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Introduction:

THE AMAZING POWER OF HERBS

Plants have been used for thousands of years as a means to better living. From medicine and beauty aid to secret ingredient in powerful household products, this introduction explains why some herbs offer natural and reliable alternatives to man-made formulas and concludes with directions on how to use this book.

SIDEBARS INCLUDE:

- The Herb Grower's Guide to Container Gardening
- Preserving the Harvest: How to dry your own herbs
- A Better Brew: How to make your own teas and tinctures
- Beyond Fragrance: Your guide to essential oils

Part One:

YOUR HERBAL MEDICINE CHEST

Many prescription and over-the-counter medicines contain ingredients derived from (or similar to) chemicals naturally found in plants. For example, acetylsalicylic acid (better known as aspirin) is similar to salicin, a pain-relieving compound found in the herb known as willow bark. That's why botanical medicine is so versatile and reliable. And because natural herbal remedies usually offer wide-ranging benefits, they can often help treat similar conditions; therefore, formulas in this section will be grouped to address the following related problems.

ENTRIES INCLUDE:

DENTAL DILEMMAS: Bad Breath, Toothaches, and Gum problems

- Mint-Parsley Mouthwash
- Oil of Clove Toothache Remedy
- Goldenseal Paste for Gingivitis

COLD & ALLERGY SEASON: Coughs, Stuffy Nose, and Sore Throat

- Slippery Elm Throat Lozenges
- Homemade Horehound Cough Syrup
- Eucalyptus Steam Remedy

STOMACH PROBLEMS:

Flatulence, Heartburn, Indigestion, and Nausea

- Raspberry Leaf-Ginger Stomach Soother
- Chamomile Heartburn Reliever
- Dill Seed Tea

STRESS SYMPTOMS: Headaches and Insomnia

- Lemon Balm Bedtime Elixir
- Lavender-Chamomile Bath Salts
- Insomniac's Tea

HAIR & SKIN PROBLEMS:

Acne, Eczema, Athlete's Foot, and Dandruff

- Tea Tree Oil and Lavender Anti-Fungal Foot Soak
- Rosemary-Lavender Shampoo
- Burdock Root Compress

MINOR FIRST AID: Bumps & Bruises / Burns / Cuts & Scrapes / Insect Bites & Stings

- Calendula Poultice
- Parsley Herbal Ice
- Aloe Burn Reliever
- Comfrey Herbal Paste (for Poison Ivy)

BEAUTY BOOSTERS

These sidebars appear throughout Part I to highlight another use for an herb. Subjects may include:

- Skin Deep: Rosemary Oatmeal Facial Scrub
- Savor a Soak: Relaxing Lavender-Rosehips Bath Bomb
- Natural Complexion Booster: Chamomile-Mint Facial Cleanser

Part Two:

THE HERBAL HOME

Enjoy a casual stroll through an herb garden and take a moment to pinch a few leaves in your fingers. Just one whiff instantly reveals why these special plants have been revered for years. But herbs also have special antibacterial properties that make them extremely valuable around the house as an economical and non-toxic alternative to commercial products. Practical applications in this section will be organized room-by-room.

ENTRIES INCLUDE:

LAUNDRY ROOM & CLOSETS

- Tea Tree Laundry Soap
- Natural Healthy Dryer Sheets
- Lavender Sachets

KITCHEN

- All-purpose Eucalyptus Kitchen Scrub
- Lemon-Thyme Microwave Oven Cleaner
- Lemon-Tea Tree Oil Dishwasher Detergent

BATHROOM

- Tea Tree Oil Tub and Tile Cleanser
- All-purpose Bathroom Sanitizer Spray
- Homemade Citrus Window Cleaner

HERE, THERE, AND EVEN THE AIR:

Walls, Carpets, Furniture, and Room Fresheners

- Rosemary-Lavender Rug Cleaner
- Stain-fighting furniture spray
- All-purpose Herbal Room Deodorizer

OUTSIDE USES: From garden to car care

- Garlic-Pepper Bug Spray
- Commuter's Stress-Relieving Lavender Car Sachet
- Deer Deterrent (Russian Sage)

PET CARE

- Crazy Cat Catnip Toys
- Tansy Flea-Be-Gone Spray
- Pet Bed Herbal Odor Eliminator

GET CRAFTY SIDEBARS include:

- Holiday House Spray
- Lavender-Vanilla Herbal Sleep Pillow
- Sew Easy Rose Sachets

REPEATING SIDEBARS THROUGHOUT BOTH SECTIONS:

[INSERT HERB NAME]: What Can It Do?

