

Medicinal Herbal Actions List

The following text is meant for informational purposes only. It is not meant to diagnose or treat any illness or injury. Always consult with a physician or other qualified medical care provider concerning the diagnosis and treatment of any illness or injury, or before beginning an herbal regimen.

Adaptogen: Herbs that improve the body's ability to adapt to stress of any sort, including infection, mental stress, or fatigue. Seem to change the threshold of resistance to damage by supporting the adrenal glands and possibly the pituitary glands.

Examples: **Ginseng** *Panax quinquefolius*, Valerian *Valeriana officinalis*

Alterative: Herbs that restore the proper function of the body, usually through altering metabolism by improving the tissues' ability to metabolize nutrients and eliminate wastes. Many of these herbs act through the kidneys, liver, lungs, bowels, or skin to eliminate wastes. Some stimulate digestion, some are antimicrobial, and some work through actions not as yet understood. Generally used as first line medicines in conditions of chronic inflammation or degeneration, for example, any sort of chronic skin condition, many types of arthritis, and auto-immune illnesses. Most herbs that have a primary action on the liver or kidneys can be considered alterative.

Examples: Alfalfa *Medicago sativa*, *Astragalus membranaceus*, Barberry *Berberis vulgaris*, Bayberry (Sweet gale, Wax-Myrtle) *Myrica gale*, Trillium (Birthroot) *Trillium spp.*, Bistort *Persicaria bistorta*, Black Cohosh *Actaea racemosa*, Black Root *Leptandra Virginica*, Black Walnut Bark *Juglans nigra*, Blessed Thistle *Cnicus benedictus*, **Blue Flag** *Iris versicolor*, Boxwood *Buxus spp.*, Burdock *Arctium lappa*, Pot Marigold *Calendula*, Cayenne *Capsicum annuum*, Chaparral *Larrea tridentata*, Chickweed *Stellaria media*, Cleavers *Galium aparine*, Comfrey *Symphytum officinale* L., Devil's Claw *Harpagophytum procumbens*, Dandelion Root *Taraxacum officinale*, Dogwood *Cornus spp.*, **Echinacea purpurea**, Elder *Sambucus L.*, Eyebright *Euphrasia L.*, Fringe Tree *Chionanthus L.*, Fumitory *Fumaria*, Garlic *Allium sativum*, **Ginseng Panax L.**, Goldenseal *Hydrastis canadensis*, Gotu Kola *Centella asiatica*, Guaiac *Guaiacum L.*, Holly *Ilex*, Ironweed *Vernonia spp.*, Kelp, Licorice Root *Glycyrrhiza lepidota*, Mandrake *Mandragora L.*, Marshmallow *Althaea officinalis*, Mezereum *Daphne mezereum*, Milkweed *Asclepias L.*, Nettles *Urtica dioica*, Oregon Grape Root *Mahonia Nutt.*, Pilewort *Ranunculus ficaria*, Pipsissewa *Chimaphila umbellata*, **Plantain Plantago spp.**, Pokeweed *Phytolacca americana*, Prickly Ash *Zanthoxylum L.*, Purple Loosestrife *Lythrum salicaria*, Raspberry Leaf *Rubus idaeus*, Red Clover *Trifolium pratense*, Rockrose *Cistus L.*, Rhubarb *Rheum rhabarbarum*, Sarsaparilla *Smilax aristolochiifolia*, Sassafras *Sassafras albidum*, Soapwort *Saponaria L.*, Speedwell *Veronica L.*, Spikenard *Nardostachys grandiflora*, Black Spruce *Picea mariana*, St John's Wort *Hypericum perforatum*, Twinleaf *Jeffersonia diphylla*, Uva Ursi *Arctostaphylos Uva-Ursi*, Virginia Creeper *Parthenocissus quinquefolia*, Wafer Ash *Ptelea trifoliata*, Wahoo *Euonymus atropurpurea*, Walnut *Juglans nigra*, Wheatgrass *Triticum aestivum*, Willow Bark *Salix spp.*, Wild Indigo *Baptisia L.*, Wood Betony *Stachys officinalis*, Curly Dock *Rumex crispus*, Water Dock *Rumex orbiculatus*, Yarrow *Achillea millefolium*, Yellow Jessamine *Gelsemium sempervirens*, Yellow Parrila, Yerba Santa *Eriodictyon spp.*, Yucca Root *Yucca schidigera*

Analgesic: Herbs that relieve pain.

Examples: Buttercup *Ranunculus L.*, Chamomile *Anthemis L.*, Catnip, Celandine, Clove, Comfrey *Symphytum officinale L.*, *Echinacea purpurea*, Ginger *Zingiber officinale*, Henbane *Hyoscyamus niger*, Hops *Humulus lupulus*, **Kava Kava Piper methysticum**, Jimson Weed *Datura stramonium*, Lemongrass *Cymbopogon L.*, Meadowsweet *Spiraea spp.*, Goatsbeard *Tragopogon L.*, Ghost Pipe *Monotropa uniflora*, Lady's Slipper *Cypripedium acaule*, Marijuana *Cannabis sativa*, Mint *Mentha L.*, Monkshood *Aconitum L.*, Mullein *Verbascum thapsus*, Nightshade, Noni Fruit, Opium *Papaver somniferum*, Pansy, Pokeweed *Phytolacca americana*, Poplar, Prickly Ash *Zanthoxylum L.*, Primrose, Saffron, Sassafras *Sassafras albidum*, Skullcap *Scutellaria L.*, Turmeric *Curcuma longa*, Wild Daisy, Wild Lettuce *Lactuca canadensis*, Willow *Salix spp.*, Wintergreen *Gaultheria procumbens*, Woodruff *Asperula L.*, Wood Sorrel *Oxalis spp.*, and Valerian *Valeriana officinalis*

Anhydrotic: Herbs that decrease sweating.

Examples: **Astragalus** *Astragalus membranaceus*

Anodyne: Herbs that reduce pain by reducing the sensitivity of the nerves. Synonymous with ANALGESIC

Antacid: Herbs that relieve excessive stomach acid. They may also possess demulcent effects to protect the stomach lining.

Examples: Comfrey Leaves or Root *Symphytum officinale L.*, Flax Seed, Dandelion Root *Taraxacum officinale*, Kelp, Mullein *Verbascum thapsus*, Red Raspberry *Rubus idaeus*, **Slippery Elm** *Ulmus americana*, Wood Betony *Stachys officinalis*

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- Anthelmintic:** Destroy or expel worms from the digestive system. There are two categories of anthelmintics; Vermicides - these destroy worms without necessarily expelling them. They should be used with laxative herbs. Vermifuges - These herbs expel parasites and worms from the bowels. These will evacuate the upper intestines and the bowels very rapidly. There are two other categories that deal specifically with tapeworms, but most of the herbs will fall into the two mentioned. For informational purposes Taeniafuges expel tapeworms, and Taeniocides kill tapeworms in the body.
Examples: Garlic *Allium sativum*, Tansy *Tanacetum L.*, Wormwood *Artemisia vulgaris*
- Antibortive:** Herbs that help to inhibit abortive tendencies. The herbs will not interfere with the natural process of miscarriage when the fetus is damaged or improperly secured.
Examples: American Mistletoe *Phoradendron leucarpum*, Kelp, Pennyroyal *Mentha pulegium*, Ragwort *Packera spp.*
- Antiarthritic:** Relieve gout or other arthritic conditions. Generally, ALTERATIVES
Examples: *Angelica*, Arnica *Arnica montana*, Ashwagandha *Withania somnifera*, Barberry *Berberis vulgaris*, Birch *Betula spp.*, Camphor Tree *Cinnamomum camphora*, Cayenne *Capsicum annuum*, Devil's Claw *Harpagophytum procumbens*, Eucalyptus *Eucalyptus globules*, European Mistletoe *Viscum album*, Giloy *Tinospora cordifolia*, Guggul *Commiphora mukul*, Larch *Larix decidua*, Nirgundi *Vitex negundo*, Poke *Phytolaca americana*, Shallaki *Boswellia serrata*, Sonth *Zingiber officinale*, Spruce *Picea spp.*, Stinging Nettle *Urtica dioica*, Willow *Salix spp.*
- Antiasthmatic:** Herbs that relieve the symptoms of asthma. Some, like *Lobelia*, are strong Antispasmodics that dilate the bronchioles. Others, like Mullein *Verbascum thapsus*, and Yerba Santa *Eriodictyon californicum* help break up the mucus. Some herbs like Mullein may be smoked for quick relief, which may also be taken as tea.
Examples: *Lobelia*, Mullein *Verbascum thapsus*, Rooibos African Red Tea, Wild Cherry Bark *Prunus virginiana*, Yerba Santa *Eriodictyon californicum*
- Antibilious:** These herbs stimulate the flow of bile from the liver. Most of the remedies classified as BITTERS or HEPATICS also have cholagogue function. Bile aids in the digestion and assimilation of fats and fat-soluble nutrients. It also acts as a mild laxative to keep the bowels moving smoothly and prevent accumulation of material that could become toxic.
Examples: Balmony, Fringetree, Barberry *Berberis vulgaris*, Goldenseal *Hydrastis canadensis*
- Antibiotic:** Herbs that inhibit the growth of, or destroy, bacteria, viruses or amoebas. Many of these herbs may have direct germ killing effects, but they work by stimulating the bodies own immune system response. Eating miso, tamari, or yogurt can help replace the good bacteria you can lose by taking antibiotics for an extended period of time.
Examples: Acacia, Aloe, Marijuana *Cannabis sativa*, Chaparral *Larrea tridentata*, Cryptolepis, *Echinacea purpurea*, Eucalyptus, Garlic *Allium sativum*, Ginger *Zingiber officinale*, Golden Seal *Hydrastis canadensis*, Grapefruit Seed Extract, Honey, Hops *Humulus lupulus*, Iceland Moss, Juniper Berries, Licorice Root *Glycyrrhiza lepidota*, Myrrh, Olive Leaf, Plantain *Plantago spp.*, Rosemary Oil, Sage *Salvia officinalis*, Sundew, Thyme, Usnea, Wormwood *Artemisia vulgaris*
- Anticatarrhal:** Help remove excessive mucus, generally from the upper respiratory tract. Mucus is generally produced in the body's effort to remove infective organisms or to remove excessive carbohydrates. Some of these herbs make the mucus more watery so it is easier to expel, others decrease production.
Examples: *Angelica*, Anise, Bayberry (Sweet Gale, Wax-Myrtle) *Myrica gale*, Bistort *Persicaria bistorta*, Cayenne *Capsicum annuum*, Cinnamon *Cinnamomum spp.*, Coltsfoot, Comfrey *Symphytum officinale L.*, Cranesbill *Geranium dissectum*, Elder *Sambucus L.*, Elecampane, Figs, Flax Seed, Garlic *Allium sativum*, Ginger *Zingiber officinale*, Ginkgo Biloba, Goldenseal *Hydrastis canadensis*, Horseradish, Irish Moss, *Lobelia*, Lungwort, Marshmallow *Althaea officinalis*, Mullein *Verbascum thapsus*, Peppermint *Mentha piperita*, Raisins, Sage *Salvia officinalis*, Wild Cherry Bark *Prunus virginiana*, Yerba Santa *Eriodictyon californicum*
- Anticoagulant:** Herbs that break up or prevent clots.
Examples: Yellow Sweet Clover *Melilotus officinalis*, White Sweet Clover *Melilotus albus*
- Anticonvulsant:** Herbs that help reduce or prevent seizures.
Examples: Valerian *Valeriana officinalis*, Black Cohosh *Actaea racemosa*
- Antidiabetic:** Herbs that help regulate and reduce blood sugar.
Examples: Burdock *Arctium annum*, Garlic *Allium sativum*

