



Dreaming About Herbs

Herbs for serenity and sleep

August 3rd, 2018 | 10:00-12:00 pm | Thimble Farm

Tensions and anxieties can stress our brains and have us in a wired spiral long after the sun has gone down - all while your body is asking for sleep. Herbs contain powerful calming and even sleep-inducing properties that you can utilize during both daytime and nighttime hyperactivity!

Harvesting Herbs

- Harvest in the morning when possible - recommended for the highest concentrations of plant oils and compounds
- Harvest as cleanly as possible or wash before using or drying (any dirt or yellowing leaves should be removed during harvest, for ease of the user)
- Try not to just attack the plant with scissors. Look for where the new growth shoot are on the stem and harvest above. Take care to always leave 1/3 of the plant so it can bounce back.
- Depending on the part of the plant we desire:
 - **Leaves:** harvest before it flowers to avoid bitterness (ex. thyme, oregano, mint)
 - **Flowers:** harvest after flowering but before the presence of pollen (ex. lavender)
 - **Roots:** harvest in the spring or fall when the plant's center of activity is in its root
- Store fresh herbs in the fridge, in a closed tupperware with a splash of water, open or perforated plastic bag - try for cool place with some humidity. Be mindful that basil especially, will oxidize fast (turn brown like a cut apple or a cut avocado), so use quickly. When I harvest basil, I'll use it that day in infusions. Basil does best in a closed container outside of the fridge.

Relaxing Herbs

Herb	Properties (Source: The Herbal Academy online)	Suggestions
<p>Lavender <i>Perennial</i> Harvest: leaves and flowers</p> 	<p>Lavender has been shown to affect heart rate, blood pressure, and to help in the shift to parasympathetic nervous system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● *May make you drowsy! ● Antimicrobial – helps to fight viral, bacterial, and fungal infections, use in household cleaning supplies ● Headache and general pain relief when used topically and internally ● Hay fever reducer ● Bruises, bug bites, stings, burns, scrapes, scratches irritated skin, mouth ulcers ● Athlete's foot ● Yeast infections ● Muscle soreness or injury ● Menstrual cramping ● Insomnia ● Carminative – plants that are rich in aromatic oils and help to relieve gas, griping, and spasms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tea ● Infuse into an oxymel ● Infuse into honey, oil, or vinegar ● Dry and put into a dream pillow ● Use as a tincture ● Use in a salve, poultice, lotion or balm recipe ● Use the essential oil in a diffuser