The top 20 herbs profiled, each in a separate monograph-style sidebar interspersed throughout the book; each profile will cover:

- history
- common uses
- growing and storage advice

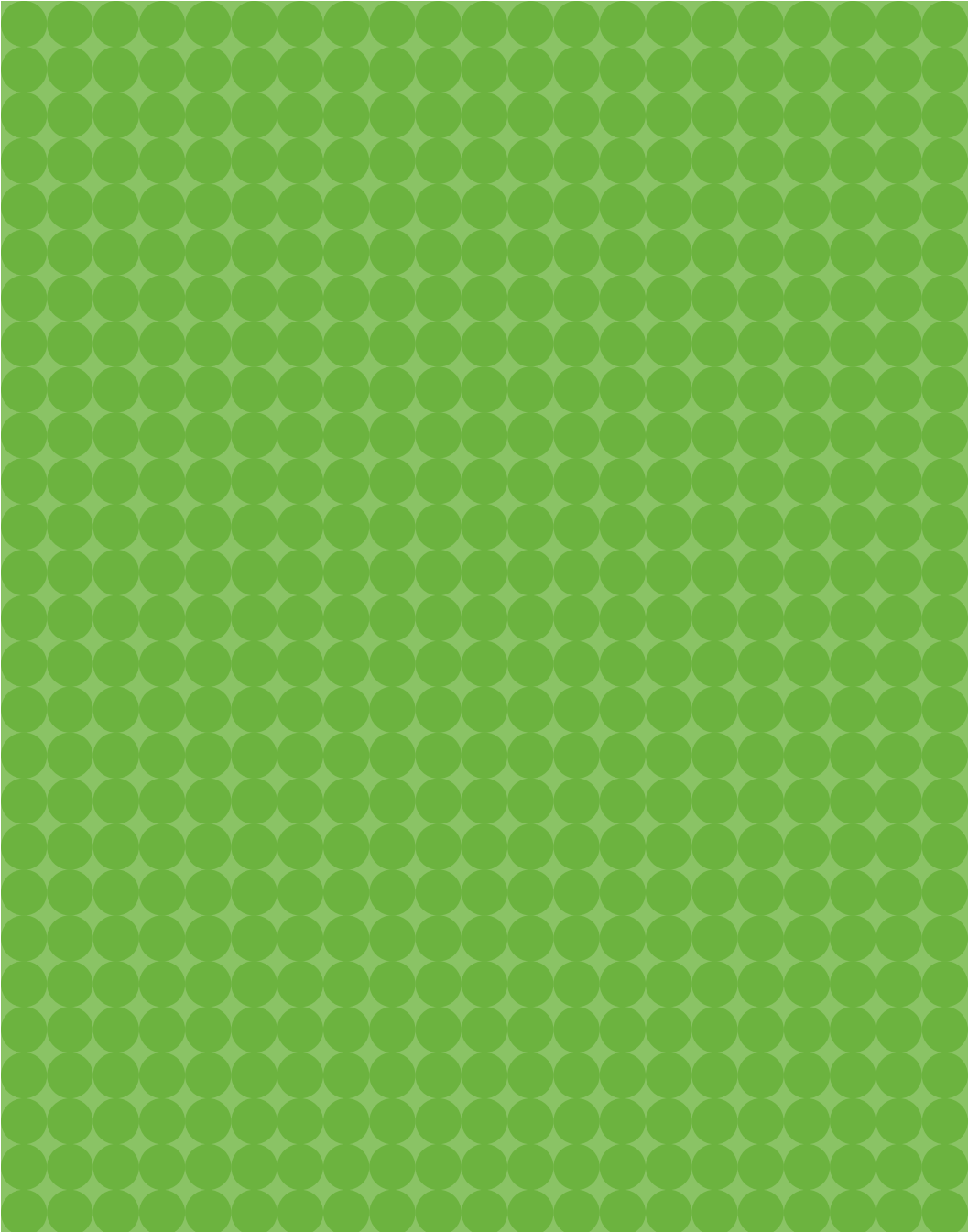
DID YOU KNOW? Brief factoids

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PART 1

Your Herbal
Medical Chest



Cold & Allergy Season

COUGHS, STUFFY NOSE, AND SORE THROAT

For some, a nagging cough is a sure sign that allergy season has arrived. For others, the ongoing hack means cold and flu weather is here to stay. Whatever the reason, you can lessen the severity of even the most annoying symptoms with a variety of herbal remedies.