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- Antidepressant:** Herbs that raise the mood and counteract depression. With the advent of modern pharmacology, it has been found that these herbs have an action on the chemicals that transmit nerve impulses in the brain; these "neurotransmitters" have been found to be in imbalance in most cases of severe depression.
Examples: **St John's Wort** *Hypericum perforatum*, **Passion Flower** *Passiflora incarnate*
- Antidiarrheal:** Alleviates diarrhea
Examples: Agrimony *Agrimonia eupatoria*, Barberry *Berberis vulgaris*, Bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus*, Blackberry *Rubus fruticosus*, Cinquefoil *Potentilla erecta*, Coffee *Coffea Arabica*, Dogwood *Cornus florida*, Psyllium Seed *Plantago afra*, Uzara *Xysmalobium undulatum*
- Antiemetic:** Herbs that reduce nausea and vomiting.
Examples: Anise, Black Horehound, Cinnamon *Cinnamomum spp.*, Cloves, Colombo, Ginger *Zingiber officinale*, Goldenseal *Hydrastis canadensis*, Iceland Moss, Lemonbalm, *Lobelia*, Peach Leaves, Peppermint *Mentha piperita*, Raspberry *Rubus idaeus*, Red Clover *Trifolium pratense*, Spearmint *Mentha spicata*, Sweet Basil
- Antiepileptic:** Herbs that help reduce or prevent seizures.
Examples: Valerian *Valeriana officinalis*, Black Cohosh *Actaea racemosa*
- Antifungals:** Herbs which help the body destroy or resist pathogenic organisms. Some of these are actually antiseptic, killing the organisms (generally, "cidal" means organisms are killed, "static" means replication of organisms are stopped, and "fuge" means organisms, as in intestinal worms, are expelled.) Others support the function of the immune system to neutralise many pathogens, including bacteria, viruses, fungi and paracytes. These herbs can support the body in fighting off many infections, but there are certainly times when anti-biotics can be life-saving.
Examples: Cornflower *Centaurea cyanus*, *Echinacea purpurea*, Mountain Laurel *Kalmia latifolia*, Myrrh, **Garlic** *Allium sativum*, **Thyme**, Eucalyptus, Wild Indigo *Baptisia L.*, Sage *Salvia officinalis*
- Antihemorrhagic:** Herbs which stop or prevent bleeding. Astringents are often haemostatic.
Examples: Yarrow *Achillea millefolium*, Cranesbill
- Antihistamine:** Herbs that oppose the action of histamines.
Examples: Kudzu *Pueraria lobata*
- Antihydrotic:** Relieves "dropsy" or fluid retention.
Examples: Bearberry, Couch Grass, Buchu, Corn Silk, Dandelion
- Antihydrotic:** Herbs that reduce or suppress perspiration.
Examples: Sage
- Antihypertensive:** Herbs that reduce blood pressure.
Examples: Garlic *Allium sativum*, Barberry *Berberis vulgaris*
- Antihypothyroid:** Herbs that stimulate thyroid action.
Examples: Black Cohosh *Actaea racemosa*, Kelp
- Anti-Infective:** Herbs that combat infections.
Example: Bistort *Persicaria bistorta*, Clematis *Clematis recta*, Colchicum *Colchicum autumnale*, Jack-in-the-Pulpit *Arisaema triphyllum*, Kudzu *Pueraria lobata*, Lily-of-the-Valley *Convallaria majalis*, Mountain Laurel *Kalmia latifolia*, Oats *Avena sativa*, Peppermint *Mentha piperita*, Picture Plant *Sarracenia purpurea*, **Plantain** *Plantago spp.*, Sandalwood *Santalum album*, Sassafras *Sassafras albidum*, Sorrel *Rumex acetosa*, Spruce *Picea spp.*, Thyme *Thymus vulgaris*, Turmeric *Curcuma domestica*, Yellow Dock *Rumex crispus*
- Anti-Inflammatory:** Helps the body combat inflammation. Herbs classed as emollients, demulcents, and vulneraries often do this. Some anti-inflammatory herbs contain salicylates, the chemicals on which aspirin is based; some herbs contain precursors of steroidal compounds, and can balance the levels of steroids in the body; Others have a useful anti-inflammatory effect without a mechanism of action yet identified;
Examples: **Salicylates:** Willow Bark *Salix spp.*, Wintergreen *Gaultheria procumbens*, Birch *Betula spp.*, and Black Haw.
Steroidal: Licorice Root *Glycyrrhiza lepidota*, Wild Yam, and Ginseng *Panax quinquefolius*.
Unidentified: Bogbean, Devil's Claw *Harpagophytum procumbens*, Marigold flowers, and Black Cohosh *Actaea racemosa*.