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Digestive – used by herbalists to support digestion ● Anxiety, worry, confusion, frustration, anger, hysteria, mood swings, stress, psychological shock of injury 	
<p>Chamomile <i>Annual</i> Harvest: flowers</p> 	<p>Chamomile combats restlessness and insomnia.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● *May make you drowsy! ● Flower contains calcium, magnesium, potassium, and B vitamins (Mars, 2015) ● Nourishes the nervous system and muscles - helps induce a sense of calm while relieving muscle spasms and tightness ● Bitter constituents which help to gently stimulate healthy digestion ● Taken during colds and flus, can encourage sleep as well as reduce fever symptoms such as aches and restlessness ● Used to help ease allergies and makes a soothing eye wash for allergic eyes ● May prevent complications from diabetes (Kato et al, 2008) ● Associated with reduced rates of thyroid cancer (Riza et. al, 2015) ● Topically, this herb is vulnerary, anti-inflammatory, and antiseptic that can be used for promoting skin health and soothing wounds, burns, and rashes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tea ● Infuse into an oxymel ● Infuse into honey, oil, or vinegar ● Dry and put into a dream pillow ● Use as a tincture ● Use in a salve, poultice, lotion or balm recipe ● Use the essential oil in a diffuser
<p>Lemon Balm <i>Perennial</i> Harvest: leaves</p> 	<p>Lemon balm helps with anxiety-related insomnia and like tulsi, promotes calm, happy thoughts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Contains a wide class of chemicals called terpenes which are known to calm nerves and reduce anxiety ● Gentle nervine helps to calm and rejuvenate the nervous system ● Eases nervous tension, insomnia, and headaches ● Restorative to those who are overwrought and exhausted ● Mild antispasmodic action will help to soothe intestinal cramps ● Stimulates the liver and helps to enhance digestion ● Potent antiviral and can be of great help during viral illnesses, such as colds, flu, shingles, and herpes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tea ● Infuse into an oxymel ● Infuse into honey, oil, or vinegar ● Dry and put into a dream pillow ● Use as a tincture ● Use in a salve, poultice, lotion or balm recipe ● Use the essential oil in a diffuser
<p>Mugwort <i>Perennial</i> Harvest: leaves and buds</p> 	<p>Mugwort can help encourage sleep for those with insomnia as well as encourage lucid dreaming.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● *May encourage wild dreaming and can make you sleep less restfully ● *Large amounts of mugwort can induce nausea and vomiting ● Harvest: leaves and buds, use fresh or dried ● Digestive tract and aid in all digestive functions ● Anti-fungal, anti-bacterial, expectorative and anti-asthmatic ● Mild purgative abilities for constipation ● Diuretic properties - for liver, spleen, and kidney health ● Mild narcotic and sedative properties - use to promote sleep in cases of insomnia ● For nervousness, exhaustion ● Use topically on gout and bruises ● Stimulates irregular or suppressed menstruation - stimulates the uterus making it useful for menstrual pain and cramps ● Treats parasitic infections, such as tapeworm, roundworm, and threadworm; also ringworm skin infection ● For gastric disorders, stomach pain, and bowel complaints - also poor appetite, indigestion, motion sickness and stomach acidity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tea ● Infuse into an oxymel ● Infuse into honey, oil, or vinegar ● Dry and put into a dream pillow ● Use as a tincture ● Use in a salve, poultice, lotion or balm recipe ● Use the essential oil in a diffuser

<p>Passion Flower Annual Harvest: flowers</p> 	<p>Passion flower is used to help induce calm of mind and body, readying you for sleep and lowering anxieties.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • *May make you drowsy! • Use for insomnia • Calms strong muscle spasms, particularly those associated with respiratory ailments such as croup, whooping cough, and asthma - also in cases of childhood epilepsy or severe digestive cramping • Aids in ability to slow breathing, allowing for deeper respirations while at the same time lowering the pulse and decreasing the blood pressure • Assists in drug addiction and withdrawal symptoms, specifically with opioid and benzodiazepine addictions - due to ability to bind with the same receptor sites, easing withdrawal symptoms, facilitating a good night's rest, and calming anxious feelings • Use as a poultice to reduce the inflammation of boils and wounds • Antispasmodic and sedative effects for easing fear, tension, and anxiety • Considered milder than valerian (below) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tea • Infuse into an oxymel • Infuse into honey, oil, or vinegar • Use in a salve, poultice, lotion or balm recipe • Use as a tincture
<p>Valerian Perennial Harvest: root</p> 	<p>Valerian is a go-to for insomnia, as well as anxiety stress, and the below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • *May make you drowsy! • Diuretic • Decongestant - can relieve mucus-y coughing • Soothing for coughs and sore throats • Calms the stomach, improves digestion • Controls aggression • Soothes sore muscles and bruises - also menstrual cramps • Good for headaches and other pain relief • Treat addictions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tea • Infuse into an oxymel • Infuse into honey, oil, or vinegar • Use as a tincture • Use in a salve, poultice, lotion or balm recipe
<p>Tulsi Annual Harvest: leaves</p> 	<p>Tulsi calms our anxieties, elevates mood, and promotes calm, happy thoughts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptogen - herb that supports a healthy stress response by balancing different processes in the body including the hormonal cascade, how the immune system functions, and brain chemistry • Antispasmodic – eases muscle cramping • Antimicrobial – helps to fight viral, bacterial, and fungal infections. • Carminative – plants that are rich in aromatic oils and help to relieve gas, griping, and spasms • Digestive – used by herbalists to support digestion • Antidepressant and anxiety-regulating effects - for cognitive function and memory • Antioxidants - boosts the immune system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tea • Infuse into an oxymel • Infuse into honey, oil, or vinegar • Dry and put into a dream pillow • Use as a tincture • Use in a salve, poultice, lotion or balm recipe • Use the essential oil in a diffuser
<p>St. John's Wort Perennial Harvest: flower tops</p> 	<p>St. John's Wort aids in serenity as a mind and body relaxant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nervous system trophorestorative - balance and nourish the nervous system restoring health • Ease anxiety, tension, neuralgias, seasonal affective disorder, and mild to moderate depression • Relieve physical tension and pain - issues such as neuralgias, sciatica, Bell's palsy, head and spine trauma, pinched nerves, after surgical and dental work, any area that is rich in nerve endings • Use when muscles are sore from over-exertion easing shoulder, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tea • Infuse into an oxymel • Infuse into honey, oil, or vinegar • Use as a tincture • Use in a salve, poultice, lotion or balm recipe

