

Tisane



Mission Statement:

The goal of the Eastern Kingdom Herbalists' and Apothecaries' Guild is to encourage study, teaching and practice of medieval herb uses, as well as study of medieval apothecary and pharmacy practice, in the East Kingdom. The Guild should serve as a conduit for herbalists and apothecaries in the kingdom to communicate with and learn from each other, and to disseminate knowledge about medieval herbalism and pharmacy to others.

ti·sane ti-'zan, -'zän, n.

Etymology: Middle English, from Middle French, from Latin *ptisana*, from Greek *ptisanē*, literally, crushed barley, from *ptisain* to crush - *Date:* 14th century : an infusion (as of dried herbs) used as a beverage or for medicinal effects

HEADLINES

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From the Agitatrix

Greetings!

Another harvest is upon us, and hopefully we all have something to be grateful for. I, in particular, am grateful to see how many of us are interested in the Herb Guild and how many people in the East Kingdom have incorporated herbal practices in their SCA lives. I'm specifically grateful to the Barony of Concordia who hosted a small-but-excellent herbal event the last weekend in June. For those of you who weren't there, you missed out on great classes, great food, and a great deal of fun.

Which brings us to our next topic: herbal events and gatherings. I encourage all guild members to try running a herbal/apothecary discussion group at your local events, and/or to teach herbal classes. Wouldn't it be great if there was an herb-related class at every schola and EKU?

We are still thinking about ways to improve the

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To get on our mailing list, e-mail to joanne@jafath.com or drop an old-fashioned note to the return address on the mailer.

If you are on line, join us on the [sca-herbalist](http://www.sca-herbalist.com) mailing list (go to www.yahoo.com/groups/sca-herbalist to sign up) or the East-specific EK-Herb (sign up from our website at www.eastkingdom.org/guilds/herb).

Do you have a favorite herb, gardening tip, historical tidbit, or recipe? Maybe a review of a book you think the world should share? That's perfect for this newsletter — send it to the Chronicler!

Simple Steps for Simples

By The Brown Wanderer of Rhosgobel, Aiwendil servant of Yavanna
(Elfstone LARP - Atlanta, GA)
AKA John M. Ostrander, RPh, PD, PhD (Pharmacognosy)

Simple – having few parts or features – a medicinal herb or medicine obtained from an herb - so called because each vegetable was supposed to possess its particular virtue and, therefore, to constitute a simple remedy. So says the dictionary. It is the purpose of this note to bring some definition to terms you may see used from time to time.

To begin at the beginning I will discuss a seemingly simple task, gathering and drying of “crude” herbs or spices. Vegetable materials that have undergone no processing beyond collection and drying are termed crude. Such is the whole oregano or sage plants hanging in my dining room, cut and dried. Any additional processing beyond what is needed to collect and preserve a product from degradation or insect attack is said to have “advanced” it in value. Advancing may be by simple “garbling”, removal of extraneous matter, twigs or dirt and stones and/or “comminution”, chopping or grinding. Sometimes it may involve adding some additional vegetable or animal matter such as wrapping for crude opium or using gourds as a container for curare (things we will probably not routinely be involved in doing).

In collection of vegetable materials, some simple rules may be applied to help you ensure accumulation of a good product. Roots and Rhizomes should be collected in the fall, when plants become dormant. Barks on the other hand should be collected in the spring before plants leave dormancy. Leaves and flowering tops should be collected when photosynthesis is at its peak during the time of flowering. Flowers should be collected prior to pollination sometimes before the flower unfolds, arnica or marigold. Fruits are to be collected either right before or immediately after ripening and seeds should be collected when fully mature but before the fruit has opened. Of course, there are always exceptions.

Methods for the drying of plant material should accomplish the removal of sufficient moisture to insure good keeping quality and prevent mold or bacterial growth, enzymatic degradation, or other undesirable chemical changes. Again there are exceptions some things are fermented prior to use such as dark teas others are “sweated” to activate some principles by endogenous enzyme action, vanilla beans. Drying may take the form of simple air-drying in either open sunlight or in the shade; shade helps to retain natural color of the herb. Drying by artificial heat must be done with caution to prevent degradation of the vegetable. Drying should take place at no more than 40 to 60 degrees Centigrade. The proper amount of dryness can be ascertained after some experience by the brittleness or snap of the vegetable. Roots should be washed to remove dirt and larger ones may be split.

After collection, and advancing your materials you will want to store them in any acceptable airtight, moisture proof and preferably light proof containers.