Sore Throat Soother: **SLIPPERY ELM THROAT LOZENGES**

Instead of loading up on expensive natural lozenges at the health food store, why not make your own? Flavored with a hint of licorice and honey, these lozenges create a slick texture as they dissolve in your mouth, making them the perfect herbal remedy to coat and soothe a sore throat.

- 1 teaspoon (5ml) dried, chopped licorice root
 - 1/3 cup (80ml) boiling water
 - 2 to 3 tablespoons (30 to 45ml) of honey
 - 1/2 cup (55g) slippery elm powder, plus extra to prevent sticking
-

Make an infusion by steeping licorice in boiling water for 10 minutes. Pour the desired amount of honey (more or less depending on your sweet tooth) into the bottom of a glass measuring cup. Strain the tea over the honey until the mixture measures $\frac{2}{3}$ cup (60ml). Stir until combined and then pour over slippery elm powder. Stir until mixture forms a stiff dough. Scatter a little extra powder on a clean work surface and roll out the dough to about a $\frac{1}{8}$ inch (6mm) thickness. Use the top of a very small bottle to cut the dough into small discs. Arrange on a small plate and let sit uncovered for 24 to 48 hours until thoroughly dry. Store in a cool dark place and take as needed to relieve a sore throat.

Beauty Booster: **ROSEMARY-OATMEAL FACIAL SCRUB**

Looking for a natural way to achieve glowing skin? Consider whipping up a batch of this easy facial scrub about once a week. Soon you may have friends asking for your secret.

- 1/4 cup (22g) oatmeal (not instant)
 - 2 tablespoons (30ml) powdered milk
 - 1 tablespoon (15ml) fresh rosemary
-

Combine the oats, milk, and rosemary in the work bowl of a food processor. Whirl until oats are finely ground. To use, pour about half of the mixture into the palm of your hand and add enough lukewarm water to make a paste. Apply to clean face and neck. Scrub gently with the tips of your fingers in light upward strokes. Rinse thoroughly and pat skin dry. Refrigerate remaining scrub and repeat in 3-4 days.

Herbal Cough Quieter: HOREHOUND COUGH SYRUP

This old-fashioned elixir relies on honey to render it into deliciously smooth syrup. Keep a bottle handy to coat the throat and quell an irritating cough.

2 tablespoons (30ml) fresh or dried horehound

2 cups (475ml) boiling water

Honey

Make an infusion by steeping horehound in water for exactly 10 minutes. Strain the tea and measure the amount of liquid that remains. Transfer to a large glass bottle and add the same amount of honey as liquid. Shake well until mixture is well combined. Cover and refrigerate. Take 1 spoonful at a time, up to 4 times a day.

