

Herbal Vulneraries

Kristine Brown - Traditional Community Herbalist

What Are Vulneraries and How Do They Work?

A vulnerary is a medicine used in the healing of wounds.

Herbal vulneraries work in many ways. Some are anti-inflammatory and heal through reducing inflammation. Others may be astringent, helping to dry out weepy wounds and pull the tissue together. Some are demulcent or emollient, soothing dry irritations, keeping the tissue moist and encouraging skin to heal. A few herbs stimulate cell growth while others produce an impervious layer with their tannins to protect the wound while it heals.

Herbal vulneraries are often a combination and many are antimicrobial, protecting the wound from infection.

Why Herbal Vulneraries?

- ~ Herbs are safe and effective
- ~ Herbs often give better pain relief
- ~ Herbs support and encourage the natural healing process
- ~ Herbs can protect the wound as it heals
- ~ Herbs can guard against infection without compromising good gut flora

Herbal Vulneraries

There are thousands of herbal vulneraries. This is a short list of readily available herbs:

Aloe (*Aloe spp.*)
 Burdock (*Arctium major*)
 Calendula (*Calendula officinalis*)
 Comfrey (*Symphytum officinale*)
 Chickweed (*Stellaria spp.*)
 Goldenseal (*Hydrastis canadensis*)
 Marshmallow (*Althea officinalis*)
 Oak (*Quercus spp.*)
 Plantain (*Plantago spp.*)
 Prunella (*Prunella vulgaris*)
 Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)
 Sage (*Salvia officinalis*)
 St. John's Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*)
 Thyme (*Thymus vulgaris*)
 Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)
 Willow Barkm (*Salix spp.*)
 Witch Hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*)

How to Use Herbal Vulneraries

- ~ Poultices
- ~ Compresses
- ~ Plasters
- ~ Herbal washes
- ~ Herbal bathes
- ~ Teas
- ~ Liniments
- ~ Tinctures
- ~ Oils
- ~ Salves and ointments

Recommended Herbal Books (*indicates available through library loan system)

- ~The Green Pharmacy by James A. Duke, Ph.D.*
- ~The Herbal Handbook: A User's Guide to Medical Herbalism by David Hoffmann
- ~The Authentic Herbal Healer by Holly Bellebuono

Online Resources

Ellis McAllister:

<http://rbgeherbaljournal.blogspot.com/2011/06/vulnerary-selection-for-poultices.html>

Thomas Easley:

<http://eclecticschoolofherbalmedicine.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Herbs-for-Acute-Injury.pdf>

Janet Partlow:

<http://yerbabuenaherbs.blogspot.com/2010/03/herbal-salves-for-skin.html>

Kiva Rose:

<http://bearmedicineherbals.com/choice-injury-herbs.html>