NORTHWEST PORTLAND AREA
INDIAN HEALTH BOARD
Indian Leadership for Indian Health

Roots of Healing

Plant Medicine for Healing From Substance Use

Tribal Opioid
RESPONSE
A Project of the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board

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Purpose and Respect

This booklet was created as a tool for individuals in recovery from substance use disorder and for those beginning their healing journey. Its purpose is to offer accessible knowledge about plant medicines traditionally used for easing symptoms of withdrawal, restoring balance, and supporting overall wellness.

The plants described here are presented with care: what they are used for, which parts are commonly prepared as teas or infusions, and what aspects of the body they are known to support. This booklet is meant to help readers understand how these medicines fit into a broader healing path—not to diagnose, treat, or replace the guidance of a health professional or a knowledgeable community healer.

This is not a plant identification guide, a foraging manual, or a substitute for cultural teaching. Many plants have look alikes or require careful preparation. For your safety and for the protection of the land, please seek out your local apothecary or tribal herbalist when obtaining or preparing these plants. Their knowledge ensures that the medicines you use are safe, ethically gathered, and aligned with community tradition.

Plant medicine is not only a tool for wellness, but also a relationship, teaching, and responsibility. May these pages support your path, honor your resilience, and connect you back with the land and culture.

DISCLAIMER

Most plants have a twin; one is medicinal and one is poisonous. If you don't know the three indicators to identify the plant you're working with, please do not forage these plants on your own. Instead, seek out your local Tribe or other reputable apothecaries in your area.

As previously stated, this booklet is **NOT** a plant identification guide nor is it a foraging guide.

Symptom Key

Each plant can aid in alleviating certain symptoms that may be experienced when recovering from substance use. Pay attention to the symptom icons for each plant. At the end of the booklet, there is a tear-away chart that gives an overview of what plant can aid in alleviating certain symptoms.

Brain Fog

Constipation

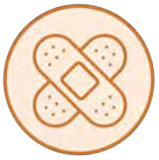
Anxiety/Irritability

Nausea, Vomiting & Diarrhea

Hot/Cold Flushes

Cravings

Sleep Disturbances



Wound Care

Get to Know Our Plant Friends

Why work with herbs?

Herbal medicine offers gentle support with fewer side effects than many medications. They're accessible—no insurance or pharmacy needed—and help us reconnect with nature and traditional cultural practies. Herbal medicine works alongside treatments, it does not replace prescription medications.

Try a "HOW"
Herb of the Week

Choose an herb from this booklet that resonates with you and spend the week getting to know it. Get dried herbs from your local Tribe, apothecary, or herbalist—they're usually excited to share their knowledge!

- Drink the tea daily (morning, afternoon, or evening)
- Try it as a rinse or poultice if appropriate
- Notice how you feel—energy, mood, digestion, sleep
- Keep notes about what you observe

Plants Have Personalities

The more time you spend with herbal medicine, whether it be drinking the tea, applying the poultice, or using the herb as a rinse, the more you'll understand its unique gifts.

The more time you spend with herbal medicine, the more your spirit is going to recognize it in your day to day world. Whether it be on a walk or on a road trip, you'll start to notice them. They have a quiet whisper that reminds you that you are not alone. They are here to heal you on your journey.

How to Prepare Herbal Medicines

Our ancestors knew to pray over plants when using them for herbal medicine. When preparing herbs, you need to be mindful in setting your intentions. Pray over your herbal medicines with a thankful heart and tell the medicine what you need.

Tea

(Hot Water Infusion)

For one cup: Put 1-2 teaspoons dried herb (or 2-4 teaspoons fresh) in a cup. Pour boiling water over it. Cover and steep 10-15 minutes. Strain and drink.

For a therapeutic daily dose: Use 2 tablespoons dried herb in 1 quart (4 cups) boiling water. Steep covered 20+ minutes. Strain and drink throughout the day.

For stronger tea use more herbs and steep longer. If working with tougher material like roots or barks, steep overnight. Store in fridge and drink within 48 hours.

Poultice

Mash or chew fresh leaves until juicy. Apply directly to skin. For dried herbs, add just enough hot water to make a paste. Wrap with cloth or bandage to hold in place. Change every few hours.

Mouth or Skin Rinse

Make a strong tea (double the herbs, steep 20+ minutes). Let cool to comfortable temperature. Use as a skin wash or swish in mouth for 30 seconds, then spit out. Repeat several times daily.

Infused Oil

Fill a jar halfway with dried herbs. Cover completely with olive oil, leaving 1 inch space at top. Cap tightly. Let sit in a warm place, shaking daily. After 4-6 weeks, strain out herbs. Store oil in a dark bottle.

