

HERBS FOR EASING ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, AND DESPAIR

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Our biodynamic herb farm and shop are open Monday-Friday, noon-5pm, year-round

In Chinese Medicine, it is said that when the heart is disquieted, unsettled, a person may experience physical symptoms such as anxiety, insomnia, heart palpitations, agitation, susceptibility to fright, and even biomedically defined clinical depression. Because of the extreme stress, overwork and lack of nourishment (physical, emotional and spiritual), that people in the modern western world live with, I believe plant medicines that calm the spirit and nourish the heart and nervous system are essential to include in our daily self-care practices. Creating some form of daily meditation and gratitude practice and time in nature is also essential for humans' overall health and well-being.

LAVENDER

Lavendula officinalis

Fresh or dried tea, honey, Lavender glycerite, essential oil, healing baths

Temperament and Flavor: Cool, dry, slightly bitter, pungent

Parts used: flowers and leaf

Actions: Nervine-very helpful for people who feel emotionally depleted. Lavender can be especially beneficial for a person who has experienced trauma and is constantly thinking about the experience-the experience has become the focus of their life and can lead to depression. Lavender when combined with Sacred basil, hawthorn and lemon balm can help resolve this kind of depression. Lavender eases nervous headaches, nervous exhaustion, anxiety, mildly elevated blood pressure (with hawthorn), and mental decline related to Alzheimer's (with ginkgo). Lavender improves digestion-especially when food is stagnant in gut.

Digestive: Eases gas and nausea and relaxes the digestive tract. Lavender's antimicrobial volatile oils help eliminate unwanted bacteria from the colon and help resolve stomach and bowel infections that cause vomiting and diarrhea. Helps heal inflamed gums and mouth sores-rinse with 1 drop of essential oil diluted in water or place 1 drop in a tsp of coconut oil for oil pulling daily practice. Lavender and fennel seed reduce gas and indigestion.

Gynecology: Combine lavender with nervine herbs such as green milky oat seed, blue vervain, rose petals and skullcap for easing acute premenstrual and menopausal stress and agitation.

Avena's Into the Flow!

Mind: Eases stress-induced headaches, relaxes and calms the mind, reduces mental and emotional agitation, and lessens feelings of unrest and depletion. As a gentle nerve stimulant, lavender can help transform mild depression and seasonal affective disorder (SAD). Combine lavender and lemon balm glycerites with St John's Wort tincture and calendula blossom tea or tincture for easing SAD.

Nerves: Eases anxiety, stress, insomnia, low self-esteem, and nervous tension and restores vitality to a person experiencing nervous exhaustion. Lavender's aromatic oils help uplift a person's spirit, shift inner disharmony, and soothe and comfort the heart.

LEMON BALM *Melissa officinalis*

Fresh or dried tea, lemon balm glycerite, essential oil, healing baths.

Temperament and flavor: cool, moist, sour, mildly bitter

Part used: leaf and flower

Actions: Reduces heart palpitations associated with stress. Eases anxiety, stress, panic attacks, insomnia, and ADD and ADHD. Helps to calm and quiet the Heart and reduce feelings of overwhelm and low self-esteem in children and adults. Lemon balm uplifts the Spirit and during winter I like to use lemon balm glycerite with rose petal elixir, lavender glycerite and St John's Wort tincture.

Safety considerations: Avoid large doses for people with hypothyroidism.

ROSE *Rosa rugosa*

Rose water, rose petal tea, honey, tincture, elixir, rose essential oil, rose flower essences, healing baths. Avena Botanicals Peaceful Heart Tea, Rose petal Elixir

Temperament and flavor: cool, moist, slightly sweet, bitter, pungent

Roses relax the nervous system and ease nervous depression, anxiety, agitation, impatience and fear (including emotional trauma, present and past). They soothe, calm and comfort a person who feels emotionally unsettled and is grieving. Roses gently open the heart and mind and inspire a feeling of love and compassion for oneself and others.

SACRED BASIL, HOLY BASIL *Ocimum sanctum* Tulsi, Tulasi (Sanskrit name)

Fresh or dried tea, Sacred basil glycerite or tincture, Sacred basil honey, flower essence, healing bath.

Temperament and flavor: warm, dry, bitter, pungent

Long revered in India, Tulsi opens the lungs, heart and mind and bestows the energy of love and devotion. Eases anxiety, depression, insomnia, and stress-related headaches. Heightens awareness and mental clarity. Pots of the plant growing in dooryards helps purify the entrance to one's home.

