

# PRACTICAL HERBS 2



Henriette Kress

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# GREEN POWDER

Green powders are a great way to add mineral-dense vegetable greens to your food.

Although it's made from the green parts of plants, you can also add more colorful parts. Spice it up with small amounts of strong-flavored herbs.

Grind your chosen materials into a powder and use the powder in your cooking, or add a spoonful or two to your food.

Make your green powder in small batches, in case the result isn't as delicious as you'd hoped.

Take a lot of herb material, such as

- nettle leaf, kale, bur-marigold (*Bidens* spp.)
- parsley, lovage, celery leaf
- carrot greens
- various mallows
- other mild-tasting plants

Add a few of these for flavor:

- *spicy*: thyme, basil, marjoram, oregano, beebalm, rosemary, chamomile, blackcurrant leaf, angelica leaf
- *anise/licorice*: sweet cicely (*Myrrhis odorata*), aniseed, anise-y giant hyssops (*Agastache* spp.), goutweed leaf (*Aegopodium* spp.)
- *lemony*: lemon balm, lemon catnip, lemon grass, lemon thyme
- *minty*: peppermint, mountainmint (*Pycnanthemum* spp.)
- *sweet*: rose petals or lavender
- *salty*: various seaweeds
- *bitter*: dandelion leaf, burdock leaf, horehound, the lower leaf of goldenrod

- *astringent*: willowherb (*Epilobium* spp.), birch leaf, raspberry leaf, lady's mantle leaf, cinquefoil leaf, strawberry leaf
- *oniony*: onion greens, chives greens, garlic greens, garlic mustard greens (*Alliaria petiolata*)

Or experiment with others you like.

If you have them on hand, you can also add powdered berries to your blend. Mild berries include rosehip, hawthorn berries, and bilberry. Blackcurrant, cranberry, and lingonberry are very sour.

Various spicy roots can also enhance a green powder—for instance, calamus root (*Acorus calamus*), angelica root, or ginger.

## How to make a green powder

Grind the dried plant parts in a blender (or a coffee grinder, for small batches), and then rub the powder through a sieve. Set aside any parts too large to go through the sieve and add them to your next blender batch.

Store your green powder in glass jars with tight-fitting lids. Label, for instance: "Minty green powder, June 2014."

Add a few tablespoons of green powder to soups, stews, and similar, or sprinkle a spoonful or two on the food on your plate.

# HEMORRHOIDS

Hemorrhoids have a number of possible causes. The most common is a congested local blood supply that creates local varicosities that are more or less uncomfortable or painful.

If your movements are limited to the distance between the couch and the fridge, your blood can't really circulate in the vein around the anus. Walking for half an hour a day works wonders. Time your walk for midday, and you might also get relief from insomnia. Good herbal teas astringe the tissues of a couch potato; that is, they tighten lax mucous membranes.



Salve made from horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) is an excellent topical treatment for hemorrhoids, varicose veins, and bags under the eyes.

Astringent herbs include raspberry leaf, lady's mantle, cinquefoil, and alder cones (*Alnus* spp.).

For hemorrhoids that develop due to something bearing down on the vein around the anus, relief will depend on the pressure's source: If it's a saddle or bicycle seat, go for a walk every now and then. If it's a growing baby, walks can help, but they won't be enough.

Use these herbs alone or together in tea, bath, sitz bath, or compress: chamomile, yarrow, ground ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*), catnip, mallow, and mullein.

Salves also can help enhance local blood flow. Make a salve from yarrow, horse chestnut, and/or catnip, and apply it after each bowel movement. And insert a suitably sized wedge of fresh potato now and then.

Food sensitivity also plays a role in the development of some hemorrhoids. Determine which food offends and remove it from your diet.

Use the aforementioned plants and support your liver with herbs such as dandelion, burdock leaf, yellow dock root, and barberry root.

Few people are cursed with "athlete's" hemorrhoids, which arise when muscles are so tuned they push part of the mucous membrane out the rectum. They find relief in teas of relaxing herbs such as catnip, chamomile, and valerian.

# MIGRAINE

A typical migraine headache affects one hemisphere of the brain with intense, pulsing, debilitating pain lasting from two hours to as long as 72.

Some simple causes of migraine include the following.