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- Antilithic:** Helps prevent the formation of stones or gravel in the urine, and can help the removal of those already formed. They may work by a combination of dissolving stones, washing out the components that could form them, or increasing urine flow so as to flush out the system.
- Examples: Barberry *Berberis vulgaris*, Bean, Bearberry, Birch *Betula spp.*, Briar Hip, Buchu, Cascara Sagrada *Frangula alnus*, Chaparral *Larrea tridentata*, Chervil, Corn Silk, Cucumber, Dandelion *Taraxacum officinale*, Devil's Claw *Harpagophytum procumbens*, Dyer's Broom, Everlasting, Fraxinella, Goldenrod *Solidago L.*, Gravel Root, Ground Ivy, Holly *Ilex*, Horsetail, Hydrangea Root, Juniper Berries, Knot Weed, Marshmallow *Althaea officinalis*, Meadowsweet *Spiraea spp.* Mouse Ear, Oregon Grape Root *Mahonia Nutt.*, Parsley, Pimpernel, Pipsissewa *Chimaphila umbellata*, Plum, Queen of the Meadow, Ragwort *Packera spp.*, Common Groundsel, European, Restharrow, Seven Barks, Uva Ursi *Arctostaphylos Uva-Ursi*, Water Eryngo, Woodruff *Asperula L.*, Yellow Toadflax
- Antimalarial:** Herbs that prevent or treat Malaria.
- Examples: Barberry *Berberis vulgaris*, Black Catnip *Phyllanthus amarus*, Cayenne *Capsicum annum*, Croton Seeds *Croton tiglium*, Fever Bark *Alstonia constricta*, Hwema Bark *Corynanthe pachyceras*, Marijuana *Cannabis sativa*, Milk Thistle *Silybum marianum*, Neem *Antelaea azadirachta*, Quassia *Picrasma excelsa*, Quinine *Cinchona pubescens*, Simaruba *Simaruba amara*, Tree of Heaven *Ailanthus altissima*, Tulip Tree *Liriodendron tulipifera*, Wild Indigo *Baptisia tinctoria*
- Antimicrobial:** Help the body destroy or resist pathogenic organisms. Some of these are actually antiseptic, killing the organisms (generally, "cidal" means organisms are killed, "static" means replication of organisms are stopped, and "fuge" means organisms, as in intestinal worms, are expelled.) Others support the function of the immune system to neutralize many pathogens, including bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites. These herbs can support the body in fighting off many infections, but there are certainly times when antibiotics can be life-saving.
- Examples: *Echinacea purpurea*, Myrrh, Garlic *Allium sativum*, Thyme, Eucalyptus, Wild Indigo *Baptisia L.*, Sage
- Antimitotic:** Herbs that reduce or prevent spontaneous cellular mutations.
- Examples:
- Antimutagenic:** Herbs that reduce spontaneous mutations within cells. This may help reduce incidence of cancer.
- Examples: Comfrey
- Antineoplastic:** Herbs that inhibit the growth of tumors.
- Examples: Bitter Melon *Momordica charantia*, Cranberry *Vaccinium macrocarpon*, Kudzu *Pueraria lobata*, Pygeum *Prunus africana*
- Antioxidant:** Herbs that render free radicals harmless.
- Examples: Artichoke, **Ashwagandha** *Withania somnifera*, **Bacopa** *Bacopa monniera*, Bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus*, Ginger *Zingiber officinale*, Ginkgo, Grape Seed Extract, **Green tea** *Camellia sinensis*, Hawthorne, Milk Thistle *Silybum marianum*, Olive Leaf, Rosemary, St John's Wort *Hypericum perforatum*, **Turmeric** *Curcuma longa*,
- Antiparasitic:** Destroy or expel worms from the digestive system. See Anthelmintic
- Examples: Garlic *Allium sativum*, Tansy *Tanacetum L.*, Wormwood *Artemisia vulgaris*
- Antipruritic:** Herbs that prevent or relieve itching.
- Examples: Butcher's Broom *Ruscus aculeatus*, Evening Primrose *Oenothera biennis*, Kudzu *Pueraria lobata*, Scarlet Pimpernel *Anagallis arvensis*, Sweet Gale *Myrica gale*, Vervain *Verbena officinalis*, Wheat *Triticum aestivum*
- Antipsoriatic:** Herbs that alleviate symptoms of Psoriasis.
- Examples: Bitter Mellon *Momordica charantia*, Black Nightshade *Solanum nigrum*, Burdock *Arctium lappa*, Hogweed *Heracleum sphondylium*, Kudzu *Pueraria lobata*, Red Clover *Trifolium pratense*, Sarsaparilla *Smilax spp.*, Sunflower *Helianthus annuus*, Teazle *Dipsacus spp.*
- Antipsychotic:** Relieves the symptoms of Psychosis.
- Examples: Pygeum *Prunus africana*

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- Antipyretic:** Herbs that reduce fever. In general, herbalists don't like to reduce fever unless it also has some beneficial effect on the infection or inflammation causing the fever. They see fever as one of the body's ways of fighting infection, and try to use herbs that support the immune system and the other cleansing processes of the body. Thus, the DIAPHORETICS can lower body temperature by promoting perspiration, but they also help the body cleanse. Similarly, circulatory STIMULANTS increase blood flow to the skin and so promote a cleansing sweat. ALTERATIVES can act through an ANTI-MICROBIAL action, or through stimulation of the immune system, and can also help the body clear out the toxic waste products of an infective process.
- Examples: Alfalfa *Medicago sativa*, American Centaury, American Hellibore, Bird's Tongue, Birthwort, Bloodroot, Boneset *Eupatorium perfoliatum*, Borage, Brooklime, Buck Bean, Camphor, Carline Thistle, Catnip, Chickweed *Stellaria media*, Cleavers, Colombo, Coral Root, Cranberries, Currant, Dogwood *Cornus spp.*, Dulse, Elder Flowers, Ephedra (Mormon Tea, Ma Huang), European Centuary, Everlasting, Feverweed, Fraxinella, Fringe Tree *Chionanthus L.*, Garlic *Allium sativum*, Gotu Kola Hedge Bindweed, Holly *Ilex*, Hops *Humulus lupulus*, Imperial Masterwort, Kelp, Lady's Mantle, Lemon Balm *Melissa officinalis*, Lemons, Licorice Root *Glycyrrhiza lepidota*, Limes, Magnolia, Monkshood *Aconitum L.*, Olive, Oranges, Peruvian Bark, Poplar, Quassia, Rosemary, Skullcap *Scutellaria L.*, Sumac, Sweet Flag, Willow *Salix spp.*, Wormwood *Artemisia vulgaris*, Southernwood *Artemisia abrotanum*, Valerian *Valeriana officinalis*, Yellow Gentian, Yerba Santa *Eriodictyon californicum*
- Antiretroviral:** Herbs which are effective against retroviruses (RNA viruses such as HIV).
- Examples: Aloe, Astragalus *Astragalus membranaceus*, Bromelain, Cats Claw, Frost Grape *Vitis vulpina*, Garlic, Licorice *Glycyrrhiza lepidota*, Magnolia Vine Berries, Multake, Prunella, Rooibos, Shitake, Turmeric
- Antirheumatic:** Herbs that alleviate the symptoms of Arthritis.
- Examples: Arnica *Arnica montana*, Barberry *Berberis vulgaris*, Birch *Betula spp.*, Camphor Tree *Cinnamomum camphora*, Cayenne *Capsicum annuum*, Devil's Claw *Harpagophytum procumbens*, Eucalyptus *Eucalyptus globules*, European Mistletoe *Viscum album*, Larch *Larix decidua*, Poke *Phytolaca americana*, Spruce *Picea spp.*, Stinging Nettle *Urtica dioica*, Willow *Salix spp.*
- Antiscorbutic:** Herbs rich in Vitamin C which prevent or cure scurvy, a disease caused by deficiency of this vitamin. They are generally classed as ALTERATIVES.
- Examples: Alfalfa *Medicago sativa*, Barberry *Berberis vulgaris* Berries, Black Berries, Black Currant, Burdock Root *Arctium lappa*, Blueberries, Cayenne *Capsicum annuum*, Chickweed *Stellaria media*, Citrus Fruits, Cranberries, Dandelion *Taraxacum officinale*, Eyebright *Euphrasia L.*, Fennel Seed, Fenugreek *Trigonella L.*, Hibiscus, Hops *Humulus lupulus*, Horsetail, Juniper Berries, Kelp, Mullein *Verbascum thapsus*, Peppermint *Mentha piperita*, Poke Root, Rose Hips, Stinging Nettle, Wood Betony *Stachys officinalis*, Curly Dock *Rumex crispus*
- Antiseptic:** Inhibit growth of bacteria, and prevent infection, putrefaction, cell decay, and pus formation.
- Examples: Agave, Anise oil, Astragalus, Barberry *Berberis vulgaris*, Beth Root, Bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus*, Trillium (Birthroot) *Trillium spp.*, Bistort *Persicaria bistorta*, Black Walnut Bark *Juglans nigra*, Buchu, Pot Marigold *Calendula*, Chamomile *Anthemis L.*, Chaparral *Larrea tridentata*, Clove, Cubeb, *Echinacea purpurea*, Eucalyptus, Feverweed, Garlic *Allium sativum*, Garlic Mustard *Alliaria petiolata*, Golden Seal *Hydrastis canadensis*, Guaiac *Guaiacum L.*, Heather, Hibiscus Flower, Juniper Berries, Iceland Moss, Lavender, Mustard, Myrrh, Nasturtium, Nettles *Urtica dioica* Olive Leaf, Onion, Oregon Grape Root *Mahonia Nutt.*, Plantain *Plantago spp.*, Rosehips, Rosemary, Sage *Salvia officinalis*, Sandalwood, Saw Palmetto *Serenoa repens*, Sassafras *Sassafras albidum*, Sweet Gum, Thyme, Tormentil, Turmeric *Curcuma longa*, White Oak Bark, White Pond Lily, Willow Bark *Salix spp.* Wild Indigo *Baptisia L.*, Wormwood *Artemisia vulgaris*, Yerba Santa *Eriodictyon californicum*