Cleavers
(Galium aparine)

Parts Used

Anything above the ground: fresh stems, leaves, and flowers. Picked while the plant is blooming or starting to make seeds.

What Cleavers Does for Your Body

- Supports kidneys and urinary tract
- Flushes out excess water and waste (diuretic)
- Reduces puffiness and helps swollen lymph nodes go down
- Calms mild inflammation inside and out
- Soothes irritated skin and helps it heal
- Provides vitamins and minerals to nourish your body

Cleavers helps your body let go of what it doesn't need

Coffee (AKA Madder) Family
(Rubiaceae)

Cleavers supports your kidneys and urinary tract and helps your body flush out excess water and waste. Drinking cleavers tea is like having a gentle friend who helps your kidneys do their job better—filtering, processing, and staying healthy. Think of it as a gentle inner rinse that moves things along steadily, encouraging your body's natural flow to clear what doesn't belong.

Cleavers reduces puffiness and helps swollen lymph nodes go down. Drinking cleavers tea knows exactly where you're holding onto too much and helps you let it go. Whether it's in your neck, armpits, or groin, cleavers finds the stuck places and gets them moving again.

Cleavers calms mild inflammation inside and out. Like a cooling breeze on a hot day, cleavers tea brings relief when your body is running too hot or feeling irritated. It helps everything settle down and find balance again.

Cleavers soothes irritated skin and helps it heal. Applied as a poultice or wash, cleavers has an affinity for skin that's raw, tender, or inflamed—especially when it shows up in folds or flexor creases. It's been used for mouth sores, ulcers, and skin irritation from rashes or eczema.

Cleavers provides vitamins and minerals to nourish your body. One of spring's first gifts, eating fresh cleavers or drinking the tea shows up when your body is hungry for fresh nutrition after winter. It's food and medicine rolled into one gentle package.

When you're holding too much—stress, toxins, emotions—cleavers helps you release. Some people say it's like having a quiet friend who helps you process things in the background, clearing space for what really matters. Like spring cleaning for your inner world, cleavers helps you let go of what's been weighing you down so you can feel fresh and light again.

Dandelion
(Taraxacum officinalis)

Parts Used

We use all parts of the plant! Stems, leaves, and flowers are gathered in spring. Roots are dug in fall when the plant's energy is stored down low.

What Dandelion Does for Your Body:

- Helps your body get rid of extra water (diuretic)
- May help reduce swelling and puffiness
- Stimulates your liver and helps move bile
- Supports your stomach and digestion
- Gently helps with constipation (mild laxative)
- Supports healthy blood pressure and cholesterol levels
- Provides antioxidants to help protect your cells

Dandelion wakes up your body when things feel sluggish

Daisy Family
(Asteraceae)

Dandelion helps your body get rid of extra water and may help reduce swelling and puffiness. Drinking dandelion tea acts like a gentle drain for your body, helping flush out extra fluid that makes you feel puffy or swollen. It's especially good when you're holding water weight or feeling bloated.

Dandelion supports your stomach and digestion, gently helps with constipation, and stimulates your liver. Dandelion tea or fresh leaves wake up your digestive fire when things feel slow or stuck. It gets your systems flowing again—gently waking up the liver, clearing your skin, and helping you think more clearly.

Important: Don't use dandelion if you have gallbladder problems, blocked bile ducts, or serious stomach inflammation.

Dandelion supports healthy blood pressure and cholesterol levels. Drinking dandelion tea over time helps keep your blood flowing smoothly and supports your heart by helping maintain healthy pressure and cholesterol levels—like a gentle tune-up for your circulatory system.

Dandelion provides antioxidants to help protect your cells. Whether you eat the fresh leaves or drink the tea, dandelion feeds your body protective compounds that help shield your cells from damage—like having tiny bodyguards working throughout your system.

Dandelion shows up where others can't—and helps you do the same. It pushes through cracks in sidewalks and still thrives, reminding us how to stay steady when life gets chaotic. If you're feeling stuck, hot-headed, or weighed down, dandelion helps get things moving. It's especially helpful when you feel irritated but sluggish at the same time. It clears emotional heat, calms frustration, and helps you digest not just food, but also stress.

Devil's Club
(Oplopanax horridus)

Parts Used

Inner bark from the stems and roots—carefully collected after removing the thorns. Best gathered in fall or early spring when the plant's energy is stored down low.

What Devil's Club Does for Your Body

- Helps your body cope with long-term stress
- Supports recovery from emotional and physical exhaustion
- Supports energy and stamina without overstimulating
- Reduces inflammation in the body
- Strengthens your immune system when it's worn down
- Helps balance blood sugar over time

Devil's Club builds you back up.

