

## Making Herbal Tinctures

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### **Why Herbal Tinctures?**

- ~Herbal tinctures are a cost effective way of making a small amount of herb last a long time.
- ~Some plants do not extract well in water or oil, making the alcohol base the best method for extracting the medicinal constituents from the plant.
- ~Most tinctures remain potent for years, extending the shelf life of the herb.
- ~Usually small doses (5 - 10 drops up to 1 - 2 dropperfuls) are highly effective.
- ~Tinctures are portable and easy to administer.
- ~Tinctures are not adulterated with 'filler' material as most herbal capsules sold in stores are.

### **Herbs That Work Well With Tinctures**

Herbs can be tinctured fresh or dry. Fresh is usually recommended though a few of the low dose/more potent herbs are best tinctured dry. Richo Cech has written an excellent book (see resources) on the best combination of fresh/dried and alcohol ratios that is very thorough.

### **How to Make Herbal Tincture - Simpler's Method**

Tinctures require only 2 - 3 ingredients: the herb being tinctured, alcohol such as grain (Everclear), vodka or brandy and sometimes water.

1. Fill your jar with the herb you are using. Chop up the herb before filling. Fill your jar until it is loosely packed.
2. Cover completely with your alcohol of choice, vodka or brandy. If using grain alcohol (Everclear) fill 1/2 full then top off with water.
3. Label your tincture jar with the name of the herb, part of herb being used, the type of alcohol, the ratio of herb to alcohol, the percentage of alcohol and the date it was started.
4. Let sit for a minimum of 4 weeks before using. The longer it sits, the stronger it gets. Roots and bark especially grow stronger after sitting for 6 months or longer. There is no need to strain off the herbs from the tincture unless you want to transfer the tincture to a smaller jar.

### **How to Use Herbal Tinctures**

Dosages will vary according to the individual herbs. Herbs range from low dose botanicals, requiring only 3 - 5 DROPS per day to high dose botanicals that can be taken by the dropperful every 15 - 20 minutes for several hours. Most herbs are in the mid-dose range, with an administration of 1 dropperful every 30 minutes.

Herbal tinctures can be taken for chronic or acute situations. A tincture taken for a chronic problem is generally taken 1 - 3 times a day for several days, weeks or months. A tincture taken for an acute situation will often be taken 1 dropperful every 20 minutes for 1 - 2 hours then taken in increasingly longer periods of time apart until symptoms subside.

Always know the herb you are taking and the correct dosages before taking it. Consult with a herbalist or a reputable herbal for information on dosage of specific herbs.

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

~Making Plant Medicine by Richo Cech

~The Herbal Medicine Maker's Handbook: A Home Manual by James Green\*

~Rosemary Gladstar's Medicinal Herbs: A Beginner's Guide\*

~Healing Wise by Susun S. Weed\*

~Practical Herbs by Henriette Kress

~Herbal Medicine From the Heart of the Earth by Sharol Tilgner, N.D.

**Online Resources**

Article by Susun Weed:

[http://www.susunweed.com/herbal\\_ezine/October07/wisewoman.htm](http://www.susunweed.com/herbal_ezine/October07/wisewoman.htm)

Mountain Rose Herbs article on making tinctures:

<http://mountainroseblog.com/guide-tinctures-extracts/>

How to make a glycerite extract:

<http://www.keeperofthehome.org/2012/10/make-your-own-herbal-vitamin-and-mineral-tincture.html>