TINCTURE –

aka MACERATION –

by Mistress Christianna MacGrain

A solution of medicinal substances in alcohol, diluted alcohol, or vinegar. Tinctures are prepared by steeping herbs in alcohol, heating herbs and alcohol at various temperatures or by filtering alcohol through herbs with cheesecloth or a paper filter. Whole roots can be stored in alcohol indefinitely to produce tinctures of various strengths. Tinctures can be added to hot or cold herb teas, added to water for external compresses, foot baths, and sitz baths. 1 or 2 drops under the tongue or several drops in tea or juice is also an effective way to take tinctures. Drops can be added to fats or cocoa butter for ointments or suppositories, or to dried herbs for pills and lozenges.

Vinegar tinctures can be used to cleanse sickrooms and wash the body during any bacterial illness or during epidemics. Pioneer homeopaths experimented on themselves using tinctures, noting their reactions to each one. They theorized that a tincture causing a certain condition in them used homeopathically (ultra-minute amounts) could cure the same condition in a sick person.

Combine 1 - 4 oz. powdered plant material to 8 - 12 oz. alcohol (grain alcohol). Add water to make a 50% alcohol solution. Let stand for 2 weeks, shaking once or twice a day. Strain and pour into a dark bottle for storage. This will keep a long time, as the alcohol will preserve it. Alcohols can be ninety-proof spirit for internal use, such as ninety-proof vodka or gin, or eighty to eighty-six proof brandy or whiskey. Sherry is good for mouthwashes. Vinegar is useful for body washes, liniments, and healing compresses. Herbal vinegars can also be made for culinary use. Heat plain, cider or red wine vinegar, and pour into a bottle. Add herbs and let steep. Strain, or continue to add vinegar to bottle to re-fresh the flavor.

Bug Bite Lotion

Made by Mistress Christianna MacGrain

Combine:

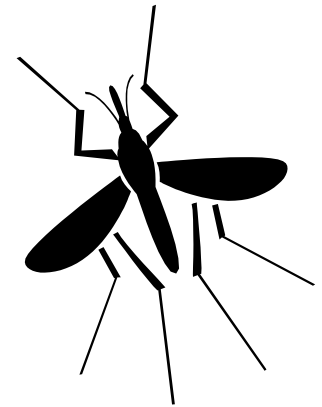
- 2 pints rubbing alcohol
- 1 ounce dried Echinacea root and leaves
- 1 ounce dried plantain leaves
- ½ ounce yellow dock root
- 6 bulbs of chopped or pressed, peeled garlic

Cover the mixture and let stand in a dark place for one to two weeks, shaking daily. Strain and pour tincture into a dark or opaque bottle.

Small spray bottles are the handiest way to store this. Apply the lotion with a quick spritz on a fresh bite, or as a wash and/or a small poultice, using a piece of cotton and a bandage to hold it in place.

Effective on all stinging insect bites, as well as other types of skin irritations.

Based on the Bee Sting and Insect Bite Lotion recipe from *Growing and Using the Healing Herbs* by Gaea and Shandor Weiss



Meadowsweet

Filipendula ulmaria, *Spiraea Ulmaria*, *Spiraea alba*, *Spiraea latifolia*, *Spiraea salicifolia*

Bridewort, Queen of the Meadow, Meadsweet, Dolloff, Lady of the Meadow, Meadow Queen

The first Queen Elizabeth is said to have preferred Meadowsweet above all other strewing herbs. This sounds like a great reason to put it in your herb garden; the problem is, what exactly *is* Meadowsweet? Are all those Latin names referring to the same plant, or are we talking about a whole group of sweet-scented woody shrubs?

Leaving the botanical identification apart, the usual description goes that Meadowsweet is a perennial, growing in damp meadows. It is common throughout Europe and in the eastern North American continent as far west as Ohio. It blooms from June to August.

Historically, meadowsweet was one of the druids sacred herbs, and one of the fifty ingredients in a drink called “Save” in Chaucer’s *Knights Tale*. Salicylic acid was produced from meadowsweet and from willow bark in 1899, and the name aspirin is derived from the oldest botanical name, *Spiraea ulmaria*.

Medically, it is a digestive remedy. If this sounds odd, considering aspirin and its irritating effect on the stomach, apparently the plant contains natural buffers as well. External uses include eye washes.

Mrs. Grieve and Culpeper distinguish *Spiraea filipendula* from *Spiraea ulmaria*, preferring the latter. According to them, *Filipendula* (known as dropwort), is a good remedy for kidney affections and shortness of breath. *Spiraea salicifolia* has pink flowers. There are also several Oriental varieties.

Meadowsweet is approved by the German E Commission for use against coughs, bronchitis, fevers and colds. It is a diuretic, usually administered as an infusion. No health hazards or side effects are reported.

