

CALENDULA PREPARATIONS

Deb Soule, Herbalist, Avena Botanicals Apothecary and Biodynamic Farm

Rockport, Maine www.avenabotanicals.com www.debsoule.com 207-594-0694

Tea Infusion: 1 tablespoon of dried flowers per 8 oz cup of water. Steep in hot water for 10-15 minutes. Calendula is a favorite herb of mine to add into various tea blends for the joyful and bright color it imparts to a pot of tea, especially in winter.

Fresh calendula flower tea infusion: Fresh flowers can be used throughout the summer months in sun teas or placed in cool water with other herbs and slowly heated to a simmer. Turn off heat and let infuse for 10-15 minutes. The longer calendula infuses in hot water the more bitter the flavor.

Fresh calendula flower sun tea: I often add a few fresh calendula flowers to my quart glass water bottle along with other fresh herbs like holy basil, lemon balm, lemon balm, borage flowers and edible marigold flowers. I keep this water bottle filled with water to sip on throughout the day. The colors and fragrances of the herbs brings joy to my heart as I sip this healing water.

Fresh petals in salads or honey: If you want to nibble on the flower petals, gently remove the petals and sprinkle on top of a salad or place in a clean glass jar and cover with raw honey.

Oxymel: Fill a clean glass jar; quart, half-gallon or gallon, full of fresh or freshly dried (not older than 6 months) calendula flowers. Then completely fill jar, covering flowers, with half organic raw apple cider vinegar and half raw honey. Stir to mix the honey and vinegar. I keep my oxymels in full sun on my porch for 4-6 weeks, shaking them gently every few days. You can use one layer of unbleached cheesecloth placed in a stainless colander when straining herbs from the liquid. Label, date, and store in glass with a plastic lid (vinegar corrodes metal lids) in a cool, dark cupboard for one year.

Dosage: Add 2-3 tsp of oxymel into a small glass of water and enjoy drinking.

Bitter's Vinegar: I like to combine fresh calendula flowers with other bitter tasting herbs for my medicinal bitter's vinegar. Other bitter herbs: blessed thistle, burdock root, dandelion leaf and root, yellow dock root, rosemary. I blend these herbs fresh in my vita-mix with organic raw apple cider vinegar until the liquid is packed full of plants. Then I pour into a clean glass jar, cover with a plastic lid and let infuse for at least one month before straining through cheesecloth. Always compost your herbs as a way to respect their lives. If you live in the city, place the herbs in houseplants or find a shrub or tree in a park to discreetly give back to the Earth.

Dosage: 5-10 drops on tongue, 10 minutes before meals. Or place 1/8-1/4 tsp of bitter's vinegar in a tiny bit of water and drink, 10 minutes before meals. Bitter's before meals enhances digestion and assimilation of nutrients and improves regular bowel movements.

Tincture: Fresh or dried flowers. The high resin content in calendula needs a higher percentage of alcohol to extract their medicinal properties. You can use 100 proof vodka or 190 proof grape or grain alcohol. When using fresh flowers, completely fill your glass jar with flowers and cover with alcohol. If using dried flowers, either blend them with alcohol in a blender or pulverize the flowers in a mortar and pestle or herb grinder. Then fill whatever size glass jar you are using with the dried flowers, completely cover with alcohol and use a plastic lid to seal. Label and date. After 4-8 weeks pour off the liquid through cheesecloth, squeeze the flowers and compost. Place the tincture in a glass jar, label, date, and store in cool cupboard with doors. Tinctures can last for 6 years or more-they should be passed around your community long before their shelf life expires.

Dosage: 3-15 drops, 1/2 teaspoon, in a tiny bit of water, 1-4 times per day

Infused oil or salve: I have found that infusing dried calendula flowers into an organic carrier oil for 2 weeks makes a deeper amber colored oil than when infusing fresh flowers. Use topically as often as needed.

See separate handout for instructions on making calendula oil and salve.

Succus: Calendula succus is made by blending fresh flowers, leaves and stem in a blender with 25% alcohol. Strain the liquid soon after blending, compost plants and bottle in a spritzer

bottle. Spray as often as needed for healing cuts, wounds, abrasions, and insect bites. Store bottle in a cool, protected cupboard. Shelf-life is limited-1 year or so.

Herbal foot or full body bath: Make a strong herbal infusion with fresh or dried calendula, alone or combine with other favorite aromatic herbs. Let the tea infuse for 15-30 minutes. You can strain the herbal tea if it is going into a full body bath. For foot baths I pour the hot infusion and herbs into my foot tub and enjoy soaking my feet amongst the floating herbs. Once finished with my foot bath, I pour the herbs and water outside under a tree or bush. If you live in an urban setting, do your best to compost all herbs either in house plants or outside under trees.