- *Magnesium deficiency.* Approximately four out of five migraine sufferers are found to be magnesium deficient. Excessive consumption of sugar and simple carbohydrates (bread, sweets, rice, potato, fresh juice) draw on magnesium reserves. In addition, our over-farmed soils are depleted of minerals such as magnesium. Commercial fertilizers contain only a few major nutrients—and magnesium isn't one of them.
- *Vitamin B deficiency.* Our bodies need B vitamins in order to absorb magnesium. Stress draws on our vitamin B reserves. The cycle is most starkly demonstrated in schoolchildren who experience migraine before important exams: Stress depletes key B-vitamins. This prevents the body from absorbing magnesium. Lack of sufficient magnesium then causes a migraine.
- *Aspartame, monosodium glutamate, and/or benzoate sensitivity.* One out of 10 migraine sufferers can trace the onset of their headache to consumption of these additives.
- *Tyramine sensitivity.* One in 20 suffers gets a migraine from eating foods rich in tyramine, such as chocolate, soft cheeses, and red wine.
- Few people are outright *allergic* to a given food. When a client tells me, "I always get a migraine when I eat [this food]," I can only reply, "You should avoid [that food], then."

- *Ubiquinone (coenzyme Q10) deficiency.* In this case, taking supplemental CoQ10 for a few weeks takes care of the problem.

Overwhelmingly, though, magnesium deficiency is the root cause of most chronic migraine. Refer to page 16 to learn how to make magnesium vinegar and epsom salt baths, and remember to take your B vitamins.



*Feverfew (Tanacetum parthenium) can help with symptoms of migraine, but it's more important to address the root cause.*

Henriette Kress: *Practical Herbs 2*, 2013.

Read more here:

<http://www.henriettesherbal.com/articles/pract-herbs2.html>



*Melissa officinalis*, lemon balm.

## LEMON BALM

*A very good herb for tension and stress.*

### ***Melissa officinalis***

You can use lemon catnip (*Nepeta cataria* 'Citriodora') and Moldavian dragonhead (*Dracocephalum moldavica*) similarly.

**Taste:** Lemony, aromatic, a little bitter.

**Energetics:** Slightly cooling, drying.

**Family:** Mint family, *Lamiaceae*.

**Perennial:** Harvest from summer to fall.

**Habitat:** Lemon balm likes fertile soil in a warm and sunny spot.

**Cultivation:** Lemon balm is a short-lived perennial you can grow from seed or buy as a plant. It won't survive being covered by weeds.

If you buy lemon balm plants in the salad department at your grocery store and plant them in your garden, water the plants daily for the first week or two.

**Appearance:** Young lemon balm plants have rather large leaves, very unlike the small leaves of flowering lemon balm plants. The small white flowers grow in whorls near the leaf nodes.

**Look-alikes:** Young lemon balm looks a lot like stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica*), but stinging nettles sting. Look-alikes lack the lemony scent of lemon balm.



*Moldavian balm (Dracocephalum moldavica).*

**Important constituents:** Lemon balm contains, among others, essential oils (citral, geranial, neral, citronellal), tannins (as rosmarinic acid and other caffeic acid derivatives), and bitter substances.

## PICKING AND PROCESSING

If the soil is fertile and the spot is sunny, you can cut 2 ft (60 cm) branches twice a summer. In poorer soil, lemon balm is smaller.

Gather flowering branches either before flowering or in full flower. The best harvest is in high summer on a sunny hot afternoon.

Strip the leaves and tops from the stems and spread them to dry. Or dry them in a dehydrator set no higher than 95 °F (35 °C).

Store your dried lemon balm in airtight glass jars. The dried herb will lose a lot of its scent in about half a year, but it will still work.

Use lemon balm fresh in teas or tinctures.

## EFFECTS AND USES

Lemon balm reduces tension and nervousness. Use it for stage fright or prior to job interviews, for example, or give it to worked-up kids before long-anticipated events. (Take it yourself, if excited children stress you out.)

Lemon balm helps treat insomnia, palpitations, and stomach upsets caused by tension or nervousness.

It calms mild digestive problems. Try it for gas and bloating.

It's also of use in mild menstrual pain.

If you caught the common cold or have a fever, drink a hot lemon balm tea.

The French *eau des Carmes* (Carmelite water) was distilled from spirits, lemon balm, and spices. You can make your own similar, if milder, Carmelite brandy.

Externally, a crushed lemon balm leaf relieves the itch and pain of some insect bites.

A lemon balm bag under the pillow will help you fall asleep.

Apply a crushed fresh leaf or some (diluted) essential oil of lemon balm to quickly reduce cold sores.



*A flowering branch of lemon balm.*

## Lemon balm tea

1–2 teaspoons dried or fresh lemon balm  
 1–2 teaspoons mallow leaf (optional)  
 1 cup (250 ml) boiling water

Pour boiling water over the herb, steep 10 minutes, and strain.

