood**, often found on the edges of the woods, are astringent and relieve pain locally and also if consumed internally.

For **sprains** and soft-tissue injuries, pounded leaves of **Elder** (red or black) and/or roots of the **bellworts** (*Uvularia* species) make good poultices. Both can be found in the forest, though Elder appears in some old fields as well.

If you are feeling tired, or overextended on a long hike, try eating some of the rhizome from **Wild Sarsaparilla** and chewing on some leaves of **Wood Sorrel**. Both are energizing tonics, and the Sarsaparilla provides some edible starches while the Sorrel adds moisture and cools the constitution.

For muscle strains and soreness following a day of hard outdoor work or play, try infusing your bathwater with fresh **Hemlock** and **Pine** boughs. They are aromatic and analgesic, and in the warm water of the tub they penetrate deeply into sore tissue and leave you feeling more relaxed and flexible. Infuse 4-5 good sized boughs (about the length of your forearm) into the hottest bath possible, for about 5 minutes. Remove the branches before getting in only if desired.