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## Injury Therapeutics and Differentials

(By Herb and By Ailment)

by Kiva Rose

### By Herb

**Peach** (*Prunus persica*) -cool/sl. moist- THE treatment for many bites and stings, especially the insanely itchy, widespread bite of the Cone Nosed Kissing Beetle. It works better than any other herb I've ever used for hyperimmune (allergic) response to plants and bugs. Use internally and externally, generally as a fresh plant tincture of bark, although a fresh leaf poultice is very nice too. Like its cousin Rose, it's perfectly suited to all kinds of red, inflamed, irritated skin problems.

**White Sage** (*Salvia apiana*) -cold, dry- A powerful disinfectant and anti-inflammatory that seems to share Lavender's ability to take the pain out of wounds, papercuts, cuts and burns. Other odiferous sages will work too, but this one is my favorite so far. I've had great results treating old, inflamed and infected wounds with it. It has a rather amazing ability to reduce pain in a big way (combine with Cottonwood and Pine for best results). For run of the mill scrapes and cuts I use a salve, but for deep infections, puncture wounds or burns in danger of infection I always use the diluted tincture or a strong tea (though alcohol extracts many of its healing aspects better than water).



**Beebalm** (*Monarda* spp.) -warm/cool, dry- Wonderful for burns and any hot, irritated skin

condition, rashes or wounds. Useful every which way, from tincture to infusion to poultice to salve. I have used this herb extensively in the treatment of cellulitis, antibiotic resistant staph/strep infections and all kinds of wounds. I usually combine it with Mugwort, Alder and Rose.

**Evening Primrose** (*Oenothera* spp.) -cool/sl. moist- All around lovely salve wherever there's inflammation and irritation. It really excels in the treatment of stings, bites, pokes and other irritating, heating injuries commonly obtained out of doors.

**Mugwort** (*Artemisia* spp.)-cool,dry- Great for itchy, hot rashes, the very best thing I've ever used on poison ivy and contact dermatitis conditions. Also makes a lovely (but terribly bitter) spit poultice for an array of wounds, rashes and other injuries. I've used it with very good results on tendonitis, sore muscles and contusions. It's a very broadly acting antimicrobial so comes in handy in a wide array of situations.

**Yarrow** (*Achillea* spp.) -cool/warm, dry- Yarrow is such a familiar wound herb I almost feel silly talking about it, but seeing as it's one of my very favorites I must babble on a bit about it. Great for both deep and shallow wounds, very disinfectant, hemostatic and pain relieving. The roots are even more powerful than the flowering tops and preferable in the severe pain of toothaches. Spit poultices are phenomenal for insect stings and bites, but it works MUCH better if you add your spit than if you just smush the herb. Freshplant is superior to any preparation, but tincture & powdered flowering tops are my preferred preparations.

**Rose** (*Rosa* spp.) petal, leaf, bark or root -cold, dry- Excellent for blisters, burns, wounds and sunburns. Rose is a wound medicine of primary importance for many Native tribes. Diluted Rose petal vinegar is a wonderfully soothing way to treat a sunburn, takes the heat out quick. And Rose petal pastilles work great for a sore throat, Rose petal honey is wonderful, perhaps unsurpassed for burn care (I like it combined with Sage honey). Some indigenous people used branch/root ashes for burns too. You can pack wounds with ground Rose leaf and twigs, and fresh rose petals make a handy (and elegant) backwoods bandage (just lick it to make it stick better). And because Rose is such an efficient blood mover, I like to use a fomentation or vinegar on both small bruises and larger contusions, it can be combined with Peony root for even better results. And Rose leaf spit poultices are another great one for insect stings and bites.

**Comfrey** (*Symphytum officinale*) -cool, moist- We've all heard about the amazing feats Comfrey has accomplished in the way of broken bones and wounds, but I was still quite shocked at the impressive results I obtained the first time I used a simple Comfrey leaf salve on a knee ligament injury. The knee had been bashed in a truck door, severely bruising the ligaments and causing remarkable swelling with great pain and complete immobility. Now ideally, I would have added something warming and diffusive to keep the injury from getting stuck and hard, but all I had on hand right then was a large container of comfrey leaf salve. Surprisingly, with each application the injury became noticeably less swollen and painful and eventually mobile. Through the healing process I tried various other herbs (liniments with lobelia and cayenne, arnica oil, Mugwort, Cottonwood, Mullein root and so on), the only things that came close were Cottonwood bud oil and Mugwort oil, but they still weren't quite as effective. Now most of you will already know this but I must mention it, but be sure not to use Comfrey on ANY open wound that might have even a TRACE of infection. It may cause the skin to heal so quickly that it closes right over a festering infection, leading to all kinds of systemic nastiness. This is a WONDERFUL herb used properly, but it's powerful enough that we need to understand where it's indicated and where it's not.