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- Antispasmodic:** Helps prevent or ease muscle spasms in both skeletal muscles (the muscles that move bones) and smooth muscles (the muscles related to many of the body's involuntary functions, such as digestion). Many sedative, nervine, or hypnotic herbs also have anti-spasmodic effects. Those anti-spasmodic herbs with an affinity for the respiratory system are useful for asthma.
- Examples: Anise, Astragalus *Astragalus membranaceus*, Balm, Basil, Bedstraw, Belladonna, Black Cohosh *Actaea racemosa*, Black Haw, Blind Nettle, Blue Cohosh *Caulophyllum thalictroides*, Buttercup *Ranunculus L.*, Cascara Sagrada *Frangula alnus*, Cayenne Pepper *Capsicum annuum*, Chamomile *Anthemis L.*, Caraway, Catnip, Cayenne *Capsicum annuum.*, Celandine *Chelidonium majus*, Cinquefoil *Potentilla L.*, Coriander, Corydalis, Cowslip, Cramp bark, Dill, Dog Poison, English Ivy, Fennel, Ferula, Garlic *Allium sativum*, Gum Plant, Hawthorne, Henbane *Hyoscyamus niger*, Hibiscus Flower, Hops *Humulus lupulus*, Indian Pipe, Jimson Weed *Datura stramonium*, **Kava Kava** *Piper methysticum*, Lady's Slipper *Cypripedium acaule*, Lavender, Lemon Balm *Melissa officinalis*, Lettuce, Licorice Root *Glycyrrhiza lepidota*, Lily of the Valley, Linden, *Lobelia*, Marijuana *Cannabis sativa*, Marjoram, Masterwort, Mint *Mentha L.*, American Mistletoe *Phoradendron leucarpum*, Motherwort *Leonurus cardiaca*, Mugwort, Mullein *Verbascum thapsus*, Muskmallow, Nettle Leaf *Urtica dioica*, Nerve Root, Oat, Onion, Parsley, Passion Flower *Passiflora incarnata*, Peony, Peppermint *Mentha piperita*, Pimpernel, Ploveris Root, Pot Marigold *Calendula*, Prickly Ash *Zanthoxylum L.*, Radish, Ragged Cup, Raspberry *Rubus idaeus*, Red Clover *Trifolium pratense*, Rosehips, Rosemary, Rue, Saffron, Sage *Salvia officinalis*, Siberian Ginseng *Eleutherococcus senticosus*, Spearmint Leaf, St John's Wort *Hypericum perforatum*, Skullcap *Scutellaria L.*, Skunk Cabbage, Sundew, Thyme, Twinleaf *Jeffersonia diphylla*, Valerian *Valeriana officinalis*, Vervain *Verbena officinalis*, Wild Daisy, **Wild Lettuce** *Lactuca canadensis*, Wild Yam, Woodruff *Asperula L.*, Wormwood *Artemisia vulgaris*, Woundwort, Yarrow *Achillea millefolium*, Yellow Melilot, White Melilot, Yerba Santa *Eriodictyon californicum*
- Antithrombotic:** Herbs that prevent formation of blood clots.
- Examples: Garlic
- Antitoxin:** Herbs that act against the effects of specific toxins.
- Examples: Black Cohosh *Actaea racemosa*, *Angelica*, Plantain *Plantago spp.*
- Antitussive:** Herbs that reduce or prevent cough.
- Examples: Coltsfoot, Mullein *Verbascum thapsus*, Wild Cherry
- Antiviral:** Herbs that kill viruses or render them unable to replicate.
- Examples: *Echinacea purpurea*, Plantain *Plantago spp.*, Myrrh, Garlic *Allium sativum*, Thyme, Eucalyptus, Wild Indigo *Baptisia L.*, Sage
- Anxiolytic:** Also called anti-anxiety or anti-panic. Herbs that are used for the treatment of anxiety, and its related psychological and physical symptoms. Anxiolytics have been shown to be useful in the treatment of anxiety disorders.
- Examples: **Kava Kava** *Piper methysticum*
- Aperient:** A mild and gentle laxative. Promote only the natural bowel movement and function. Bulk forming herbs soak up water in the gut, creating a larger volume of softer stool;
- Examples: Agar-Agar, Asparagus, Boneset *Eupatorium perfoliatum*, Borage, Burdock *Arctium lappa*, Pot Marigold *Calendula*, Cucumber, Curly Dock *Rumex crispus*. Dandelion *Taraxacum officinale*, Dyer's Broom, Elder *Sambucus L.*, Fig, Flax Seed, Fringe Tree *Chionanthus L.*, Guar Gum, Licorice Root *Glycyrrhiza lepidota*, Olive Oil, Plum, Prunes, Psyllium, Raisins, Restharrow, Rhubarb root *Rheum rhabarbarum*, Rose, Rose Hips, Senna, Turtlebloom, Witch Grass
- Aphrodisiac:** Herbs that increase sexual potency or excitement.
- Example: Artichoke, *Astragalus membranaceus*, Burdock *Arctium lappa*, Carline Thistle, Celery, Clove, Coriander, Damiana, European Vervain *Verbena officinalis*, False Unicorn, Fennel, Fenugreek *Trigonella L.*, Galangal, Ginseng *Panax quinquefolius*, Jasmine, Jimson Weed *Datura stramonium*, Kava Kava, Lettuce, Lovage, Maca Root, Matico, Mint *Mentha L.*, Onion, Plantain *Plantago spp.*, Pride of China, Queen of the Meadow, Saffron, Sarsaparilla Root, Savory, Saw Palmetto *Serenoa repens*, Sundew, Walnut *Juglans nigra*, Water Eryngo
- Aromatic:** These herbs are characterised by a strong, usually pleasant odor that stimulates the digestive system. Often used in cooking to add flavor, they also aid digestion.
- Examples: Allspice, *Angelica*, Anise Seed, Balm, Barberry *Berberis vulgaris*, Buchu, Chamomile *Anthemis L.*, Caraway, Cardamon, Catnip, Cinnamon *Cinnamomum spp.*, Cloves, Coriander, Cubebs, Dill, Fennel, Galangal, Ginger *Zingiber officinale*, Goldenrod *Solidago L.*, Hops *Humulus lupulus*, Juniper, Khus-Khus, Lavender, Marjoram, Matico, Monarda, Nutmeg, Orris Root, Pennyroyal *Mentha pulegium*, Peppermint *Mentha piperita*, Rosemary, Rue, Sage *Salvia officinalis*, Sassafras *Sassafras albidum*, Savory, Star Anise, St John's Wort *Hypericum perforatum*, Sweet Cicely, Sweet Flag, Wax Myrtle, Wild Hyssop, Wood Betony *Stachys officinalis*, Woodruff *Asperula L.*, Wormwood *Artemisia vulgaris*

Medicinal Herbal Actions List

Astringent: Have a binding action on skin or mucous membranes that helps dry up mucous discharge, tone local blood vessels and varicosities, and stop bleeding. Most of these herbs are rich in tannins, compounds used to "tan" leather, which precipitate protein molecules; they produce a leathery, smooth coat over the tissue in question, thus reduce irritation on the surface by a mild numbing, reduce local inflammation by toning the vessels supplying the area, and create a barrier to infection in wounds and burns. Depending on the tissue they act upon, they are used to treat diarrhea, bleeding, mucous discharges, and the discomfort of varicosities and hemorrhoids.

Examples: Agrimony *Agrimonia L.*, Aloe Vera, Alpine Cranberry *Vaccinium vitis-idaea L. spp.*, Amaranth *Amaranthus L.*, Virginia Creeper *Parthenocissus quinquefolia*, Apple Fiber, Bearberry *Uva Ursi* *Arctostaphylos Uva-Ursi*, Bears Garlic *Allium sativum*, Beechdrops, Beet Root, Bennet *Geum urbanum*, Betony *Stachys officinalis*, Bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus*, Birch *Betula spp.*, Trillium (Birthroot) *Trillium spp.*, Bistort *Persicaria bistorta*, Black Alder *Alnus glutinosa*, Black Cohosh *Actaea racemosa*, Pot Marigold *Calendula*, Cayenne *Capsicum annuum*, Cinnamon *Cinnamomum spp.*, Cinquefoil *Potentilla L.*, Comfrey *Symphytum officinale L.*, Cranesbill *Geranium dissectum*, Dandelion Root *Taraxacum officinale*, Dogwood *Cornus spp.*, Elm *Ulmus americana*, Evening Primrose *Oenothera L.*, Eyebright *Euphrasia L.*, Fenugreek *Trigonella L.*, Goldenrod *Solidago L.*, Goldenseal *Hydrastis canadensis*, Great Burnet, Ground Ivy, Hawthorn Berry, Hemlock Spruce, Hemp Nettle, Henna, Herb Robert, Hibiscus (Hibiscus *rosa-sinensis*), Holly *Ilex*, Horse Chestnut, Horseweed, Houndstongue, Houseleek, Hyssop, Kidney Vetch, Knotweed, Lady's Mantle, Laurel, Lemon, Lettuce, Loosetrife *Lythrum spp.*, Lungwort, Madder, Magnolia, Mallow, Marsh Tea, Matico, Meadowsweet *Spiraea spp.*, Milfoil, Motherwort *Leonurus cardiaca*, Mountain Laurel, Mouse Ear, Mullein Leaf, Myrrh, Nettle, New Jersey Tea, Oak bark, Olive Leaf, Peppermint *Mentha piperita*, Periwinkle, Peruvian Bark, Pilewort *Ranunculus ficaria*, Pimpernel, Pipsissewa *Chimaphila umbellata*, Pitcher Plant, Plantain *Plantago spp.*, Plum, Pomegranite, Pride of China, Privet, Queen of the Meadow, Radish, Raspberry Leaf *Rubus idaeus*, Red Eyebright *Euphrasia L.*, Rhatany, Rhubarb *Rheum rhabarbarum*, Rockrose *Cistus L.*, Rose, Rosehips, Rosemary, Rowan, Sage *Salvia officinalis*, St John's Wort *Hypericum perforatum*, Sandalwood, Sanicle, Savory, Senna (Purging Cassia), Shinleaf, Solomon's Seal, Sorrel, Spotted Cranesbill *Geranium dissectum*, Squaw Vine *Mitchella repens*, Sticklewort, Storksbill, Sumac, Sweet Fern, Sweet Gum, Sycamore Maple, Tormentil, Vervain *Verbena officinalis*, Walnut *Juglans nigra*, Water Avens, Wax Myrtle, White Pond Lily, Wild Cherry Bark *Prunus virginiana*, Wild Indigo *Baptisia L.*, Wild Strawberry, Willow *Salix spp.*, Wintergreen *Gaultheria procumbens*, Witch Hazel, Woundwort, Yarrow *Achillea millefolium*, Yellow Dock *Rumex crispus*, Water Dock *Rumex orbiculatus*, Yellow Toadflax, Yucca Root

Bactericidal: Herbs that kill bacteria.