Ginseng Family (Araliaceae)

Devil's Club helps your body cope with long-term stress and supports recovery from emotional and physical exhaustion.

Devil's Club is for when you've hit your limit—physically, emotionally, even spiritually. The kind of exhaustion where you don't just feel tired, you feel like something took your spark. Drinking the tea helps your adrenals recover and slowly rebuilds what stress has taken from you.

Devil's Club supports energy and stamina without overstimulating.

It helps rebuild your strength—and your boundaries. Devil's Club doesn't push you to power through. It helps you root down, say no when you need to, and slowly come back to yourself—the kind of strength that lasts without making you crash later. It's protective, steady, and quietly fierce.

Devil's Club reduces inflammation in the body.

For bodies worn down by long-term stress and chronic inflammation, the tea works from inside while the oil or wash soothes achy joints. It's been used for generations to help with arthritis and the deep ache of being inflamed.

Devil's Club strengthens your immune system when it's worn down.

When stress has left you shaky and vulnerable to every bug going around, Devil's Club tea helps rebuild your defenses. It shows up for people who keep getting sick because they've given too much.

Devil's Club helps balance blood sugar over time.

Traditionally used for Type 2 diabetes, drinking Devil's Club tea regularly helps steady blood sugar. It's especially helpful for people facing fatigue from blood sugar swings.

Strong medicine from a strong plant.

Thorny and commanding, Devil's Club reminds you that you're allowed to take up space—and that you don't have to carry everything alone. It helps rebuild your boundaries along with your strength, teaching that saying no when you need to is its own kind of medicine.

Hawthorn
(Crataegus spp.)

Parts Used

Flowers, Leaves, Berries

What Hawthorn Does for Your Body

- Strengthens and protects your heart over time
- Helps keep your heartbeat steady
- Supports healthy blood flow to the heart
- Helps blood vessels stay flexible and strong
- Provides antioxidants that protect heart tissue
- Mildly helps the body release extra water (diuretic)
- Calms anxiety and emotional stress around the heart

Hawthorn is long-term heart support – inside and out.

Considerations: Hawthorn can change how heart medicine works. People taking heart medication should check with their doctor before using it.

Daisy Family
(Asteraceae)

Hawthorn strengthens and protects your heart over time. This isn't emergency medicine—it's like a loving friend who shows up every day to help your heart get stronger. Drinking hawthorn tea over at least 3 months slowly builds your heart muscle's strength and resilience until your whole heart—physical and emotional—feels less fragile and more ready to love, trust, and keep going.

Hawthorn helps keep your heartbeat steady and supports healthy blood flow to the heart. Whether your heart races, skips, or feels weak, hawthorn tea helps it find its natural rhythm. It improves circulation to the heart muscle itself, making sure your heart gets what it needs to keep beating strong.

Hawthorn helps blood vessels stay flexible and strong. Your blood vessels need to expand and contract with each heartbeat. Hawthorn tea helps keep them supple instead of stiff, supporting healthy blood pressure while softening the tight walls we build when we've been hurt—making space for forgiveness and connection again.

Hawthorn provides antioxidants that protect heart tissue. Rich in compounds that shield your heart from damage, drinking hawthorn tea is like giving your heart a protective coat. These antioxidants help prevent the wear and tear that comes with age and stress.

Hawthorn mildly helps the body release extra water. Unlike harsh diuretics, hawthorn tea gently encourages your body to let go of excess fluid. This takes pressure off your heart without depleting you.

Hawthorn calms anxiety and emotional stress around the heart. If you're carrying heartbreak, grief, or emotional heaviness—when your heart feels worn out in ways that aren't just physical—hawthorn helps rebuild. It holds space for your emotional heart and strengthens your physical one, reminding us that the heart needs both kinds of medicine.

Important: Hawthorn can change how heart medications work. People taking heart medicine should check with their doctor before using it.

Lemon Balm
(Melissa officinalis)

Parts Used

Anything above the ground: leaves, stems, and flowers.

What Lemon Balm Does for Your Body

- Calms anxiety and nervous tension
- Helps you sleep without feeling drowsy
- Eases digestive upset from stress
- Reduces heart palpitations
- Lifts mild depression
- Fights cold sores (herpes simplex)
- Relieves stress headaches
- Gently lowers blood pressure

Lemon balm brings calm to your racing mind and heart.

Considerations: If you have a low thyroid or are pregnant, only use Lemon Balm under the guidance of a qualified practitioner.

Mint Family
(Lamiaceae)

Lemon balm calms anxiety and nervous tension. When your thoughts are racing and you can't settle down, lemon balm tea helps quiet the mental chatter. It's especially good for that jittery, wound-up feeling that comes with stress or too much caffeine.