Safety considerations: Avoid internal use during pregnancy.

SCHISANDRA *Schisandra chinensis*

Fresh Schisandra berry tincture, frozen berries for smoothies, tea.

Temperament and flavor: warm, dry, sweet, sour, salty, bitter, pungent.

Schisandra treats the Chinese Heart, Lung and Kidneys and helps us hold onto what is eternally valuable in life. When taken over time its astringent and adaptogenic properties help build one's inner capacity to be less emotionally reactive and to be more inwardly resilient and physically grounded and strong. The berries help the Kidney to "grasp" the qi/chi, making it possible to breath more deeply and fully. Schisandra holds one's Heart steady so your light can shine. For an educational video of Deb speaking on schisandra go to youtube.com and search for Avena Botanicals and title is Schisandra at Avena Botanicals.

Safety considerations: Avoid internal use during pregnancy, acute fevers, flu, bronchitis, or pneumonia or any acute condition with heat-skin rashes.

SKULLCAP *Scutellaria lateriflora*

Temperament and flavor: cool, bitter, pungent

Parts used: leaf gathered when plant is flowering

Actions: antispasmodic, anxiolytic, bitter, brain tonic, digestive, nervine, vasodilator. **Relieves heart depression and quiets the spirit.**

In Ayurveda, skullcap is considered to be a *sattvic* herb, helping to enhance wisdom and awareness and to maintain balance in the heart and mind and to support meditation. (Consider combining with oats, rose and Sacred basil).

Skullcap's bitter and pungent flavors support digestion and liver health and are especially indicated for people whose digestion is compromised due to stress, anxiety and nervous exhaustion.

Supportive for women experiencing mood swings and headaches associated with PMS and menopause. (skullcap, oats, rose, blue vervain). Skullcap strengthens a depleted nervous system (use with fresh milky oats), relieves anxiety, agitation, and supports sleep (address root causes of insomnia).

Combine with fresh milky oats glycerite for supporting someone breaking addictive behaviors and withdrawing from drugs and alcohol. Useful for any stress-related disorder including tremors and epilepsy (animals and humans) and Parkinson's disease. (combine with green milky oats)

Safety considerations: Avoid skullcap when taking central nervous system depressants (opiates, benzodiazepines, tricyclic anti-depressants, anti-epileptic medications).

"Chapter 8 of the *Ling Shu*, by Jing-Nua Wu, "Apprehension and anxiety, worries and preoccupations injure the spirit-When the heart is subject to apprehension and anxiety, worried and preoccupied, then an injury to the spirit is produced." These are primary feelings for a person undergoing drug withdrawal, all associated with fear. Skullcap's effectiveness in the treatment of drug addiction detoxification is related to its excellent ability to relieve heart depression, and therefore affect the greatest hurdles in the hell many people experience when trying to deal with a severe or long-term drug addiction. Because of its profound effect on the liver, skullcap can help with many of the physical manifestations of withdrawal". Thomas Avery Garran, L. Ac, *Western Herbs According to Traditional Chinese Medicine*

HAWTHORN *Crataegus phaenopyrum*

Tea, Hawthorn Plus tincture, syrup, flower essence, healing baths

Parts used: flower, leaf, berry

Temperament: slightly warm **Flavor** of berries: sour **Flavor** of flowers: sweet, bitter

Hawthorn is one of my favorite herbs for helping calm and settle a person who feels anxious or agitated and unable to sleep peacefully. For years I have combined hawthorn with heartsease pansy, motherwort and lemon balm (Broken Heart Remedy) for people experiencing grief or depression from a loss. Hawthorn and lemon balm in combination support children and adults with ADD and ADHD. Hawthorn increases the uptake of oxygen to the heart, lowers mildly elevated blood pressure and improves overall circulation. This thorny shrub/tree's medicine offers energetic protection to children and adults who are especially "tender-hearted" and easily feel vulnerable.

Safety considerations: Consult health care provider if taking pharmaceutical cardiac medications.

ASHWAGANDHA *Withania somnifera*

Temperament and flavor: warming, sweet, bitter, oily

Parts used: dried root *Grow as annual in Maine*

Actions: Calms and clears the mind, improves memory, helps restore sleep.

Useful in many conditions caused by stress, including insomnia, anxiety, and ADHD. Strengthens an exhausted nervous system, lessens emotional instability, agitation, and "burn out". Energizing while calming.

Safety considerations: Avoid during pregnancy and if on hyperthyroid medications.