Examples; *Echinacea purpurea*, Myrrh, Garlic *Allium sativum*, Thyme, Eucalyptus, Wild Indigo *Baptisia L.*, Sage

Bitter: The bitter taste of these herbs seems to stimulate the release of digestive hormones in the gut. This stimulates appetite, and is of value in convalescence. It helps normalize the secretory functions of pancreas, duodenum, and liver. It increases the secretion of bile, and aids the liver in detoxification. There is also evidence that these herbs help the gut wall repair local damage. Note that these herbs should not generally be used in pregnancy (anything that increases gut contractions can also increase uterine contractility) Also called BITTER TONICS.

Examples: Rue, Gentian, Wild Lettuce *Lactuca canadensis*, Wormwood *Artemisia vulgaris*, Rue, Gentian

Carminative: These herbs are generally rich in aromatic oils. Their main action is to soothe and settle the gut wall, easing gripping and allowing the removal of gas. Many of the aromatic herbs have a carminative effect.

Examples: Allspice, *Angelica*, Anise, Astragalus, Balm, Basil, Betony *Stachys officinalis*, Bergamot *Monarda citriodora*, Brier Hip, Buchu, Caraway, Cardamom, Carline Thistle, Carrot, Catnip, Cayenne *Capsicum annuum*, Celery, Chamomile *Anthemis L.*, Chickweed *Stellaria media*, Cinnamon *Cinnamomum spp.*, Cloves, Coriander, Cubeb, Dill, Fennel, Ferula, Feverfew, Garlic *Allium sativum*, Ginger *Zingiber officinale*, Goldenrod *Solidago L.*, Hyssop, Juniper, Laurel, Lavender, Lemon Balm *Melissa officinalis*, Lemongrass *Cymbopogon L.*, Lovage, Marjoram, Masterwort, Milfoil, Monarda, Myrrh, Nutmeg, Onion, Orange, Parsley, Pennyroyal *Mentha pulegium*, Peppermint *Mentha piperita*, Pimpernel, Pleurisy Root, Rue, Sage *Salvia officinalis*, Sarsaparilla *Smilax aristolochiifolia*, Savory, Star Anise, Sweet Cicely, Sweet Flag, Thyme, Valerian *Valeriana officinalis*, Wild Ginger *Zingiber officinale*, Wild Cherry Bark *Prunus virginiana*, Wild Hyssop, Wintergreen *Gaultheria procumbens*, Wormwood *Artemisia vulgaris*, Yerba Santa *Eriodictyon californicum*

Cathartic: Herbs that clean waste material from the whole digestive system, including bowels, liver, and gall bladder. Can have a very strong effect. Due to the considerable gripping they produce, are often used with ginger. Strong cathartics are often listed as poisonous, and should be used with caution. Contrast with APERIENTS and LAXATIVES.

Example: Aloes, Asarum, Bird's Tongue, Black Root *Leptandra Virginica*, Blue Flag *Iris versicolor*, Boneset *Eupatorium perfoliatum*, Buck Bean, Castor Bean, Dogbane, Elder *Sambucus L.*, Hellebore, Holly *Ilex*, Jalap, Mandrake *Mandragora L.*, Mezereum *Daphne mezereum*, Mulberry, Pokeweed *Phytolacca americana*, Scotch Broom, Senega Snakeroot, Senna, Stillingia, Walnut(Butternut), Wild Jalap, Yellow Toadflax

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- Cholagogue:** These herbs stimulate the flow of bile from the liver. Most of the remedies classified as BITTERS or HEPATICS also have cholagogue function. Bile aids in the digestion and assimilation of fats and fat-soluble nutrients. It also acts as a mild laxative to keep the bowels moving smoothly and prevent accumulation of material that could become toxic.
- Examples: Aloe Vera, Artichokes, Balmony, Barberry *Berberis vulgaris*, Black Root *Leptandra Virginica*, Blue or American Gentian, Burdock *Arctium lappa*, Pot Marigold *Calendula*, Cat's Foot, Chicory, Dandelion *Taraxacum officinale*, Elder *Sambucus L.*, Elecampane, European Centaury, Fern, Fumitory *Fumaria*, Fringed Gentian, Fringetree, Garlic *Allium sativum*, Goldenseal *Hydrastis canadensis*, Heather, Hedge Bindweed, Hemp Agrimony *Agrimonia L.*, Lavender, Licorice Root *Glycyrrhiza lepidota*, Linden, Milk Thistle *Silybum marianum*, Mint *Mentha L.*, Mouse Ear, Mugwort, Olive, Radish, Red Pimpernel, Red Clover *Trifolium pratense*, Rosemary, Senna, Soapwort *Saponaria L.*, Stiff Gentian or Gallweed, Turtlebloom, Wormwood *Artemisia vulgaris*, Yarrow *Achillea millefolium*, Yellow Dock *Rumex crispus*, Yellow Gentian, Yerba mate
- Cicatrisant:** Herbs that aid wound healing. See VULNERARIES.
- Examples: Hounds tooth, Comfrey *Symphytum officinale L.*, Plantain *Plantago spp.*
- Demulcent:** Herbs rich in mucilage which soothe and protect inflamed or irritated tissue. When they are used on the skin, demulcent herbs are called EMOLLIENTS. Depending on where they work, they can reduce irritation in the bowel and help heal ulcers, ease cough, or relax painful spasm in the bladder, ureters, and sometimes even the uterus.
- Examples: Acacia, Almond, Althea, Barley, Apple Fiber, Burdock *Arctium lappa*, Chickweed *Stellaria media*, Cinnamon *Cinnamomum spp.*, Colombo, Comfrey *Symphytum officinale L.*, Dulse, Elm *Ulmus americana*, Fenugreek *Trigonella L.*, Fig Tree, Flax, Ginseng (Panax schin-seng), Great Burnet, Gum Plant, Hibiscus (*Hibiscus esculentus*), Hollyhock, Iceland Moss, Indian Corn, Irish Moss, Kelp, Licorice Root *Glycyrrhiza lepidota*, Lungwort, Mallow, Marshmallow Root, Milk Thistle *Silybum marianum*, Mullein *Verbascum thapsus*, Oat Straw, Olive, Pansy, Plantain *Plantago spp.*, Slippery Elm Bark, White Pond Lily, Wild Daisy, Witch Grass
- Deobstruent:** These herbs will remove obstructions from the alimentary canal and other areas.
- Examples: Barberry *Berberis vulgaris* (liver), Culver's Root (bowel), Goldenseal *Hydrastis canadensis* (glands), Gravel Root (kidneys), Hydrangea Root (kidneys), Plantain (blood, kidneys)
- Depurative:** A term synonymous with ALTERATIVE.
- Desiccant:** Herbs that will dry surfaces by absorbing moisture.
- Examples: Agar Agar, Bladderwrack Powder, Corn Starch, Marshmallow Powder, Slippery Elm Powder
- Detoxicant:** Herbs that support the liver in removing toxic substances from the body. See HEPATIC. Contrast with ANTITOXINS, which work against specific toxins.
- Diaphoretic:** Herbs that promote sweating. This can help the vital function of removing waste products through the skin. Or it can help cool the body during a fever. They are thought to work by dilating the capillaries in the skin, which stimulates the sweat glands. Many of these herbs work as diaphoretics if taken hot, but as DIURETICS if taken cold.
- Examples: Burdock *Arctium lappa*, Bergamot *Monarda citriodora*, Pot Marigold *Calendula*, Cayenne Capsicum annum, Chamomile *Anthemis L.*, Ginger *Zingiber officinale*, Lemon Balm *Melissa officinalis*, Peppermint *Mentha piperita*, Rosemary, and Spearmint Leaf
- Stimulating:** *Angelica*, Blessed Thistle *Cnicus benedictus*, Boneset *Eupatorium perfoliatum*, Buchu, Elder Flowers, Ephedra, Garlic *Allium sativum*, Horseradish, Hyssop, Pennyroyal *Mentha pulegium*, Peppermint *Mentha piperita*, Sage *Salvia officinalis*, Spearmint *Mentha spicata*, Yarrow *Achillea millefolium*
- Neutral:** Horehound, Safflower, Sarsaparilla *Smilax aristolochiifolia*, Sassafras *Sassafras albidum*.
- Relaxing:** Burdock *Arctium lappa*, Pot Marigold *Calendula*, Catnip, Chamomile *Anthemis L.*, Lemon Balm *Melissa officinalis*, Motherwort *Leonurus cardiaca*, Mugwort, Passion Flower *Passiflora incarnata*, Pleurisy Root, Thyme, Vervain *Verbena officinalis*, Willow *Salix spp.* Wild Yam
- Discutient:** Herbs which act by dissolving abnormal growths and tumors.
- Examples: Black Walnut Bark *Juglans nigra*, Bloodroot, Burdock Root *Arctium lappa*, Cabbage Leaf, Chaparral *Larrea tridentata*, Devil's Claw *Harpagophytum procumbens*, Garlic *Allium sativum*, Sanicle, Red Clover