Lemon balm helps you sleep without feeling drowsy. Unlike heavy sedatives, lemon balm helps you relax into natural sleep. Drink the tea in the evening when worries keep you awake—it won't knock you out or leave you groggy.

Lemon balm eases digestive upset from stress. For nervous stomach, butterflies, or stress-related nausea, lemon balm tea calms both your mind and your gut. It's especially helpful when anxiety makes you lose your appetite.

Lemon balm reduces heart palpitations and stress headaches. When stress makes your heart race or gives you tension headaches, lemon balm gently slows things down. It helps your cardiovascular system relax without making you tired.

Lemon balm lifts mild depression. As a gentle mood lifter, lemon balm tea helps when you're feeling down but not deeply depressed. It brings a subtle brightness, like sunshine breaking through clouds.

Lemon balm fights cold sores. Applied as a strong tea compress or infused oil, lemon balm has proven antiviral effects against herpes simplex (cold sores). Start using it at the first tingle.

Lemon balm gently lowers blood pressure. Through its calming effects on the nervous system and blood vessels, regular use helps reduce stress-related high blood pressure.

The happy herb. Lemon balm's bright, citrusy scent lifts your spirits just by smelling it. Ancient Greeks called it the "herb of gladness"—it helps you find your natural joy even when life feels overwhelming. Like a gentle friend who knows how to make you smile, lemon balm reminds us that calm and happiness often go hand in hand.

Marshmallow
(Althea officinalis)

Parts Used

Roots – dug in fall when the plant's energy is stored down low

What Marshmallow Does for Your Body

- Soothes and protects irritated tissues inside and out
- Heals digestive tract tissues throughout the whole system
- Calms respiratory irritation and coughs
- Relieves both diarrhea and constipation
- Eases urinary tract discomfort
- Reduces muscle spasms and cramps
- Helps heal wounds, burns, and skin problems

Marshmallow is the soothing friend who's always there for you.

Considerations: The slippery coating from marshmallow can slow absorption of other medicines. Take other herbs or medications at least one hour before or after marshmallow.

Mallow Family
(Malvaceae)

Marshmallow soothes and protects irritated tissues inside and out. This plant is pure comfort. Rich in mucilage—a slippery, gel-like substance—marshmallow coats and protects anywhere that feels raw, hot, or irritated. It's a natural lubricant and soother (called a "demulcent") that brings relief to inflamed tissues wherever they are.

Marshmallow heals digestive tract tissues throughout the whole system. From mouth sores to stomach ulcers to intestinal inflammation, marshmallow tea or cold infusion creates a protective coating all the way through. It's like giving your entire digestive system a soothing, healing hug.

Marshmallow calms respiratory irritation and coughs. For dry, hacking coughs or raw, scratchy throats, marshmallow tea coats and calms. It's especially helpful when your respiratory tract feels hot, dry, and irritated—bringing cool relief to angry tissues.

Marshmallow relieves both diarrhea and constipation. Here's the magic: marshmallow knows what your body needs. It firms up loose stools while helping stuck ones slide out smoothly. Marshmallow brings balance to your digestion, whatever direction it needs to go.

Marshmallow eases urinary tract discomfort. For burning, irritation, or inflammation in the urinary tract, marshmallow's cooling nature brings blessed relief. Drink the tea to soothe those hot, angry tissues from the inside.

Marshmallow reduces muscle spasms and cramps. As a gentle antispasmodic, marshmallow tea helps relax tight, cramping muscles throughout your body. It's especially soothing for digestive and menstrual cramps.

Marshmallow helps heal wounds, burns, and skin problems. Applied as a poultice or wash, marshmallow speeds healing and reduces inflammation. The mucilage creates a protective barrier while anti-inflammatory compounds get to work healing damaged skin.

The friend everyone loves. Marshmallow is always there for you—no harsh edges, only gentle comfort. Like that friend who knows just what to say, marshmallow reminds us that sometimes the softest approach is the strongest medicine.

Milk Thistle
(Silybum marianum)

Parts Used

Seeds collected from the dried flower heads after blooming

What Milk Thistle Does for Your Body

- Protects and repairs your liver while reducing inflammation
- Acts as a strong antioxidant (protects cells from damage)
- Supports kidney health
- Supports your stomach lining and digestion
- Helps balance blood sugar and cholesterol over time

Milk Thistle is your body's bodyguard—especially for your liver.

Fun fact: In the Pacific Northwest, milk thistle grows so vigorously it's considered invasive. If you know someone who wildcrafts, they'll tell you this plant is unique because taking plenty actually helps the ecosystem.