	<p>neck, and back pain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Wound repair - stimulates granulation and capillary regeneration, as well as having substantial antibacterial effects ● Vulnerary and anti-inflammatory - hasten healing and soothe pain of burns, cuts, wounds, insect bites, also varicosities such as hemorrhoids and varicose veins ● Antiviral and analgesic for ear drops ● Supports the liver - stimulate bile flow aiding in the digestion and assimilation of nutrients ● Astringency and antimicrobial properties rebalance the digestive tract during gastrointestinal upset such as diarrhea and dysentery ● Useful during bouts of PMS and painful menstruation, and menopause 	
<p>Borage <i>Annual</i> Harvest: leaves and flowers</p> 	<p>Borage is useful for easing tensions and worries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reduce the symptoms of colds, fevers and respiratory infections ● Historically used to comfort to the heart, dispelling melancholy and making men and women glad and merry ● Used in treating mood disorders and stress-related issues ● The plant's oil contains GLA, which is transformed into omega-3 EPA and DHA - which are highly recommended in the treatment of anxiety, as they provide the right amount of fatty acids for the human brain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tea ● Infuse into an oxymel ● Infuse into honey, oil, or vinegar ● Use as a tincture ● Use in a salve, poultice, lotion or balm recipe
<p>Rosemary <i>Perennial</i> Harvest: leaves</p> 	<p>Rosemary is a calming herb on the nerves with a strong fragrance that can induce feelings of security.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stimulating, astringent herb that specifically acts on the cardiovascular and nervous systems ● Increases blood flow and tones the vascular system ● Enhances memory and recall ● Eases painful joints ● Excellent stomachic and nervine, curing many cases of headache ● Relieves nervous depression 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tea ● Infuse into an oxymel ● Infuse into honey, oil, or vinegar ● Dry and put into a dream pillow ● Use as a tincture ● Use in a salve, poultice, lotion or balm recipe ● Use the essential oil in a diffuser
<p>Catnip <i>Perennial</i> Harvest: leaves and flowers</p> 	<p>Though catnip brings about friskiness and euphoria in cats, it does the opposite for humans, relieving hyperactivity and relaxing us.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Relaxing nervine ● Soothes hyperactivity ● For colic, fever ● Can relieve insomnia ● Relaxes the smooth muscles of the intestines - helpful in constipation and stomach ache ● Anti-catarhal - dissolves and prevents formation of mucus and prevents mucus membrane inflammation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tea ● Infuse into an oxymel ● Infuse into honey, oil, or vinegar ● Dry and put into a dream pillow ● Use as a tincture ● Use in a salve, poultice, lotion or balm recipe ● Use the essential oil in a diffuser
<p>Rose <i>Perennial</i></p>	<p>Rose's gentle antidepressant and sedative properties can help uplift emotions while providing a sense of ease.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tea ● Infuse into an

<p>Harvest: leaves</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used to comfort and calm the heart • Ease depression, anxiety, irritability, and even grief and broken heartedness • Rinses, gargles, and tea made from rose petals deliver astringent and anti-inflammatory properties to assist in soothing irritated eyes, a swollen sore throat, seasonal allergies and illnesses with copious nasal discharge • Calming nervine • Respiratory and immune booster • Useful topical remedy 	<p>oxymel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infuse into honey, oil, or vinegar • Dry and put into a dream pillow • Use as a tincture • Use in a salve, poultice, lotion or balm recipe • Use the essential oil in a diffuser
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Herbal Infusions:

All these herb can be used fresh or dried, depending on the product, you'll want to strain out the herb after the substance has reached desired strength for proper storage. Be mindful that herbs in a jar that are not completely submerged in vinegar, honey, etc. will likely rot or mold - so be sure to submerge completely and it's generally a good idea for both general use of the product and its shelf life to strain out the herb. Good rule of thumb for infusing is about 4-6 weeks for any medium. Also when using vinegar, put some wax paper between the lid and the infusion to avoid the vinegar corroding the metal. Use your senses of smell and sight to determine if any of your infusions have invited sour populations of bacteria and/or other microbes (this is especially true with fresh herb infusions).

- **Infusion:** (tea) fresh or dried herb in cold or hot water; drink immediately or store in the fridge for 2-3 days
- **Decoction:** (strong tea) fresh or dried herb simmered in water on the stove; drink immediately or store in the fridge for 2-3 days
- **Tincture:** fresh or dried herb in 40 proof or higher alcohol; use a few drops as needed, store in a cool, dark place indefinitely
- **Oxymel:** fresh or dried herb in ½ honey ½ vinegar mixture; use as you would a cough syrup, or in regular or fizzy water, store in a cool, dark place indefinitely
- **Infused honey:** fresh or dried herb in honey; store in a cool, dark place indefinitely
- **Infused oil:** fresh or dried herb in oil; store in fridge with fresh herbs, store in cool dark place with dried herbs indefinitely
- **Infused vinegar:** fresh or dried herb in vinegar; store in a cool, dark place indefinitely
- **Poultice:** fresh herb simmered in water for 2 minutes or dried herb with hot water poured over, then mashed herb used on top of or inside a water permeable cloth and put on wound/scrape/burn/muscle; use immediately or put in fridge for 2-3 days

Drying Herbs

When drying herbs, we want to dry them as soon as possible after harvest. The name of the game is dry the plant material before it discolors or rots. Most herbs will dry fine laid out on a table or drying rack, or bunched and strung upside down in a dark and dry room. We can also lay herbs in the oven with the pilot light on to dry them. Using a dark or less lit place for drying ensures you keep the most color of your herbs - in bright light the color tends to fade or turn brown. Most fleshy herbs like basil and dill will likely rot or turn brown if you don't use a dehydrator or dry them quickly enough. Try to dry herbs in a room without dust or dirt, because once dried, they will be rigid, unable to clean, and need to be stored away in a cool, dark place for future use. Dried herbs can be stored in a cool, dark place indefinitely!

Dream Salve Recipe

Source: The Herbal Academy

- **Ingredients:**
 - 1 cup organic extra virgin olive oil

- 1 tablespoon each of lavender flowers, mugwort, chamomile, rosemary, rose petals, lemon balm, st. john's wort, and tulsi
- 1 ounce beeswax
- **Directions:**
 - In a double boiler, pour olive oil in top pan followed by herbs.
 - Heat over low heat for 60 minutes, stirring occasionally.
 - Remove from heat. Strain and compost herbs, reserving infused oil.
 - Melt beeswax in a clean pan over low heat.
 - Once melted, add herbal infused oil and lavender essential oil. Mix well.
 - Quickly pour salve into tins or glass jars and allow to cool before placing lids on and labeling.

DIY Sleep Pillows (Source: Mountain Rose Herbs)

To create a blend that **can promote restful sleep** try combining any of the following herbs:

- Catnip
- Chamomile
- Hops
- Lavender
- Lemon Balm
- Rose petals
- Rosemary
- Sweet Marjoram

Place dried herbs in a muslin bag or organza bag and close; or sandwich herbs in the middle two cotton squares/hearts/triangles/etc, and sew around edges to close

DIY Dream Pillows (Source: Mountain Rose Herbs)

To create a blend that **can encourage dreaming** try combining any of the following herbs:

- Catnip
- Chamomile
- Cloves
- Hops
- Lavender
- Lemon Verbena
- Mugwort
- Peppermint or Organic Spearmint
- Rose petals
- Rosemary