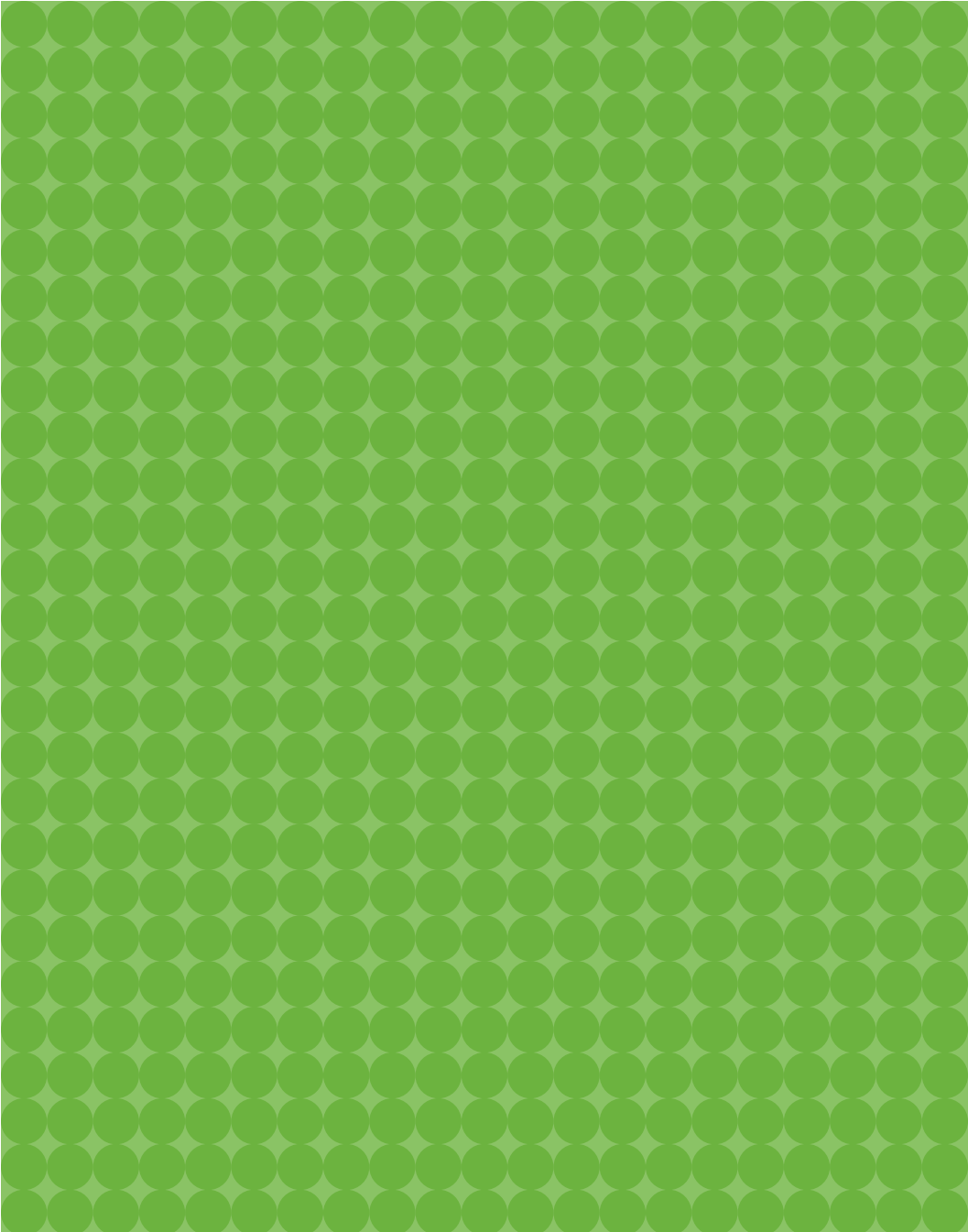
Laryngitis Relief: EUCALYPTUS STEAM REMEDY

When a virus or too much talking robs you of your voice, a little steam laced with an essential oil might restore things to normal. Eucalyptus contains a chemical called cineole that may fight infection and relieve throat inflammation, peppermint has many antibacterial properties, and warm steam can soothe and moisturize dry, irritated tissues.

3 cups (700ml) water

1/4 teaspoon (1.25 ml) eucalyptus or peppermint essential oil

Bring water to a simmer in a small pot. Remove from heat and add the essential oil of your choice. Sit down at a dining table and place the pot on heat-proof trivet in front of you. Position your face over the pot at a distance so that the steam doesn't burn your face, and drape a towel over the back of your head to form a mini-sauna. Breathe in the steam for 10 to 15 minutes, pausing for fresh air as needed. Repeat 3 times a day as needed.



PART 2

The Herbal Home

The Kitchen

Herbs are a cook's best friend, so it's no surprise to find them in most kitchens being put to good use when dinner is underway. But did you know that many herbs also contain antibacterial properties? This attribute also makes them an ideal ingredient in a variety of homemade household products. Try a few of these formulas out—they'll make post-meal cleanup a breeze!



All-Purpose Cleanser: EUCALYPTUS KITCHEN CLEANING SPRAY

It's best to use distilled water with this formula because the minerals naturally present in tap water can hamper the product's cleaning ability. Also, make sure to combine ingredients in this formula exactly as directed; if the borax is not dissolved properly, it could clog the bottle nozzle (use a clear bottle, if possible, to see what's going on).