Mint Family
(Lamiaceae)

Milk Thistle protects and repairs your liver while reducing inflammation. Milk Thistle stands guard—early and often. This is the plant you want when your body is dealing with stress, pollution, alcohol, medications, or any kind of toxic overload. Drinking milk thistle tea or eating crushed seeds reduces inflammation in stressed livers, helps liver cells grow back, and strengthens their cell walls so toxins can't get in as easily—making them stronger against future damage.

Milk Thistle acts as a strong antioxidant. Like a shield for your cells, milk thistle protects you from the inside out. Make tea from crushed seeds or grind them to eat—either way helps your body's natural detox systems work better while protecting healthy cells from damage.

Milk Thistle supports kidney health and your stomach lining and digestion. It's more than just liver support—milk thistle tea or eating crushed seeds helps your kidneys filter better and soothes your digestive system. It's protective medicine for multiple organs at once.

Milk Thistle helps balance blood sugar and cholesterol over time. Taking milk thistle regularly helps your body manage blood sugar and cholesterol levels. Crush the seeds for tea or grind them fine to sprinkle on food—this is why it's often used alongside other support for metabolic health.

More is more. Unlike many herbs, milk thistle is often taken in larger amounts for long periods of time—it's strong medicine that works best when used regularly for long-term support.

Considerations: The Pacific Northwest is home to many thistles with different medicinal uses. Milk thistle is identified by white marbling on its leaves—like someone spilled milk on them. ALWAYS work with an experienced herbalist or elder when learning to identify wild plants.

Stinging Nettles
(Urtica spp.)

Parts Used

Leaves and stems in the spring, when the plant's energy is up top
Roots in the fall, when the medicine moves down for winter

What Stinging Nettle Does for Your Body

- Nourishes your body with vitamins and minerals
- Builds strong blood, bones, tissues, hair, skin, and nails
- Boosts energy and reduces cramping and tiredness
- Supports immune system, digestion, lungs, skin, and circulation
- Helps balance hormones (especially for PMS & menopause)
- Flushes out extra water and waste (diuretic)
- Clears excess mucus from your body

Nettles feeds your whole body while clearing what weighs you down.

To deactivate stinging nettles: submerge fresh leaves in boiling water for 1 to 2 minutes, followed by an ice water bath. The heat completely neutralizes the sting, making them safe to handle and eat.

Nettle Family (Urticaceae)

Nettles nourishes your body with vitamins and minerals, building strong blood, bones, tissues, hair, skin, and nails. Rich in iron, calcium, magnesium, and silica, drinking nettle tea or eating cooked nettles delivers deep nutrition to every cell. These minerals work together to build healthy blood, strengthen bones, and nourish hair, skin, and nails from the inside out.

Nettles boosts energy and reduces cramping and tiredness. When you're depleted, nettles helps restore your vitality without pushing or stimulating. The high mineral content eases muscle cramps and that deep, tired feeling that comes from being nutritionally drained.

Nettles supports your whole body—immune system, hormones, digestion, lungs, and circulation. This is full-system medicine. Nettle tea strengthens immunity, helps balance hormones (especially for PMS and menopause), supports digestion and lungs, and improves circulation. Many people find it helps with everything from mood swings to seasonal sniffles.

Nettles flushes out extra water and waste and clears excess mucus from your body. As a gentle diuretic, nettle tea helps your kidneys flush out puffiness and excess fluid. It also helps clear stuck mucus from your lungs and sinuses, and dries up extra moisture—great when you're feeling congested or waterlogged.

Nettles reduces inflammation and allergic reactions. Here's the magic: the plant that stings actually helps calm allergic reactions and inflammation when you drink it as tea or eat it cooked. It's especially helpful for seasonal allergies and general inflammation.

Nettles brings clarity and strength. It wakes up what's stagnant and feeds what's depleted—helping you reconnect with your own energy. In herbal traditions, nettles feeds the body while waking up the spirit, reminding you what it feels like to be truly nourished and alive.

Fun fact: Yes—it stings! Nettles is covered in tiny, hollow, glass-like hairs that act as little syringes injecting histamine, acetylcholine, and formic acid into your skin. This wakes up circulation and draws fresh blood to the surface. Traditionally, people used fresh nettles to gently slap sore joints (called "urtication") to ease stiffness and move stuck energy.

Oats
(Avena sativa)

Parts Used

Fresh green seed heads that release milky sap when squeezed (milky oats)
Dried stems and leaves (oat straw)

What Oats Do for Your Body

- Feeds and rebuilds the nervous system
- Provides deep nutrition, especially minerals
- Calms nervous tension and stress
- Eases muscle tension and spasms
- Gently lifts mood when tired or worn out
- Soothes and moistens dry tissues
- Supports healthy sleep patterns

Oats feed your nervous system when you've burned through all your reserves.