Sitz bath: Combine calendula with herbs such as comfrey leaf, yarrow, rosemary, and lavender and make into a strong tea infusion. Let infuse for at least 30-60 minutes. Strain and pour warm tea into a low basin. Sit your butt into the tea. These herbs are valuable as a sitz bath for soothing inflamed perineum tissue or tissue around the opening to the vagina, and for healing hemorrhoids.

Vaginal steam: Many year ago Rosita Arvigo began teaching herbalists how to use vaginal steams. The medicated steam is a way to deliver herbs to inflamed, irritated, infected or traumatized vaginal tissue. Make 2-4 quarts of a strong calendula infusion. (You can combine calendula with other herbs such as yarrow, comfrey leaves, roses, marshmallow leaves, lavender) Place the hot steaming infusion, making sure you do not burn tender vaginal tissue, under some kind of a birthing stool that has an opening so the healing steam can directly contact your labia and vagina. Place a blanket around your lower body and the stool and sit on the stool and receive the healing waters. Be sure to keep yourself warm. Have a good friend assist you as needed.

Vaginal suppository recipe (from Dr. Aviva Romm)

1 cup organic cocoa butter

1/2 cup organic coconut oil

3-4 tablespoons organic calendula oil

1/4 tsp pure lavender essential oil (optional)

2 tablespoons organically grown goldenseal root powder

To prepare the suppositories:

- 1. Melt the cocoa butter and coconut oil together in a saucepan. When melted remove the pan from the burner.**
- 2. Add all of the herbal ingredients and stir well.**
- 3. Pour into the suppository mold (see below). Refrigerate until firm. Insert vaginally 1 per night for 7 days; repeat if needed.**
- 4. Always wear a sanitary pad while you sleep with the suppository in place. It will melt and will otherwise stain bedding or undies.**
- 5. Results are typically seen within several days, however you may treat up to a week and repeat if necessary.**

Suppository molds can easily be prepared at home by using aluminum foil that has been folded several times lengthwise, and then widthwise, to form a trough approximately 8 inches in length and 1/2 inch in width. Alternatively, suppository molds can be purchased online. The base of the suppository is a combination of coconut oil and cocoa butter, to which is added the desired combination of medicated oils, powdered herbs, and tinctures. This mixture is then poured into the mold, refrigerated to harden, cut into pieces the size of your pinky finger, and inserted as needed.

Spiritual baths: Different cultures combine herbs and water for spiritual healing ceremonies. Calendula, roses, rosemary, lemon balm, sage and sacred basil are herbs I often use together for spiritual baths. My deep thanks to Rocio Alarcon from Ecuador for sharing this healing ceremony.

You may collect the herbs fresh and leave them in a pot of water infusing outside in the sun on a hot day. Or you can make a fresh or dried herbal infusion using heat. Cover herbs with cool water, bring to a simmer, turn off the heat, leave the cover on and infuse for at least 15 minutes. Take the pot to a secluded place outside during warmer months and pour the water and herbs (add cold water if needed so you do not burn yourself) over your whole body, or have a close friend pour the healing water and herbs over you. Sing, say prayers, visualize the healing you are needing. Release your pain and old patterns.

Flower essence: Artist and creator of the beautiful Souflower Plant Spirit Oracle Deck www.mysoulflower.com writes about Calendula as an essence to support communication. She says “Our thoughts and words have great creative power, both positive and negative, for ourselves and others. Calendula helps soothe your thoughts and words with warmth and compassion and understanding so that there is a balance between assertiveness and receptiveness in communication with others.”

Safety considerations: Avoid oral use during pregnancy. Safe for topical use during pregnancy. Be sure to wash a wound well before applying calendula topically as calendula promotes rapid tissue healing. People with allergies to plants in the Asteraceae family may need to avoid oral and topical use of calendula.

“I feel the answers for our inner balance come to us from our relationship to the Moon, the Earth, our relationship with the feminine and masculine energy within us, and our ancient memory as “green women”, healers of the Earth.. In this day of scientific research and of dependency and orientation on allopathic medicine, many of us have lost faith in the power of ceremony and prayer for healing and maintaining good health.. Be reclaiming our heritage as healers, by loving the Earth and listening to her teachings, and by caring for ourselves with loving compassion, and with the use of gentle, natural remedies, we create the balance that brings well-being and vitality in all its fullness. “

-Rosemary Gladstar