

Herbs for healthy life style and healthier and happier families

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Herbs as food, medicine, spices, gifts, ... or you name it, are the oldest form of food, therapy, beauty additives ... consumed or used by various purposes in various forms by mankind.

Evidence has revealed that using **herbal** remedies in **prehistoric times** goes back to the Neanderthal age, which was over 60000 years ago! ...

In the graves of Neanderthal man located in caves of Iraq, grains of flower pollens were found thickly spotted in the soil surrounding his bones. The pollens were identified as coming from eight different species of flowering plants, all of which flourished to this day in the woods and fields surrounding the burial site.

Of the eight species, seven are still used for the medicine in dozens of different ways by the local people. Some of them are roots of the marshmallow which is used as a soothing and healing remedy for irritated throat and disorder of the intestinal tracts, Yarrow is used as a general tonic, and from the shrub Ephedra comes a potent remedy for asthma and a cardiac stimulant.

There are thousands of plants that can be used to treat many ailments, as well as trees from all over the world which provide medicine and food. Flowers can be made into essences which can help you balance your emotions. Some plants are used for decoration only, yet help cleanse our air.

The medicinal use of herbs is said to be as old as mankind itself. In early civilizations, food and medicine were linked and many plants were eaten for their health-giving properties. In ancient Egypt, the slave workers were given a daily ration of garlic to help fight off many diseases as fevers and infections which were common at that time.

The first written records of herbs and their beneficial properties were compiled by the ancient Egyptians. Records dating back to 1500BC listed medicinal herbs, including caraway and cinnamon.

In Roman times herbs such rosemary and lavender were introduced.

Other cultures with a history of herbal medicine are those of the Chinese and Indians. In the early 19th century, when methods of chemical analysis first became available, scientists began extracting and modifying the active ingredients from plants. Later, chemists began making their own version of plant compounds, beginning the transition from raw herbs to synthetic pharmaceuticals. Over time, the use of herbal medicines declined in favor of pharmaceuticals.

Recently, the World Health Organization estimated that 80% of people worldwide rely on herbal medicines for some aspect of their primary healthcare. In Germany, roughly 600 to 700 plant-based medicines are available and are prescribed by approximately 70% of German physicians.

Herbalists treat many conditions such as asthma, eczema, premenstrual syndrome, rheumatoid arthritis, migraine, menopausal symptoms, chronic fatigue, and irritable bowel syndrome, among others. Herbal preparations are best taken under the guidance of a trained professional. Be sure to consult with your doctor or an herbalist before self-treating. The herbs available in most stores come in several different forms: teas, syrups, oils, liquid extracts, tinctures, and dry extracts (pills or capsules).

TEAS are simply dried herbs left to soak for a few minutes in boiling water. Syrups, made from concentrated extracts and added to sweet-tasting preparations, are frequently used for sore throats and coughs.

OILS are extracted from plants and often used as rubs for massage, either alone or as part of an ointment or cream.

TINCTURES and liquid extracts are solvents (usually water, alcohol, or glycerol) that contain the active ingredients of the herbs.

Tinctures are typically a 1:5 or 1:10 concentration, meaning that one part of the herbal material is prepared with five to ten parts (by weight) of the liquid. Liquid extracts are more concentrated than tinctures and are typically a 1:1 concentration.

A dry extract form is the most concentrated form of an herbal product (typically 2:1 to 8:1) and is sold as a tablet, capsule, or lozenge.

Some common herbs and their uses are discussed below:

ALOE

Aloe is a member of the Lily family, yet it is very cactus-like in appearance. Even though there are over 240 species of Aloe there is only four recognized as having nutritional value. The main Aloe used in commercial products is Aloe barbadensis miller. The aloe leaf contains over 75 nutrients and 200 active compounds, including 20 minerals, 18 amino acids, and 12 vitamins. You only use the nutritious inner gel - not the outer rind of the leaf. Adding Aloe Vera to a smoothie or vegetable juice is one of the most nutritious drinks you can have. Aloe has a nauseating bitter taste, rendering it unusable in cooking, but this very property protects it in the wild as animals will move on to tastier treats. It is an easy plant to grow and requires little care other than protecting it from frost.

DANDELION

The leaf of the Dandelion is used for salads, soups and stir fry's, as well as in herbal teas. It is considered a high nutrient food and is primarily used to stimulate the digestion. The root is used for medicinal purposes and Dandelion coffee is a well known substitute for caffeine-rich coffee. Dandelion acts as a tonic to the whole system and destroys acids in the blood. It is recognized as a great blood builder and Purifier. Containing organic sodium it is very good for Anemia caused by a nutritive salts deficiency. It is also effective as a Liver Cleanser.

TUMERIC

Turmeric (*Curcuma longa*) has long been a staple of Indian cuisine. Without it, Indian curries would lack their distinctive flavor and characteristic yellow color. Turmeric has also been a staple of Ayurvedic (Traditional Indian) and Chinese systems of medicine. The active constituent in Turmeric is curcumin which has been shown to have a wide range of

antioxidant and therapeutic actions. It also reduces inflammation by lowering histamine levels and possibly by increasing production of natural cortisone by the adrenal glands. From the above, one can see the potential of herbs used in medicine for various purposes from the beginning of time- our time. Fortunately, we can see the “beauty” and usefulness of those practices even today, giving hope and cure to many people worldwide.

Our aim is to turn public attention and demonstrate what is so obvious, yet somehow hidden from our “vision” - masked within our everyday activities, which are rush and “madness” due to our fast modern life style. In other words, to show that if those herbs, plants, seeds etc., are used for so many millennia before today, and for so many purposes, and they are still used around us, than why we are we not using the fullness and potential they offer in our everyday as a daily routine - in food, or in various other ways to make our life easier, healthier, happier....?

Let’s start to learn to use the “well known secrets” and the beauty of the world of plants for the benefit of all, maintaining it for our future generations - therefore for our families and friends or for those in need, helping them to became healthier and happier. That’s what plants are for... whispering softly and gently, so someone could hear them and use them for good. ...

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