Note: Oats offer nervous system support in two forms – both help nourish frazzled nerves. Milky oats (fresh green seed heads) are stronger but only available 2 weeks of the year. Oat straw (dried stems and leaves) is gentler but can be dried and used year-round.

Grass Family (Poaceae)

Oats feed and rebuild the nervous system. When you've burned through all your vitality—when there's irritation, overwhelm, lack of focus, or that heavy fog from being stretched too thin—oats slowly restore your reserves. This isn't a quick fix – drink oat tea daily for weeks or months to steadily rebuild your capacity to rest and regulate.

Oats provide deep nutrition, especially minerals. Oat straw tea is rich in calcium, magnesium, and other minerals that feed your whole body. Make as a strong tea steeped overnight. It's like giving your nerves the building blocks they need to repair.

Oats calm nervous tension and stress while easing muscle tension and spasms. Unlike herbs that sedate or stimulate, oats simply nourish. They help your nervous system remember how to settle on its own, easing the physical tension that comes with being constantly keyed up.

Oats gently lift mood when tired or worn out. For that flat, sad and heavy feeling when nothing brings joy—oats help you reconnect with your natural emotional flow. They're especially helpful when exhaustion has left you feeling emotionally numb.

Oats soothe and moisten dry tissues and support healthy sleep patterns. Oats are naturally moistening and soothing (called a "demulcent"), so oat straw tea also moistens and soothes internally. Many people find that regular use helps them sleep more deeply without making them drowsy.

Oats help the body handle long-term stress. Traditionally used to support recovery from addictive habits—morphine, alcohol, nicotine, coffee—oats help rebuild what substance use or chronic stress depletes.

Gentle medicine for the long haul. Oats work best over time, slowly rebuilding your capacity to handle life without burning out. Think of them as your steady friend who helps you brick by brick.

Considerations: Milky oats may reduce morphine's pain relief effects and may prevent the blood pressure increase that normally happens with nicotine.

Oregon Grape
(Mahonia spp.)

Parts Used

The yellow inner bark from roots and stems

What Oregon Grape Does for Your Body

- Protects and supports the liver
- Stimulates bile flow and digestion
- Helps your body eliminate waste and toxins
- Cleanses blood and lymph
- Fights infections (bacteria and fungi)
- Reduces inflammation
- Helps heal damaged skin
- Tightens and tones tissues
- Acts as a gentle laxative

Nature's yellow antibiotic that clears heat and wakes up sluggish digestion.

Fun fact: That intense yellow color? It's berberine—nature's antibiotic! It stains everything it touches (hands, clothes, tongue). Many of nature's best infection-fighters like goldenseal and barberry share this same telltale yellow.

Barberry Family (Berberidaceae)

Oregon grape protects and supports the liver while stimulating bile flow and digestion. This bitter root is for when digestion feels weak or off—when you're hungry but nauseous at the same time. The berberine in Oregon grape can triple bile production, waking up a sluggish liver and helping you digest fats again.

Oregon grape helps your body eliminate waste and toxins while cleansing blood and lymph. When elimination pathways are overloaded—showing up as skin breakouts, brain fog, or digestive shutdown—Oregon grape helps clear out what your body's been holding onto. It's especially useful after long-term alcohol or substance use.

Oregon grape fights infections throughout your body. This bright yellow root fights bacteria and fungi in your gut, lungs, and urinary system. You can drink the tea or use it as a wash for infected skin—it works inside and out.

Oregon grape reduces inflammation and helps heal damaged skin. Whether taken internally or applied to the skin, Oregon grape calms inflammation and helps tissues heal. It's especially good for hot, red skin conditions like rashes, breakouts, and infections.

Oregon grape tightens and tones tissues while acting as a gentle laxative. As an astringent, it tightens loose, boggy tissues throughout your body. It also gently encourages bowel movements when things are stuck.

Cooling, clearing medicine. Oregon grape is for when you feel hot, stuck, and sluggish inside. It brings energy back to your gut, gets things moving, and helps you feel clear again. Start with small amounts—the bitter taste is part of the medicine.

Considerations: Not safe during pregnancy. Like any antibiotic, long-term use damages gut bacteria—use for weeks, not months.

Plantain
(Plantago spp.)

Parts Used

Fresh or dried leaves

What Plantain Does for Your Body

- Draws out splinters, stingers, and infection
- Stops bleeding from cuts and wounds
- Fights infection, reduces swelling, and helps wounds heal
- Soothes, cools, and moistens hot, irritated tissues
- Calms allergic reactions and bug bites
- Tightens and tones tissues
- Helps clear mucus from lungs
- Helps your body flush out excess water

Nature's first-aid kit that draws out the bad and heals what's left.