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- Diuretic:** Herbs that increase the formation and flow of urine. They are used to treat water retention, obesity, lymphatic swellings, nerve inflammations such as lumbago and sciatica, infections of the urinary tract, skin eruptions, and kidney stones. Whenever a Diuretic is given, a lesser amount of Demulcent herb is also given to buffer the effect of the diuretic on the kidneys (especially when the Diuretic contains irritating properties) and to protect the tissues from the movement of kidney stones.
- Examples: Bearberry, Bergamot *Monarda citriodora*, Couch Grass, Cranberry, Buchu, Corn Silk, Dandelion, Garlic Mustard *Alliaria petiolata*, Wild Lettuce *Lactuca canadensis*.
- Emetic:** Herbs that cause vomiting. They have been used in the past in conditions characterized by a great deal of mucus, to clear the mucus from the body. In modern herbalism, they are used to cause forceful emptying in cases of poisoning.
- Examples: Ipecacuanha *Cephaelis ipecacuanha*, Adder's Tongue, American Hellebore, Asarum, Black Alder *Alnus glutinosa*, Red Alder, Smooth Alder, Black Root *Leptandra virginica*, Bloodroot, Blue Vervain *Verbena officinalis*, Boneset *Eupatorium perfoliatum*, Carlina Thistle, Dogbane, Dog Poison, Dog's Mercury, Elder *Sambucus L.*, European Centaury, Garden Violet, Hellebore, Hemp Agrimony *Agrimonia L.*, Holly *Ilex*, *Lobelia*, Mezereum *Daphne mezereum*, Milkweed *Asclepias L.*, American Mistletoe *Phoradendron leucarpum*, Nightshade, Peyote, Pilewort *Ranunculus ficaria*, Pride of China, Rockrose *Cistus L.*, St. Benedict Thistle, Scotch Broom, Senega Snakeroot, Skunk Cabbage, Solomon's Seal, Spurge (Cypress, Flowering, Garden, Milk-Purslane, Petty), Stillingia, Twinleaf *Jeffersonia diphylla*, Water Eryngo, Wild Indigo *Baptisia L.*, Wild Yam
- Emmenagogue:** Herbs that stimulate menstrual flow, often used to refer to all herbs that normalise and tone the female reproductive system, although these remedies would better be called uterine tonics.
- Examples: **Examples of strong Emmenagogues:** Black Cohosh *Actaea racemosa*, Juniper Berries, and Pennyroyal *Mentha pulegium*
Herbs with some Emmenagogue properties include: American Centaury, *Angelica*, Balm, Aloe Vera, Bergamot *Monarda citriodora*, Birthwort, Bloodroot, Blue Cohosh *Caulophyllum thalictroides*, Brooklime, Caraway, Chamomile *Anthemis L.*, Chicory, Trillium (Birthroot) *Trillium spp.*, Cotton, Ergot, European Vervain *Verbena officinalis*, False Unicorn Root, Flax, Fraxinella, Hellebore, Hibiscus (*Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*), Hyssop, Imperial Masterwort, Lemon Balm *Melissa officinalis*, Lovage, Madder, Motherwort *Leonurus cardiaca*, Nettle Leaf *Urtica dioica*, Parsley, Pot Marigold *Calendula*, Pride of China, Ragwort *Packera spp.*, Rosemary, Rue, Saffron, Shepherd's Purse *Capsella bursa-pastoris*, Squaw Vine *Mitchella repens*, Sumac, Sweet Flag, Tansy *Tanacetum L.*, Tarragon, Thuja, Wood Sorrel *Oxalis spp.*, Yarrow *Achillea millefolium*
- Emollient:** See DEMULCENT...emollients have a soothing and healing effect like demulcents, but specifically on the skin.
- Examples: Aloe Vera, Chickweed *Stellaria media*, Fenugreek *Trigonella L.*, Flax seed, Kelp, Marshmallow Root, Plantain *Plantago spp.*, Slippery Elm Bark
- Estrogenic:** Herbs that normalize the balance of estrogens in the body. Often supply compounds the body can make into estrogens if more are needed. These herbs are often used to ease the symptoms of menopause.
- Examples: *Angelica*, *Motherwort Leonurus cardiaca*, Wild Yam
- Expectorant:** Herbs that help the body to remove excess mucous from the lungs. Stimulating expectorants work by irritating the lining of the bronchioles to stimulate expulsion of mucous; examples include Balm of Gilead, Elecampagne, Violet, and White Horehound. Many of these herbs can act as EMETICS in large doses. The relaxing expectorants soothe bronchial spasm and promote the production of a more watery mucous that is easier to cough up;
- Examples: Coltsfoot, Eyebright *Euphrasia L.*, Fenugreek *Trigonella L.*, Hyssop, Lemongrass *Cymbopogon L.*, Licorice Root *Glycyrrhiza lepidota*, Marshmallow *Althaea officinalis*, Mullein *Verbascum thapsus*, Nettle Leaf *Urtica dioica*, Plantain *Plantago spp.*, Red Clover *Trifolium pratense*, Slippery Elm Bark, Wild Cherry Bark *Prunus virginiana*, Yucca Root *Yucca schidigera*, and Yerba Santa *Eriodictyon californicum*
- Febrifuge:** Herbs that reduce fever. Herbalists understand that a fever is the body's way of fighting off an infection. As long as the body is able to eliminate waste, they do not typically use herbs to reduce fever. They may also lower a fever when it has some beneficial effect on the infection or inflammation causing the fever. They will also lower fever if for some reason the body's ability to eliminate waste has been compromised. They will first attempt to repair the waste eliminating system that is not functioning properly, and try to use herbs that support the immune system and the other cleansing processes of the body. They may give DIAPHORETICS to lower body temperature by promoting perspiration, and help the body cleanse. Or they may give circulatory STIMULANTS to increase blood flow to the skin and so promote a cleansing sweat. ALTERATIVES can act through an ANTI-MICROBIAL action, or through stimulation of the immune system, and can also help the body clear out the toxic waste products of an infective process.
- Fungicide:** Herbs that kill fungus. See ANTI-MICROBIAL.
- Galactagogue:** Herbs that increase lactation. Generally need to be used in the context of a very good diet and general health to be effective.

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Examples: Anise Seed, Basil, Borage, Caraway, Cleavers *Galium aparine*, Cumin, Dandelion Root *Taraxacum officinale*, Dill, European Vervain *Verbena officinalis*, Fennel, Fenugreek *Trigonella L.*, Goat's Rue, Iceland Moss, Milk Thistle *Silybum marianum*, Milkwort, Nettle *Urtica dioic*