Drink a cup as needed for nervousness, stress, and tension. Mallow mellows the tea a little.

## Lemon balm wine

½ cup (100 ml) powdered lemon balm  
 2 cups (500 ml) white wine

Put the herb in a glass jar, cover with the wine, and close the lid tightly. Leave for a week, and strain.

Take a small glassful in the evening for insomnia, or as needed for tension and nervousness.

## Lemon balm tincture

*From fresh herb:*

4 ounces (100 g) fresh lemon balm  
 8 fluid ounces (200 ml) 190 proof grain alcohol (95%)

*From dried herb:*

4 ounces (100 g) dried lemon balm  
 20 fluid ounces (500 ml) 120 proof grain alcohol (60%)

Put the herb in a glass jar, cover with alcohol, and close the lid tightly. Steep 4–8 hours, strain, and bottle. Label (example, fresh: “Lemon balm, 1:2 95%, 7.2014, Susan’s garden”; example, dried: “Lemon balm, 1:5 60%, 12.2014, bought from top herb grower”).

Use 15–30 drops as needed.

Steeping the herb longer in the alcohol makes a good lemon balm tincture, but this quick tincture is exquisite.

## Carmelite brandy

1 quart (1 l) fruit brandy (or vodka)  
 40 fresh lemon balm stems  
     or 100 g (4 ounces) dried lemon balm  
 1 lemon (organic)  
 1 tablespoon dried angelica root  
 2 tablespoons coriander seed  
 6 cloves  
 1 small cinnamon stick  
 1 teaspoon powdered nutmeg  
     or 1 nutmeg

Strip the leaves from the lemon balm stems, wash and slice the lemon, and slice or grate the nutmeg.

First make a lemon balm brandy: put lemon balm and brandy in an airtight glass jar, steep for 8 hours, and strain. (If you’re in a hurry, it’s all right to strain the lemon balm brandy after 4 hours.)



Nex, add the spices to the strained brandy, and steep 2–4 weeks. Strain through a coffee filter, bottle, and label (example: “Carmelite brandy, August 2014”).

Take 15–30 drops in hot water as needed for respiratory tract infections or the beginnings of flu.

Or use it as you would lemon balm—for agitated sleeplessness, headache, palpitations, an upset gut, and minor menstrual cramps.

## A lemon balm bath

2 quarts (2 l) boiling water  
dried or fresh thyme

*Fresh herb:* Cover herb with water.

*Dried herb:* Put herb in a pan and add triple the amount of water.

Bring to a boil, turn off heat, and steep for 15 minutes. Strain. Add to bathwater with enough cold water to make a comfortable bath. Get in and enjoy!

A lemon balm bath calms and relaxes.

## FOOD USES

Add fresh lemon balm to sweet foods, or (just before serving) to fish and fowl.

Use the leaves as garnish in cakes, beverages, and salads.

Or decorate water jars and pitchers with a few twigs of lemon balm.



*Young lemon balm.*

*Practical Herbs 2* is written for everyone who likes to harvest and process their own herbs from the wild or from their gardens.

This volume includes comprehensive instructions for making herbal honeys, poultices, and green powders.

Finnish herbalist Henriette Kress focuses on herbs that are easy to grow or find in northern Europe—stressing teas over tinctures, as local tradition dictates.

### **About the author**

Henriette Kress learned her first herbs at her grandma's knee and has studied herbs and their uses ever since. A practicing herbalist since 1998, her website, <http://www.henriettesherbal.com>, is one of the oldest and most comprehensive on the Internet.

Henriette's first book in English, *Practical Herbs*, was published in 2011.

### **Said about this book**

*"For the beginning student, it has everything you need to get started. For the practicing herbalist, it is rich with practical offerings, formulas, recipes, with uses and forms that are commonly overlooked."*

Paul Bergner, Director, North American Institute of Medical Herbalism.

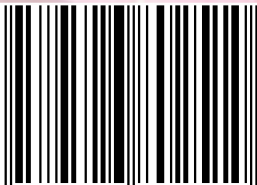
*"Fantastic details on every aspect of growing and using medicinal plants. All the little secrets that take years of experience and mistakes all laid out in a concise and easy to interpret text."*

Zoe Hawes, herbalist, United Kingdom. <http://zoehawes.co.uk>

*"Think there's not much more for you to learn about catnip, sage and thyme? Think again. Entry after entry, the uses of familiar herbs are clarified and spiced up with new insights, presented in a concise, informed and, well: practical manner."*

Jim McDonald, herbalist, Michigan, U.S. <http://herbcraft.org>

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