SOURCES

www.botanical.com, (*A Modern Herbal* online)

<http://info.med.yale.edu/library/historical/culpeper/culpeper.htm> (Culpeper on line, Yale University)

Bianchini, Francesco and Francesco Corbetta, *Health Plants of the World*, New York 1975. *PDR for Herbal Medicine*



From the Agitatrix

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guild website (<http://www.eastkingdom.org/guilds/herb/>) and ways to improve communication within the guild. Please, if you have any suggestions or any contributions for the newsletter or website, let me and Johanna know!

You may not know that I've changed (mundane) jobs and addresses, so if I've been a little slow to respond, that's why. Things should ease up in a month or two when I've found all my belongings. Here's my new contact information:

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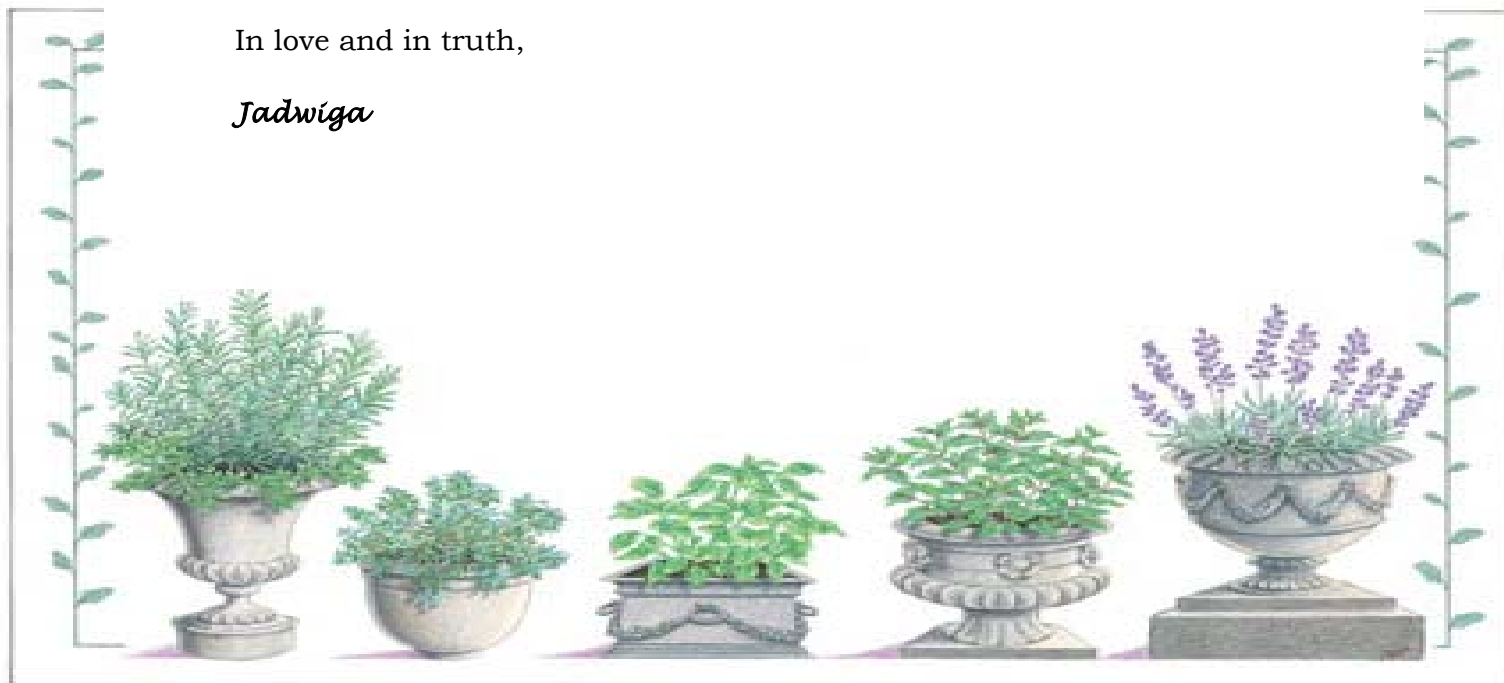
As usual, we plan to present our annual tithe to the Queen at or around 12th night. This represents the guild's year's work. I hope that even if you have only one thing to contribute, you'll consider putting something into the tithe basket so the kingdom can see how much knowledge and creativity we have. In deference to the Queen's severe allergies, please package items securely, and in plastic bags or sealed jars.

Lastly, I'm hoping we will have a track of herb-related classes at Cooking Thing in Caer Adamant in February. Let me and/or the autocrat know if you are willing to teach!

Here's hoping for a happy and successful harvest for all of us.

In love and in truth,

Jadwiga





Classes!

Have you got classes?

Is there an event you plan to attend that includes classes? Why not offer to teach an herb-related session? It can be as simple or as complex as you like: beginner classes may bring new members to the Guild, while advanced classes can attract people with skills we didn't know about.

Jo Anne Fatherly
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