2 tablespoons (30ml) white vinegar
1 tablespoon (15ml) borax
2 cups (475ml) hot distilled water
1/4 cup (60ml) liquid castile soap
10 to 15 drops eucalyptus essential oil

Combine vinegar and borax in a clean, 16-ounce (475ml) trigger spray bottle. Fill bottle almost to top with very hot water and shake until borax is dissolved. Add the soap and essential oils and cap tightly. Shake lightly to distribute the soap throughout the mixture.

Did You Know...

During the Victorian era, when women wore tight corsets that led to frequent fainting spells, lavender was a common ingredient in the "smelling salts" used to rouse the semi-conscious.

Did You Know...

Tarragon, an herb native to southern Europe, was once used to heal snakebites. Its name, *dracunculus*, means "little dragon."

Get Crafty: HOLIDAY HOUSE SPRAY

Nothing smells better around the holidays than the warm spicy scent of pine, cinnamon, and citrus. With this super easy formula for a housewarming spritz, you can make several little bottles to distribute to friends in their holiday gift baskets. Just make sure to keep one for yourself!

1 cup (240ml) distilled water
16 drops pine needle essential oil
8 drops cinnamon essential oil
4 drops mandarin essential oil

Divide water among four 2-ounce (60ml) spray bottles. Add 4 drops pine needle essential oil, 2 drops cinnamon essential, and 1 drop mandarin essential oil to each bottle. Screw on the lids and shake well to distribute the oils.

LAVENDER: What Can It Do?

The fresh, clean scent of lavender probably explains how this popular Mediterranean herb got its name—it is derived from the Latin verb *lavo*, which means “to wash.” With over twenty-five species of the plant to choose from, English lavender is generally considered the most fragrant. The volatile oil in its blossoms contains more than 100 chemical compounds, and in a good year, one acre of this particular plant will produce fifteen to twenty pounds of highly prized oil.

HOW IT IS USED

Traditionally, dried lavender blossoms have been used in sachets to protect linens from moths and to brighten up the scent of sick rooms. During the bubonic plague, glove makers believed lavender was a good way to ward off disease and relied on its oil to scent their leather. They may have had the right idea. We now know the plague is transmitted by fleas, and lavender is an effective insect repellent. Many aromatherapists also believe lavender can impart serious benefit as a stress reliever, so it is frequently added to massage oils and bath-related remedies.

MAKING IT WORK FOR YOU

If you want to grow your own lavender, head to a reliable plant nursery to find your best options (lavender is rarely grown from seed). It's an ideal plant for container gardening; water infrequently, and

Microwave Oven Rescue Formula: LEMON-THYME CLEANER

Did you forget to pick up some expensive cleaning product at the grocery? Good news! This hard-working formula is a cinch to put together with ingredients you probably have on hand. One batch makes plenty to get the inside of your microwave sparkling clean. And if you don't have both types of essential oil, don't worry; just use whatever combination you like best.

1/4 cup (55g) baking soda

1 tablespoon (15ml) distilled vinegar

3 to 4 drops each thyme and lemon essential oil

Combine the baking soda, vinegar and essential oils in a small glass bowl. Stir gently to make a paste. Apply to the walls and floor of the microwave with a damp, soft cloth or sponge. Rinse well and leave the oven door open for about half an hour until dry.

Did You Know...

The ancient Greeks fed their horses parsley, thinking it would provide strength and stamina during races. It turns out that parsley is a very good source of vitamin C, as well as many other important vitamins and minerals.

All Natural Dishwasher Soap: LEMON-TEA TREE OIL DETERGENT

Who says homemade cleaners can't be effective? Use this homemade dishwasher soap as an alternative to commercial chlorine-based dishwasher detergents. You'll save money *and* enjoy sparkling clean results!

1/2 cup (120ml) liquid castile soap

1/2 cup (120ml) water

1 teaspoon (5ml) fresh lemon juice

3 drops tea tree oil

1/4 cup (60ml) white vinegar

1 handful baking soda

Combine the soap, water, lemon juice, tea tree oil, and vinegar in a squeeze bottle that holds about 12 ounces (350ml). Shake gently to distribute ingredients well and store in a cool, dark place. To use, sprinkle a handful of baking soda over dirty dishes. Place 1 tablespoon (15ml) soap in the automatic soap dispenser; if your dishwasher has another slot for the first part of the wash cycle, add another tablespoon (15ml) to that compartment as well.