**Creosote Bush** (*Larrea tridentata*) -cold, dry- Great for scorpion stings, caterpillar hairs in your fingers and other venomous insects. A generally wonderful herb for all kinds of cuts, scratches, burns, wounds, fungal infections, rashes and just about anything else. I've used it on many wounds that definitely needed stitches with great results, it stops the bleeding and pain almost immediately, and heals very rapidly, usually leaving no scar. Larrea salve is my first choice in the treatment of a serious and painful wound, especially if there's any chance of infection. A soak, poultice or foment can all work very well. It's also very good for sore muscles, sprains, strains and just about everything else.

**Goldenrod** (*Solidago* spp) -warm, dry- An absolute miracle for pulled muscles, even when nothing else works. Better than ANY other herb I've ever used (including Arnica) for pulled, strained or overworked muscles. It works great for any wounds too, as well as arthritic swellings and the like, but it's specialty seems to be in the muscles. This is one of the twenty or so herbs I would NEVER be without, luckily it's a very common weed in North America. Oil or liniment made with fresh flowers.

**Pine** (*Pinus* spp) -warm, dry- Pine resin makes an excellent if messy tincture, vinegar or oil. The resin can also be used straight on wounds and burns. Anti-inflammatory, astringent and disinfectant, this is another very multi-purpose herb that can be used for just about any wound, nerve pain, burn, muscular aches or skin condition. Especially effective as a counterirritant to draw out splinters, boils and other things you don't want in your flesh. The needles and bark can be used as well but I like the resin best, for a milder preparation I mix all three together.

**Cottonwood** (*Populus* spp) -cool, dry- One of my very favorites, with many many applications. I make a vinegar with bark for burns, sunburns and scrapes. An oil of the buds is a great all purpose salve that relieves pain, disinfects and creates a protective coating over the wound. It also works remarkably well on contusions, tendinitis, injured ligaments, and strained or sore muscles. You can also use a high proof tincture of the buds and bark for any of those purposes.

**Alder** (*Alnus* spp.) -cool, dry- Astringent and anti-bacterial, Alder leaf makes a wonderful salve, fomentation or liniment for sunburns, burns, all manner of wounds, infections and skin irritations. A superior herb for venomous insect bites or stings, and great for burns as well. I have used it extensively in the treatment of cellulitis, antibiotic resistant staph/strep infections and other serious, rapidly spreading infections. I usually team it up with Monarda, Mugwort and Rose for the very best results.

**Mullein** root and flower (*Verbascum thapsus*) - A first rate herb for swellings, wounds, spinal injuries, bruises, burns, wounds and so on. The root and flower are especially anti-inflammatory though I find the leaves to be more directly healing. All parts of the plant are quite pain relieving.

**Elder** leaf, bark and flower (*Sambucus nigra* spp.) -cool, dry- Though a bit strange smelling, these Elder bits works very well for almost any inflammation, infection, rash, wound or pain. That sounds a bit broad, but Elder is one of the most multi-purpose

plants I've ever worked with, energetically conforming to whatever need is present. I've used it for bruises, sprains, arthritis, nerve pain, cuts, infections, sunburns, severe burns and hot rashes all to good effect.

**Oregon Grape Root** (*Mahonia* spp.) -cold, dry- This lovely little berberene containing plant makes a great root powder for all kind of stubborn infections and various first aid needs. I find it to work best in a mixed first aid powder containing other wound healing plants.

**Plantain** (*Plantago major* and related spp.) -cool, neutral- The first plant to think of in venomous spider bites (along with Alder and Peach), especially those from the brown recluse, use poultices of the fresh plant. Extraordinarily healing and pain relieving for wounds, sprains, cuts, bruises, burns and insect bites and stings. The spit poultice works best, though oil based preparations and tinctures are effective as well.

**Prickly Pear** (*Opuntia* spp.) pads and flowers -cool, moist- An excellent all around anti-inflammatory and wound healer. Of great use on stubbed toes, broken bones, burns or any other kind of swelling that you need to take the inflammation down on quickly. Just be sure not to hurt yourself worse with the stickers which are best burned off.

**Vervain** (*Verbena* and *Glandularia* spp.) -cool, dry- A specific for nerve & muscle pain, the powdered herb was traditionally used but the liniment seems to work very well too. It's also quite useful for wounds, burns, eczema, sprains and insect stings and bites. For nerve pain, I recommend taking internally as well.

**Snakeweed** (*Gutierrezia* spp.) -warm, dry- A resinous and strange plant that populates huge sections of the West as a symptom of the overgrazing so prevalent here. Ranchers, gardeners and even the EPA seems to hate it, but Indigenous and Spanish peoples have long recognized it's extraordinary value, and even considered to be sacred. The whole plant is very anti-inflammatory and pain relieving and has a long history of use in arthritis. Traditionally the dried plant was used in the bath and drank as a tea at the same time. It's also effective made into an oil or salve and used on arthritic joints, sore muscles, and wounds. A poultice works very well for insect sting and bites as well as all manner of injuries, including sprains, broken bones and bruises.

**Marshmallow, Mallow & Scarlet Globemallow** (*Althea* spp., *Malva* spp. & *Sphaeralcea* spp.) -cool, moist- A very soothing demulcent plant, wonderful as a fomentation for burns, scrapes and rashes and any inflamed, abraded surface. Also as an all-purpose wound healer as it stimulates the immune system locally and allows the wound heal quicker. It's also very drawing for splinters, boils and other things that need to come to the surface. I use as a fomentation, plaster or oil.