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- Haemostatic:** Herbs which stop or prevent bleeding. ASTRINGENTS are often haemostatic.
Examples: Bayberry (Sweet Gale, Wax-Myrtle) *Myrica gale* (Uterus), Beth Root (General), Black Alder *Alnus glutinosa*, Blackberry (Uterus), Bistort *Persicaria bistorta*, Black Cohosh (Lungs), Cayenne (Powerful), Club Moss, Comfrey *Symphytum officinale* L, Cranesbill *Geranium dissectum*, Ergot, Goldenseal *Hydrastis canadensis* (Uterus, bowels), Great Burnett, Horsetail, Knotweed, Mullein (Bowels, general), Nettles *Urtica dioica* Sting Nettle Root (General), Plantain *Plantago spp.*, Raspberry Leaf *Rubus idaeus*, Red Alder, Shave Grass, Shepherd's Purse *Capsella bursa-pastoris*, Smooth Alder, Storksbill (Uterus), Tormentil, White Oak Bark (General), Witch Hazel, Yarrow *Achillea millefolium*
- Hepatic:** Herbs that support the function of the liver. They tone, strengthen, and in some cases increase bile flow (see CHOLAGOGUE). BITTERS often exert their function through stimulation of the liver. Important for general health as the liver is the primary organ responsible for removing toxins from the body.
Examples: Agrimony *Agrimonia L.*, Aloe Vera, Asparagus, Barberry *Berberis vulgaris*, Bayberry (Sweet Gale, Wax-Myrtle) *Myrica gale*, Blue Flag *Iris versicolor*, Boldo, Buckthorn, Carrot, Cascara Sagrada *Frangula alnus*, Curly Dock *Rumex crispus*, Dandelion *Taraxacum officinale*, Fennel, Garden Sage *Salvia officinalis*, Hyssop, Mandrake *Mandragora L.*, Milk Thistle *Silybum marianum*, Poke Root, Self-Heal, Wild Yam, Wood Betony *Stachys officinalis*
- Hypnotic:** Herbs that help induce sleep. This effect can result from muscle-relaxing properties, volatile oils that reduce psychological tension, or remedies that act on the nervous system itself. Almost any hypnotic remedy can become addictive if used consistently for any long period. Should be used as part of a holistic approach to sleeplessness, including exercise, diet, relaxation exercises, and counselling regarding sources of stress.
Examples: Hops *Humulus lupulus*, **Kava Kava** *Piper methysticum*, Passion Flower *Passiflora incarnata*, Skullcap *Scutellaria L.*, Valerian *Valeriana officinalis*, Wild Lettuce *Lactuca canadensis*
- Hypoglycemic:** Herbs that help regulate and reduce blood sugar.
Examples: Burdock *Arctium lappa*, Garlic
- Hypotensive:** See ANTI-HYPERTENSIVE.
- Immunostimulant:** herbs which stimulate the immune system.
Examples: **Astragalus** *Astragalus membranaceus*, Burdock *Arctium lappa*, **Echinacea** *Echinacea purpurea*, Stinging **Nettles** *Urtica dioica*, Yarrow *Achillea millefolium*,
- Laxative:** Herbs that promote contractions of the bowels to stimulate removal of feces. Generally differentiated from the gentler APERIENTS which promote normal bowel activity, in that these stronger herbs act by irritating the bowels so they evacuate more forcefully.
Examples: Agave, Aloe Vera, Apple tree bark, Asparagus, Black Walnut Bark *Juglans nigra*, Cascara, Chickweed *Stellaria media*, Dog's Mercury, Ferula *Ferula foetida*, Fig tree, Fumitory *Fumaria*, Garden Violet, Larch, Licorice Root *Glycyrrhiza lepidota*, Lily of the Valley, Mexican Damiana, Olive, Pansy, Peach tree, Plum *Prunus domestica* *Prunus americana*, Pokeweed *Phytolacca americana*, Raspberry *Rubus idaeus*, Senna, Sorrel, Tamarind, Wahoo*, Walnut *Juglans cinerea*, Wild Daisy, Wild Oregon Grape Root *Mahonia Nutt.*, Yellow Parilla, Yerba Mate, Yucca Root
- Lithotriptic:** Herbs that help to dissolve and eliminate urinary and biliary stones and gravel.
Examples: **For kidney and bladder stones**, use Parsley, **Dandelion** *Taraxacum officinale*, and **Nettle Leaf** *Urtica dioica*. **For the gallbladder**, use Wild Cherry Bark *Prunus virginiana*, and Cascara Sagrada *Frangula alnus*
- Lymphatic:** Herbs that will stimulate and cleanse the lymphatic system.
Examples: Black Walnut Bark *Juglans nigra*, Chaparral *Larrea tridentata*, **Dandelion** *Taraxacum officinale*, Dock *Rumex crispus*, *Echinacea purpurea*, **Garlic** *Allium sativum*, Oregon Grape Root *Mahonia Nutt.*, **Poke**,
- Lypolytic:** Herbs that normalize lipids in the body. These herbs are gaining attention as we learn more about the effects of the ratios of different types of lipids in the causation of heart disease.
Examples: **Dong Quai**, **Garlic**
- Narcotic:** Powerful ANODYNES which often also have HYPNOTIC function.
Example: Ghost Pipe *Monotropa uniflora*, **Kava Kava** *Piper methysticum*, Opium Poppy *Papaver somniferum*, Wild Lettuce *Lactuca canadensis*

Medicinal Herbal Actions List

- Nervine:** Herbs that exert an effect on the nervous system. See the categories below.
- Examples: **Nervine Relaxant:** Herbs that promote relaxation of the nervous system. Often act to sedate or produce sleep, or to relax muscles. Black Cohosh *Actaea racemosa*, **Catnip**, **Chamomile** *Anthemis L.*, Hyssop, **Kava Kava** *Piper methysticum*, Linden blossom, Musk-mallow *Malva moschata*, Passion Flower *Passiflora incarnata*, Black Haw, Cramp Bark, **Lady's Slipper** *Cypripedium acaule*, Hops *Humulus lupulus*, **California Poppy**, **Lavender**, Pleurisy Root, **St John's Wort** *Hypericum perforatum*, **Valerian** *Valeriana officinalis*, Wild Lettuce *Lactuca canadensis*
- Nervine Stimulant:** Herbs that stimulate the nervous system. Coffee, Tea, Mate, Kola Nut
- Nervine Tonic:** Herbs that support and strengthen the nervous system. Oats, **St John's Wort** *Hypericum perforatum*, Vervain *Verbena officinalis*, **Skullcap** *Scutellaria L.*
- Nutritive:** Herbs that nourish the body. Useful in convalescence or anorexia.
- Examples: Marshmallow *Althaea officinalis*, Hemp seeds
- Oxytocic:** These herbs will promote and can assist in easier childbirth. See Uterine Tonic
- Examples: Birthwort, Blue Cohosh *Caulophyllum thalictroides*, Marijuana *Cannabis sativa*, Cotton, Ergot, Peruvian Bark, Shepherd's Purse *Capsella bursa-pastoris*
- Parasiticide:** Herbs that destroy parasites in the digestive tract or on the skin.
- Examples: Blackberry, Black Walnut Bark *Juglans nigra*, Chamomile *Anthemis L.*, Cinnamon Oil, Chaparral *Larrea tridentata*, Cloves, Echinacea *Echinacea purpurea*, False Unicorn, Garlic *Allium sativum*, Gentian, Nettle Leaf *Urtica dioica*, Rue, Thyme, Wood Betony *Stachys officinalis*, Wormwood *Artemisia vulgaris*
- Parturient:** Herbs that support and facilitate the birthing process. These are often Uterine Tonics or stimulants. See Oxytocic
- Examples: Black Cohosh *Actaea racemosa*, Blue Cohosh *Caulophyllum thalictroides*, Chaste Berry, False Unicorn Root, Motherwort *Leonurus cardiaca*, Raspberry *Rubus idaeus*, Squaw Vine *Mitchella repens*
- Pectoral:** Herbs that strengthen the lungs. All expectorants are pectorals, but this class includes herbs that aid the lungs through other actions as well.
- Examples: Elecampagne, **Lobelia**, Blood Root, **Mullein** *Verbascum thapsus*, **Pleurisy Root**
- Relaxant:** Herbs which induce relaxation. See Nervine
- Examples: Black Cohosh *Actaea racemosa*, **Catnip**, **Chamomile** *Anthemis L.*, **Ghost Pipe** *Monotropa uniflora*, Hyssop, **Kava Kava** *Piper methysticum*, Linden blossom, Musk-mallow *Malva moschata*, Passion Flower *Passiflora incarnata*, Black Haw, Cramp Bark, Lady's Slipper *Cypripedium acaule*, Hops *Humulus lupulus*, **California Poppy**, **Lavender**, Pleurisy Root, **St John's Wort** *Hypericum perforatum*, **Valerian** *Valeriana officinalis*, Wild Lettuce *Lactuca canadensis*
- Restorative:** See ALTERATIVE
- Rubefacient:** Herbs that increase the flow of blood at the surface of the skin and produce redness where they are applied. Their function is to draw inflammation and congestion from deeper areas. They are useful for the treatment of arthritis, rheumatism, and other joint problems and for sprains.
- Examples: Bergamot *Monarda citriodora*, Buttercup *Ranunculus L.*, **Cayenne** *Capsicum annum*, **Cinnamon** *Cinnamomum spp.*, Cowslip, Ginger *Zingiber officinale*, Hellebore, **Horseradish**, Juniper, Knotweed, Mezereum *Daphne mezereum*, Monarda, Mustard Seed, **Mullein** *Verbascum thapsus*, Olive Leaf, Pasque Flower, Peppermint Oil, Prickly Ash *Zanthoxylum L.*, Rosemary Oil, Rue, Thyme Oil, Wheatgrass *Triticum aestivum*, Powder
- Sedative:** Herbs that strongly quiet the nervous system. These will include antispasmodic and nervine.
- Examples: Birch *Betula lenta*, Black Cohosh *Actaea racemosa*, Black Haw, Bloodroot, Bugleweed (arterial, nervine), **Catnip**, Celery seeds, **Chamomile** *Anthemis L.*, Coral Root, Ferula *Ferula foetida*, Feverweed, Garden Sage *Salvia officinalis*, Goldthread, Hawthorn, Hops *Humulus lupulus*, Hyssop, **Indian Pipe** *Monotropa uniflora*, **Kava Kava** *Piper methysticum*, Lavender, Lady's Slipper *Cypripedium acaule*, Lemon Balm *Melissa officinalis*, Lettuce, Monkshood *Aconitum L.*, Mountain Laurel, New Jersey Tea, Passion Flower *Passiflora incarnata*, Peach Tree, Pennyroyal *Mentha pulegium*, Peony, Peppermint *Mentha piperita*, Periwinkle *Vinca minor*, Red Clover *Trifolium pratense*, Saffron, Saw Palmetto *Serenoa repens*, **Skullcap** *Scutellaria L.*, Sorrel, Spearmint *Mentha spicata*, **St John's Wort** *Hypericum perforatum*, Sweet Flag, Thyme, **Valerian** *Valeriana officinalis*, Black Cherry *Prunus serotina*, Wild Lettuce *Lactuca canadensis*, Witch Hazel, Wood Betony *Stachys officinalis*, Yellow Jessamine *Gelsemium sempervirens*

