



Joybilee Farm



Herbs

Materia Medica

Workbook







What is a Materia Medica?

Herb students compile a *materia medica* to help them with their studies. A materia medica gives place to the important information about each herb, including what it looks like, how it grows, how to propagate it, as well as important things that herbalists take into consideration like energetics, taste, and flavor. The materia medica is a guide to the important information herbalists need to make confident decisions about herbs for medicinal, therapeutic, and culinary use.

If you are looking for a plant to use in an infused oil because you are making a moisturizing facial lotion you might look to a plant like elderflower with a traditional use as an anti-aging skincare plant, or dandelion with its anti-inflammatory actions. By creating a personal materia medica you know what you have access to, as well as what has worked in the past. Your materia medica also reminds you when a plant shouldn't be used and if it is generally considered safe during pregnancy or lactation.

The Latin phrase “materia medica” means “healing materials”. It is an encyclopedia of herbal knowledge organized around individual plants. A materia medica gathers information from different sources and distills it into one place to make research on individual plants easier to find.

You'll notice when you are reading herbal books that many herbal reference books contain pages at the back with a materia medica. In fact some herb books are just one big materia medica. You probably also noticed that one source doesn't give you the whole picture on any one plant. You need to look at different sources to find the information you need on each plant.

Why do you need a personal materia medica?

No book contains all the information on every herb that you might need so it's always a good idea to compile a personal materia medica as you get to know your own plant allies.

A materia medica is a work in progress. As you get to know your plant allies better, you can add more information to your materia medica on each plant. Don't be afraid to include personal observations in your own materia medica. You aren't limited to what you find in books.

What is the difference between a materia medica and a herbarium?

A materia medica is a written record of an individual herb or plant. The focus is on its medicinal and cultural importance. Historical use and modern scientific research is included. On the other hand, a herbarium contains a systematically arranged collection of dried plants and plant materia, which may or may not include a materia medica on each plant.

Best practices for creating your own Materia Medica

Focus on one herb at a time



Invest in experiencing each herb as it grows, as well as in herbal preparations. Taste it, smell it, touch it. Record how it makes you feel. Identify the living herb either by growing it or by finding it in the wild. Research its historical uses. Use Google Scholar to locate abstracts and scientific studies where the herb was used. Talk to other herb students about their experiences with the herb.

A good timeframe is to dedicate a month to studying each herb, in order to really get to know it. Since most people can't grow herbs year round you may study the growing herb for only a month or two while it is actively growing. Then you might come back later and do the other research, using the dried herb.

When you are researching the herbal actions be sure to use diverse sources, as many older materia medica don't contain the information about the herb that newer studies contain. While modern scientific research often neglects traditional knowledge.

When looking at the contraindications for your herbal subject, look for actual scientific evidence of drug interactions or other contraindications. In many cases drug interactions have been assumed based on other assumptions of how an herb works, but in clinical practice the supposed drug interactions don't manifest.

Even after thousands of years of human-herbal interactions there is so much we don't know. Perhaps you will be the one to discover important, lifesaving information as you compile your own personal materia medica.

How to use this printable workbook

Print pages 3 through 8 to make a single copy of the materia medica workbook for 1 herb. Print as many copies of these materia medica pages as you need for your study.

Plan to study one herb at a time and fill out the materia medica as you research each herb.

Use page 9 to make note cards that you can print out to list the important facts about each herbal ally that you want to remember. These cards can be used for quick reference as you are studying.

Page 10 and 11 are journal pages that you can use to write, draw, or creatively connect with each herb in a way that makes sense to you. The more learning modalities we use to connect with what we are learning, the more intuitive understanding we gain of each herb. This intuition is an important resource when our loved ones are sick or we face a health crisis.

I hope that these Herbal Materia Medica pages help you form a deep connection and gratitude for the medicinal and culinary herbs that you have growing around you and accessible to you, but also that they help you form a deep connection to the Creator who made them and declared, "On both riverbanks will grow all kinds of trees for food; their leaves will not dry up, nor will their fruit fail... so that this fruit will be edible, and the leaves will have healing properties." – Ezekiel 47:12 Complete Jewish Bible

xoxo, Chris



Materia Medica

Botanical name:

Folk names:

Energetics: (circle all that apply) Cooling | Warming | Moistening | Drying|

Growing habits:

Draw Plant or Add Photo

What does the plant look like?

Flower colour:

Leaf shape:

Height:

Spread:

Growth habit:

Root:

Fragrance: (circle all that apply) | Floral | Fruity | Earthy | Herbaceous | Resinous | Piney | Sulfurous |
Woody | Grassy | Burnt | Spicy | Umami | Oily | Pungent |

Taste/flavor: (circle all that apply) | Acrid | Sweet | Bitter | Sour | Salty |Pungent |Astringent |

Observations:



Parts used: (circle all that apply) Flowers | Leaves | Root | Arial Parts |

Constituents:

Essential Oils:

Healing Actions:

Body systems: (circle all that apply) Nervous system | Digestive System | Musculoskeletal System | Urinary System | Circulatory System | Reproductive System | Immune System | Respiratory System | Endocrine System | Eyes | Ears, Nose, and Throat | Skin and Hair |

Notes:

Contraindications:

Safe for pregnancy: Yes | No **Safe for Nursing Mothers:** Yes | No

Safe for Children under 2: Yes | No **Safe for Children under 5:** Yes | No

Notes:



How is the plant used now?