Plantain Family (Plantaginaceae)

Plantain draws out splinters, stingers, and infection. Chew a fresh leaf or mash it up and apply directly—it literally pulls out splinters, bee stingers, venom, and infection. Works almost immediately to draw out what doesn't belong.

Plantain calms allergic reactions and bug bites. For stings, bites, or itchy reactions, plantain pulls out venom, reduces the histamine response, and cools the heat—bringing quick relief to angry skin.

Plantain stops bleeding and helps wounds heal. Applied to cuts and scrapes, plantain helps blood clot while fighting infection and reducing swelling. It does everything a bandage wishes it could do, acting as both band-aid and Neosporin—it protects AND heals.

Plantain soothes, cools, and moistens hot, irritated tissues. The fresh leaves are slippery and gooey in the best way (called "mucilaginous"). This quality helps repair damaged tissue whether it's on your skin, in your mouth, or throughout your digestive tract. Use fresh leaves on skin, as a mouth rinse for sores, or drink as tea. Plantain-infused oil also works great for skin healing.

Plantain helps heal your gut, lungs, and urinary system. Drink plantain tea to soothe internal inflammation—especially helpful for gut irritation from alcohol or medications. Also helps clear mucus from lungs and soothes urinary irritation. It heals anywhere your internal skin needs repair.

The humble healer that shows up everywhere. Plantain reminds us that powerful medicine doesn't have to be exotic or expensive—it literally grows in sidewalk cracks. Look for broad leaves in a flat circle (P. major) or spear-shaped leaves (P. lanceolata). This plant teaches resilience, showing up in the most damaged places to offer healing exactly where it's needed most.

Self Heal
(Prunella vulgaris)

Parts Used

Anything above the ground: leaves, stems, and flowers.

What Self Heal Does for Your Body

- Speeds wound healing inside and out
- Reduces inflammation and swelling
- Fights viral infections (especially herpes)
- Soothes sore throats and mouth sores
- Supports lymphatic drainage
- Helps clear skin conditions
- Calms allergic reactions
- Protects and heals liver

Self heal reminds you that your body knows how to heal itself.

Mint Family (Lamiaceae)

Self heal speeds wound healing inside and out. True to its name, self heal helps wounds close faster. Use fresh leaves as a poultice on cuts or drink the tea for internal healing—it works on ulcers, inflammatory bowel conditions, and anywhere tissues need repair.

Self heal reduces inflammation and swelling. Whether it's swollen glands, inflamed joints, or puffy eyes, self heal tea or compress brings the swelling down. It's especially good for hot, red, angry inflammation.

Self heal fights viral infections. This humble plant is surprisingly powerful against viruses, especially herpes family viruses. Drink the tea at first sign of cold sores, shingles, or mono symptoms. Use as a mouth rinse for oral outbreaks.

Self heal soothes sore throats and mouth sores. Gargle with strong self heal tea for strep throat, tonsillitis, or any mouth inflammation. Its astringent quality tightens tissues while antimicrobial compounds fight infection.

Self heal supports lymphatic drainage. For swollen lymph nodes or that sluggish feeling when your lymph is congested, self heal tea gets things moving. It's like a gentle massage for your lymphatic system from the inside.

Self heal helps clear skin conditions. Drink the tea or apply as a wash for acne, eczema, or any inflammatory skin condition. It works from both inside and out to clear heat and inflammation from the skin.

Self heal calms allergic reactions and protects the liver. As a gentle antihistamine, it helps with seasonal allergies and allergic skin reactions. It also supports your liver in processing toxins—helpful when you're healing from anything.

The medicine that grows where you walk. Self heal shows up in lawns, paths, and disturbed places—right where people need it most. This plant teaches that healing doesn't have to be complicated or exotic. Sometimes the most powerful medicine is the most common, reminding us to trust our body's innate wisdom to heal. Like its purple flowers standing proud in mowed grass, self heal shows us resilience and the power of simply showing up.

Skullcap
(Scutellaria lateriflora)

Parts Used

Fresh or dried leaves

What Skullcap Does for Your Body

- Calms anxiety and nervous tension
- Helps with sleep without heavy sedation
- Eases muscle spasms and twitches
- Supports relaxation and mental clarity
- Rebuilds frazzled nerves over time
- Reduces inflammation
- Mild bitter that aids digestion

Skullcap smooths frayed nerves when you're tired but twitchy.