Medicinal Herbal Actions List

- Sialagogue:** Substances that stimulate the flow of saliva and thus aid in the digestion of starches.
Examples: Beet Root, Betel Nut *Piper betle*, Black Pepper, Blue Flag *Iris versicolor*, **Cayenne** *Capsicum annuum*, Currant *Ribes rubrum*, *Echinacea purpurea*, European Centaury, **Ginger** *Zingiber officinale*, Lemon, **Licorice Root** *Glycyrrhiza lepidota*, Moneywort *Lysimachia nummularia*, Prickly Ash *Zanthoxylum L.*, Quassia *Picrasma excelsa* Rooibos African Red Tea, Senega Snakeroot, Seven Barks (Hydrangea), Water Eryngo, Yerba Santa *Eriodictyon californicum*
- Soporifics:** Herbs that will assist in giving a restful and relaxing sleep.
Examples: Black Cohosh *Actaea racemosa*, Catnip, Hops *Humulus lupulus* , **Kava Kava** *Piper methysticum*, Lady's Slipper *Cypripedium acaule*, Motherwort *Leonurus cardiaca*, Mullein *Verbascum thapsus*, Passion Flower *Passiflora incarnata*, Skullcap *Scutellaria L.*, Valerian *Valeriana officinalis*, Vervain *Verbena officinalis*
- Spasmolytic:** See ANTISPASMODIC.
- Stimulant:** Generally, herbs that cause an increase in body functions. In older herbals, this term refers specifically to stimulants of the circulatory system;
Examples: Bayberry (Sweet Gale, Wax-Myrtle) *Myrica gale*, Bergamot *Monarda citriodora*, Cayenne *Capsicum annuum*, .Prickly Ash *Zanthoxylum L.*, Yarrow *Achillea millefolium*. See CARDIAC.
- Stomachic:** Herbs that tone and stimulate action of the stomach. See BITTER.
- Styptic:** Herbs that will stop bleeding, both internal and external.
Examples: Bennet *Geum urbanum*, Beth Root, Bistort *Persicaria bistorta*, Blackberry, Blind Nettle, Cranesbill *Geranium dissectum*, Horsetail, Horseweed, Loosestrife *Lythrum spp.*, Matico, **Plantain** *Plantago spp.*, Rhatany, Sanicle *Sanicula europaea*, Shepherd's Purse, Spotted Cranebill, Tormentil, White Oak Bark, Witch Hazel, Woundwort, **Yarrow** *Achillea millifolium*
- Thymoleptic:** Herbs that raise the mood and counteract depression. With the advent of modern pharmacology, it has been found that these herbs have an action on the chemicals that transmit nerve impulses in the brain; these "neurotransmitters" have been found to be in imbalance in most cases of severe depression.
Examples: **St John's Wort** *Hypericum perforatum*, **Passion Flower** *Passiflora incarnata*
- Tonic:** Herbs that strengthen and support the function of a specific organ or, in some herbals, the whole body.
Examples: Alfalfa *Medicago sativa*, Apple Fiber, Burdock *Arctium lappa*, Cayenne *Capsicum annuum*, Dandelion Root *Taraxacum officinale*, Eyebright *Euphrasia L.*, Fenugreek *Trigonella L.*, Ginseng *Panax L.*, Hawthorn Berry, Hops *Humulus lupulus* , Milk Thistle *Silybum marianum*, Common Plantain *Plantago spp.*, and Yerba Mate
- Specific Tonics**
- Blood:** Chaparral *Larrea tridentata*, *Echinacea purpurea*, Garlic
 - Cardiac:** Black Cohosh *Actaea racemosa*, Bugleweed, Foxglove *Digitalis purpurea*, Hawthorne, Ginseng *Panax L.*, Hawthorn, Hedge Hyssop, Hellebore, Lily of the Valley, Lime blossom, American Mistletoe *Phoradendron leucarpum*, Monarda, Motherwort *Leonurus cardiaca*, Peyote, Raspberry *Rubus idaeus*, Wahoo
 - Gall Bladder:** Goldenseal *Hydrastis canadensis*, Oregon Grape Root *Mahonia Nutt.*, Parsley, Wild Yam
 - Intestinal:** Barberry *Berberis vulgaris*, Blackberry Leaves, Cascara Sagrada *Frangula alnus*, Cranesbill *Geranium dissectum*, Goldenseal *Hydrastis canadensis*
 - Kidney:** American Mistletoe *Phoradendron leucarpum*, Buchu, Burdock Root *Arctium lappa*, Cleavers, **Dandelion** *Taraxacum officinale*, Fo-ti, Horsetail, Kava Kava, Parsley, Pipsissewa *Chimaphila umbellata*, Saw Palmetto *Serenoa repens*, Uva Ursi.
 - Liver:** Barberry *Berberis vulgaris*, Buckthorn Bark, Cascara Sagrada *Frangula alnus*, **Dandelion** *Taraxacum officinale*, Eyebright *Euphrasia L.*, Fo-ti, Goldenseal *Hydrastis canadensis*, Mandrake *Mandragora L.*, Stoneroot.
 - Lung:** Beth Root, Comfrey *Symphytum officinale L.*, Elecampane, Fenugreek *Trigonella L.*, Garlic *Allium sativum*, Lungwort, Ploveris Root
 - Nerve:** American Mistletoe *Phoradendron leucarpum*, Celery, Chamomile *Anthemis L.*, Hops *Humulus lupulus* , Lady's Slipper *Cypripedium acaule*, *Lobelia*, American Valerian *Valeriana officinalis*
 - Sexual:** (1) Female - Black Haw, Damiana, Don Quai, False Unicorn, Ginseng *Panax L.*, **Squaw Vine** *Mitchella repens*
 (2) Male - Damiana, Ginseng *Panax L.*, **Plantain** *Plantago spp.*, Sarsaparilla *Smilax aristolochiifolia*, **Saw Palmetto** *Serenoa repens*
 - Uterine** Tone and normalize the function of the female reproductive system. Black Cohosh *Actaea racemosa*, Blue Cohosh *Caulophyllum thalictroides*, Chaste Berry, False Unicorn Root, Motherwort *Leonurus cardiaca*, Raspberry *Rubus idaeus*, Shepherd's Purse *Capsella bursa-pastoris*, **Squaw Vine** *Mitchella repens*

Medicinal Herbal Actions List

Vasoconstrictor: Herbs which reduce blood flow.

Examples: **Ma Huang** *Ephedra sinica*, **Witch Hazel** *Hamamelis virginiana*, **Goldenseal** *Hydrastis canadensis*, **Bugleweed** *Lycopus virginicus*

Vasodilator: Herbs which Increase blood flow.

Examples: **Yarrow** *Achillea millefolium*, **Garlic** *Allium sativum*, **Horseradish** *Amoracia rusticana*, **Barberry** *Berberis vulgaris*, **Black Cohosh** *Cimicifuga racemosa*, **Coleus forskholii** *Coleus*, **Goldenthread** *Coptis spp.*, **Hawthorn** *Crataegus spp.*, **Siberian ginseng** *Eleutherococcus senticosus*, **Ginkgo Biloba**, **Lemon Balm** *Melissa officinalis*, **Olive Leaf** *Olea europaea*, **Chinese Ginseng** *Panax ginseng*, **Parsley** *Petroselinum crispum*, **Skullcap** *Scutellaria L.*, **Linden Flower** *Tilia europaea*, **Fenugreek** *Trigonella foenum-graecum*, **Nettles** *Urtica dioica*, **Valerian** *Valeriana officinalis*, **Cramp Bark**, **(Black Haw)** *Viburnum spp.*, **American Hellebore** *Veratrum viride*, **Vervain** *Verbena officinalis*, **Prickly Ash** *Xanthoxylum americanum*, **Ginger** *Zingiber officinale*

Vermicide: Herbs that kill intestinal worms. See ANTHELMINTIC.

Vermifuge: Herbs that promote expulsion of intestinal worms. See ANTHELMINTIC.

Vulnerary: Herbs that help wounds or inflammations to heal; can refer to lesions of the skin or mucus membranes. Many ASTRINGENTS, DEMULCENTS, and EMOLLIENTS have vulnerary actions. Sometimes the vulnerary function is due to tannins producing an impervious layer that protects the wound as it heals. Sometimes mucilage soothes and keeps the tissue moist. Comfrey contains a compound called allantoin, which stimulates cell growth, and helps heal broken bones as well as skin. Comfrey contains hepatotoxic pyrrolizidine alkaloids (PA's). These have been shown to increase the incidents of liver failure. Rats given injections of pure PA's developed cancer. It is therefore not recommended that you take comfrey internally. Herbs with ANTI-MICROBIAL action can also assist wound healing by guarding against infection.

Examples: **Burdock** *Arctium lappa*, **Comfrey** *Symphytum officinale L.*, **Chickweed** *Stellaria media*, **Garlic Mustard** *Alliaria petiolata*, **Goldenseal** *Hydrastis canadensis*, **Marigold**, **Marshmallow** *Althaea officinalis*, **Plantain** *Plantago spp.*, **Yarrow** *Achillea millefolium*, **Willow Bark**.