Traditional plant use:

Standard medicinal uses, preparations, recipes, dosage:

Scientific studies:

Source: _____

Source: _____



Source: _____

Source: _____

Source: _____

Source: _____

Source: _____

Source: _____

Source: _____



More recipes that use _____:

Source: _____

Source: _____

Source: _____

Source: _____

Source: _____



Printable Notecards

A rectangular notecard template with a light purple background and a darker purple border. The bottom-right corner is folded over. The card contains 15 horizontal lines for writing, with a small gap at the bottom left for a signature or date.

A second identical rectangular notecard template, positioned below the first one. It also features a light purple background, a darker purple border, a folded bottom-right corner, and 15 horizontal lines for writing.



Herb Journal Unfettered



Glossary of Herbal Actions

- Adaptogen – increases the body’s resilience and resistance to stress, allowing the body to adapt to the problem.
- Alterative – restores proper functioning of the body, increasing health and vitality, removing toxins, cleansing blood.
- Analgesic – relieves pain
- Androgen – male sex hormones
- Anti-asthmatic – relieves asthma symptoms
- Antibacterial – inhibits the growth and replication of bacteria
- Anti-catarrhal – dries mucus and aids in removing it from the body
- Anti-depressant – elevates mood
- Anti-diabetic – aids in stabilizing blood sugar
- Anti-emetic – reduces the incidence and severity of nausea and vomiting
- Antifungal – inhibits the growth and replication of fungi
- Antihistamine – blocks the action of histamine
- Anti-inflammatory – soothes inflammation and directly reduces the inflammatory response in tissue
- Anti-microbial – inhibits the growth and replication of microbes
- Anti-neuralgic – relieves or reduces nerve pain
- Antioxidant – prevents free radical stressor oxidative damage
- Anti-parasitic – kills and expels parasitic worms from the intestines
- Anti-rheumatic – helps prevent and relieve arthritis and rheumatism
- Antiseptic – destroys and prevents the growth of microbes
- Anti-spasmodic – relieves smooth muscle spasms



- Anti-tumor – prevents or is effective against tumors
- Anti-tussive – reduces coughing
- Anti-venom – counteracts animal and insect poisons
- Anti-viral—inhibits the growth of a virus
- Anxiolytic – reducing anxiety and panic attacks
- Aphrodisiac – increases or stimulates sexual desire
- Aromatic – has a strong aroma with a high volatile oil content
- Astringent – has a tightening or contracting effect on tissue and a drying effect on mucus secretions
- Bitter – herbs with bitter taste that promote the secretion of digestive juices
- Cardiotonic – tones and strengthens the heart
- Carminative – removes gas and bloating from digestive tract and relieves intestinal pain
- Cathartic – strongly stimulates the evacuation of the bowels. Stronger than a laxative.
- Cell proliferant – promotes accelerated repair and regeneration of damaged tissue
- Cephalic – remedy for disorders of the head
- Cholagogue – stimulates gallbladder contraction
- Choloretic – increases bile flow from the liver
- Cicatrisant – promotes healing through the formation of scar tissue
- Cordial – stimulant and warming tonic
- Decongestant – reduces nasal mucus production and nasal swelling
- Demulcent – rich in mucilage that soothes and protects irritated or inflamed tissue
- Deodorant – reduces or masks unwanted odors
- Depurative – detoxifying by combatting impurity in the blood and organs
- Diaphoretic – promotes perspiration, reducing fever and helping to eliminate waste through the skin



- Digestive – promotes or aids digestion of food
- Diuretic – increases the production or elimination of urine
- Emmenagogue – stimulates menstrual flow or activity
- Expectorant – soothes bronchial spasm, loosens mucus secretions and helps in their elimination through productive coughing
- Febrifuge – relieves or reduces fever
- Galactagogue – increases milk supply in nursing women
- Hemostatic – checks bleeding
- Hepatic – aids liver function
- Hormone modulator – balances hormones
- Hypertensive – causes a rise in blood pressure
- Hypnotic – induces sleep through relaxation
- Hypocholesteremic – lowers cholesterol
- Hypoglycemic – lowers abnormally elevated blood sugar
- Hypotensive – lowers abnormally high blood pressure
- Immune stimulant – stimulates some aspect of the immune system
- Immunomodulator – affects immune system functioning in a positive way.
- Insecticidal – used to repel or kill insects
- Laxative – stimulates bowel movements either by increasing the flow of bile or by stimulating the peristaltic activity of the colon
- Lymphatic – promotes normal lymph movement and drainage
- Nervine – supports the function of the nervous system
- Neuroprotective – protects the nervous system
- Nutritive – contains nourishing vitamins and minerals that the body needs
- Radio-protective – protects against radiation



- Reproductive tonic – supports and strengthens the glandular and reproductive system
- Restorative – helps to strengthen and revive the body systems
- Rubefacient – increases blood flow when applied to the skin, promoting healing and relieving pain
- Sedative – reduces the functional activity of the nervous system, calming, relaxing
- Sialagogue – promotes the secretion of saliva
- Stimulant – accelerates the physiological functions and responses of the body
- Stomachic – digestive tonic and appetite stimulant
- Styptic – strongly astringent agent that stops or reduces bleeding
- Sudorific – causes sweating when taken hot and acts like a tonic when taken cold
- Tonic – strengthens and revitalizes
- Uterine tonic – strengthens and revitalizes the uterus and female sexual organs
- Vasoconstrictor – causes narrowing and tightening of blood vessels
- Vasodilator – dilates and relaxes the blood vessels
- Vermifuge – expels parasites from the intestine
- Vulnerary – promotes wound healing and normalizes damaged tissue

**EVERYTHING ON EARTH
HAS A PURPOSE,
EVERY DISEASE AN HERB TO CURE IT,
AND EVERY PERSON A MISSION.
MOURNING DOVE, 1888-1936**