Mint Family (Lamiaceae)

Skullcap calms anxiety and nervous tension. This is the herb for when your nervous system is stretched thin—when you're easily startled, overwhelmed by noise or light, and just can't settle. It smooths the edges without sedating you, perfect for daytime anxiety.

Skullcap helps with sleep without heavy sedation. For restless sleep where you're tired but twitchy, skullcap helps you actually rest. It's especially good when anxiety keeps you wired even though you're exhausted—what herbalists call "tired but wired."

Skullcap eases muscle spasms and twitches. As a gentle antispasmodic, it helps with everything from eye twitches to teeth grinding to heart palpitations. It has a long history of supporting people with epilepsy and helping with tremors and nervous shaking, especially during withdrawal. While not a replacement for seizure medications, it can be supportive.

Skullcap supports relaxation and mental clarity. When you can't focus because you're frazzled—not hyper, just overwhelmed—skullcap helps your mind settle. It's grounding without making you foggy.

Skullcap rebuilds frazzled nerves over time. This isn't just a band-aid for anxiety. Used regularly, skullcap actually helps repair and strengthen your nervous system, building your capacity to handle stress.

Skullcap reduces inflammation and aids digestion. It calms inflammation in the nervous system and acts as a mild bitter to support nervous digestion—that upset stomach that comes with anxiety.

Medicine for sensory overload. Skullcap is for when everything is too much—too loud, too bright, too intense. It's like wrapping frayed electrical wires in soft insulation, soothing nerves that feel fried and sparking. It helps dial down the sensitivity without numbing you out.

Yarrow
(Achillea millefolium)

Parts Used

Anything above the ground: leaves, stems, and flowers.

What Yarrow Does for Your Body

- Stops bleeding quickly (inside and out)
- Reduces fever and promotes sweating
- Eases menstrual cramps and heavy bleeding
- Fights infections and inflammation
- Helps break up bruises and stagnant blood
- Tones and strengthens weak tissues
- Supports urinary and digestive health
- Relieves pain and muscle spasms

Yarrow brings strength when you feel weak and scattered.

Considerations: Avoid during pregnancy. Not for people on blood thinners. Some people (rarely) get an allergic skin rash from touching the fresh plant.

Daisy Family (Asteraceae)

Yarrow stops bleeding quickly. Known as nature's bandage, yarrow stops nosebleeds, cuts, and wounds when applied directly. Drink the tea for internal bleeding like heavy periods, bleeding hemorrhoids, or blood in urine. It knows when to stop bleeding AND when to get stagnant blood moving.

Yarrow reduces fever and promotes sweating. For the first signs of cold or flu with fever, drink hot yarrow tea to break a sweat and cool you down. Cold tea works differently—it acts as a diuretic and tones your organs.

Yarrow eases menstrual cramps and heavy bleeding. This is powerful medicine for periods—it stops excessive flow while easing cramps. Yarrow strengthens a weak uterus and helps with irregular cycles. Many people find it life-changing for heavy, painful periods.

Yarrow fights infections and inflammation. Drink the tea or use as a wash for infected wounds, sore throats, or inflamed tissues anywhere. Its antimicrobial powers help prevent infection while reducing inflammation.

Yarrow helps break up bruises and stagnant blood. Applied as a poultice or oil, yarrow gets blood moving where it's stuck. It decreases congestion in tiny blood vessels, helping bruises heal faster.

Yarrow tones and strengthens weak tissues. For prolapsed organs, incontinence, or tissues that feel loose and weak, yarrow tea brings tone and strength back. It's especially good for the reproductive and urinary systems.

Yarrow supports urinary and digestive health while relieving pain. Drink the tea for UTIs, digestive inflammation, or general pain. It works partly by blocking prostaglandins (pain chemicals) in your body.

Medicine of boundaries and strength. Yarrow grows strongest in poor soil and harsh conditions—teaching us that adversity builds character. It helps when you feel weak-minded, scattered, or unable to hold your boundaries. Like its thousand tiny leaves, creating one strong plant, yarrow helps you pull yourself together when you feel fragmented.

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Roots of Healing | Plant Medicine for Healing from Substance Use

	Cleavers	Dandelion	Devil's Club	Hawthorne	Lemon Balm	Marshmallow	Milk Thistle	Stinging Nettle	Oats	Oregon Grape	Plantain	Self Heal	Skull Cap	Yarrow
Brain Fog	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Constipation		✓				✓				✓				
Anxiety/Irritability			✓	✓				✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Nausea, Vomiting & Diarrhea		✓			✓	✓	✓				✓			
Hot/Cold Flushes	✓							✓						✓
Cravings			✓						✓				✓	
Sleep Disturbances			✓	✓					✓				✓	
Wound Care						✓					✓	✓		✓

Tribal Opioid RESPONSE

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