**Usnea** spp. -cool, dry- An intensely antibacterial lichen that can be powdered straight from the tree and used on any irritation, inflammation or infection. A high proof tincture is also effective. Decoctions will work but not all constituents are water soluble.

**Cow Parsnip** (*Heracleum maximum*) seeds and root -warm, dry- A specific for nerve pain or injury and toothaches but useful for all wounds and swellings. I primarily use the diluted tincture.

## By Ailment

**Sunburn:** I haven't found anything better than Rose petal vinegar, diluted 1:4 in water and applied as a fomentation every few hours. It usually takes the heat and pain out very rapidly. The next step is Prickly Pear gel (or aloe) application and as the skin begins to heal and then a moistening, healing salve of White Sage, Elder leaf & flower and Plantain. Do not apply oils or oil based products to any burn that is still hot, it will only hold the heat in.

**Burns:** First, cool the area with lukewarm to cool water (never never never ice). Then apply diluted tinctures of Rose, Cottonwood and White Sage (or Monarda). Lavender essential oil (neat) or diluted tincture will also work well. Later on, compresses of Mallow and Elderflower can be very soothing. When all heat is gone from the skin then you can use a salve of Plantain, Sage and Cottonwood to speed healing.

**Spider and other venomous, itchy bites:** Spit poultices are great here (especially those made of Peach, Yarrow, Plantain or Alder leaves, or some combo of them), have the person make their own poultice and ask them to swallow the leftover juice in their mouth as that will significantly shorten the reaction time. Tinctures can work if fresh plant isn't available. If it is a serious bite, add Creosote bush and/or Peach leaf internally and externally, amazing stuff for bite and sting reactions. Osha can also work to slow allergic reactions to venom. For more minor but painful bites, like those of ants, try Evening Primrose or Rose tinctures externally, if they start to swell eat some fresh Yarrow leaves or take a few drops of tincture. For itchy, evil mosquito and horsefly bites, think Wild Rose Petal tincture.

**Poison Ivy:** First, get all that volatile oil washed off with soap and water. Then, apply diluted vinegar or tinctures of Mugwort (make sure you don't have an Aster allergy first of course), Plantain, Yarrow and Rose leaf/petal. Oatmeal, Mallow and Rose petal baths can be helpful too.



**Random rashes and contact dermatitis:** Mugwort, Alder, Yarrow & Elder flower applied any way you like. If there's heat and abundant redness, avoid oil based preparations.

**Swimmer's Ear:** For just about any ear infections I use a couple drops of Elderberry/Mullein flower tincture or oil depending on whether condition needs moistening or drying. Of course, don't stick anything in your ear if you suspect that the eardrum might be perforated.

**Sprains, Strains & Sore Muscles:** Some people suggest ice but I try not to overcool the area. Instead I usually rub the area down with oils of Goldenrod (my first choice in any situation where there's hurt muscles), Rose, Cottonwood & Comfrey (or any of these singly, depending upon the situation and what you have available). Poultices, fomentations and baths can all be used as well. Mugwort is another fine herb for this purpose, gets the chi moving and is very healing. And come to think of it, Evening Primrose and Monkeyflower also work nicely here. Use Cottonwood, Evening Primrose and your nervine/antispasmodic of choice internally if there's pain and spasms. You can use Prickly Poppy or California Poppy internally if the pain is very bad. Kava, Silk Tassel, Wild Yam or Valerian can all be very helpful if there's painful spasming happening.

**Wounds, cuts & scratches:** The possibilities are endless. My favorites are Cottonwood, Rose, Alder leaf, Larrea, Beebalm and Mugwort but many many plants can be very useful here. Mugwort is probably my most frequently used plant on any minor injury, bite or strain.

**Splinters:** Plantain, Mallow and Pine Pitch are my favorites, just make poultice and tape it on after cleaning the area. Pine is especially effective and can pull out glass, wood and all kind of interesting foreign objects, it can be used as a salve or just slap the gooey gum straight from the tree onto the effected area, then wrap so you don't get your foot stuck to the floor.

**Traveler's Diarrhea:** Tincture or tea of Creosote Bush, Mugwort and Alder (and optionally, Honeysuckle). Yes, it will taste awful and yes, it will help. Accompany this with a tea of Mallow, Elderberry, Plantain and Rose to soothe your belly, balance your immune system and help restore a healthy balance of bacteria. Evening Primrose will also help heal the gut and stop cramping but may make you sleepy.

**Heat Headaches:** First, hydrate yourself. If you're feeling electrolyte imbalance you can take of the weird fizzy stuff (EmergenC) or you can dissolve some honey and salt in water and drink it, or have a Nettle infusion. An iced tea of Mallow, Rose and Elderberry can keep you cool and moist and prevent the whole thing. To ease the actual headache try some Lavender or Sage or Cottonwood. Sticking your head in a cold river helps a lot too.

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