

Learning Herbal Medicine (class slides at the bottom)

Disclaimer: I am not a medical doctor and am just sharing some tips that work for my family. Please do your own research to find what works best for your family. If you are taking pharmaceutical drugs you will need to check for drug/plant medicine interactions.

These are some of my favorite books. As with all of these books I take bits and pieces from each book and leave some behind that doesn't work for me or my beliefs. Everyone asks me to pick my one favorite book but I could never do that. They each have something the others don't and I really do use all of them frequently. But if I had to pick 3 it would be the top 3 in this list.

Encyclopedia of Herbal Medicine - Andrew Chevallier (big sturdy book with beautiful pictures and descriptions/uses of a huge list of herbs. Especially helpful is the Ailment Index.)

The Way of Herbs - Michael Tierra (no pictures but fabulous information about the herbs, history and uses. This would probably be my favorite if it had pictures. I use this one every single time I research herbal remedies)

Herbal Recipes for Vibrant Health - Rosemary Gladstar (you can't go wrong with Rosemary Gladstar, wonderful picture book with recipes and information on how to use the herbs)

Medicinal Herbs - Rosemary Gladstar (smaller amount of herbs mentioned in this book but very detailed information on each herb and how to use them)

The Herbal Apothecary - JJ Pursell (pictures and descriptions on a smaller list of herbs, but very precise instructions on how to use them).

The Herbal Medicine-Marker's Handbook - James Green No pictures but good instructions on Teas, infusions, decoctions, oils, tinctures, salves, ointments, balms and more.

Back to Eden - Jethro Kloss (this was written in 1939 so it's lacking the shine and beautiful pictures of today's books, but it has some interesting stories and information.

Healing Mushrooms - Richard Bray (I've had this book for awhile but have yet to dive into medicinal mushrooms due to lack of space. It's on my list though!)

School of Natural Healing John R. Christopher is wonderful! It's very expensive, very old and not indexed well at all, but his stories are so inspiring! I treasure this book, especially since it encouraged me to change my diet (mostly ditching processed food) and lose some menopausal weight.

Good herbalists to follow online:

Homegrown Herbalist (Dr. Patrick Jones). This guy is one of my favorites. He's a veterinarian in Idaho and actually uses medicinal herbs on the animals he treats, as well as his human friends and family. He has so many great stories and personal experience using herbs. -listen on Youtube, books, offers classes

Rosemary Gladstar. She grew up using herbs and has a wealth of knowledge. She's also the most giving of her knowledge of any I've listened to. She has such a calming nature to her that comes out in her books as well as videos. -Youtube, many books

Barbara O'Neill. Long time herbalist with lots of hands on experience. She believes in teaching families how to take care of basic first aid and minor health issues at home vs running to the doctor for every ailment, thus freeing up hospitals to do more acute and serious emergencies. -Youtube, offers classes

[Dr. John R. Christopher](#), 1909-1983. He is no longer on the earth but there are still some crackly old videos floating around on Youtube. His stories are great, even though it is sometimes hard to find the plants he mentions. I don't know if that's because of our Texas location, plants that aren't common anymore, or because they called the plant by a different name back then. His book *School of Natural Healing* is wonderful. Youtube, books

[Homesteading Family](#). I really enjoy listening to their videos on medicinal herbs and how to use them. Youtube, offers classes

Once again, take what you want, leave what you don't behind with each of these herbalists.

A word on health. As much as we'd like it, there is no magic pill or cure-all prescription for the illnesses of life. Good health starts with living healthfully every day. Keeping our bodies actively moving, getting good sleep and eating a healthy diet are the first steps in overcoming illness, fatigue, pain, lack of focus and depression.

Before turning to any form of medicinal remedy, we first need to look at what we can do to improve exercise, sleep, diet, and eliminate any unnecessary stress (if possible). Many health complaints will be eliminated just by doing these 4 things.

I grew up eating healthy home cooked meals, but always followed by sugary desserts. Those healthy meals were undermined by the sugar overload and processed treats and sugary cereals we consumed. It wasn't a problem until it was.

In my mid 40s I became pre-diabetic and that's when I started looking at ways to turn it around. I learned what I needed to do but it took several years to make the change. Change is hard and sugar/processed food are so addicting! It's a battle I'll probably struggle with my whole life.

I try to cook almost all of our meals from scratch, grow a lot of plants in the garden, and try to not eat any added sugar (other than what's in fruit).

When I'm able to stay on track it makes a world of difference in my mood, energy, pain level and ability to avoid sickness.

If you are just starting to learn about herbal remedies and are feeling apprehensive about using them on yourself or others; a good place to start is with GRAS herbs. (generally regarded as safe) A lot of these are also a food source and can very easily be grown in backyard gardens. But don't underestimate these herbs just because they are common plants or backyard weeds. A lot of them are extremely strong while also being gentle on the body. If you are in doubt about an herb just look it up to see if it is GRAS. But that is just a starting point. You can move on to other herbs once you have a better understanding of how to use them.

And don't feel overwhelmed with the hundreds of different medicinal plants out there. In the beginning I thought I had to have many different herbs on hand for all the different things they did. So I either planted or bought SO MANY herbs. I'm glad I have them on hand but truthfully I probably won't use them all up before they pass their potency period. And almost all herbs are good for many different ailments, meaning you can probably get by with a good 10 -15 herbs growing in your backyard (or foraged in the wild). Maybe less.

I could never pick a favorite herb but I think every single household would avoid a lot of health complaints by just adding **garlic** into their diets. I plant a huge amount of garlic every year and we add it to most dishes we cook. If we are starting to feel any kind of sickness come on we will slice a raw garlic clove, mix it in some goat cheese and eat it just like that, 3 times a day. Raw garlic is a powerful medicine and kicks (or lessens) a lot of illnesses so fast. Onions, comfrey, thyme, mullein and lemon balm are next on the list.

[A word on foraging for herbs](#). Be very sure that what you are picking is indeed the plant you seek. The very best way to be sure is to actually plant

seeds and grow that plant in your garden. You will learn what it looks like from seedling to flowering stage and know it like the back of your hand. Growing them also ensures that you are getting a pesticide, heavy metal, pollution free herb. If you do see a plant in the wild that you are sure of (dandelions, mullein, echinacea) make sure it's in a field that's not sprayed, and far from a road where there might be gas fumes and pollutants. This is especially important with liver detoxifying herbs like milk thistle.

***Herbs that pull toxins from the body also pull toxins from the soil. ***

I recently saw milk thistle growing wild in the ditch beside my neighborhood. But I knew that the landscapers put all kinds of chemicals in the grass and when it rains it all drains into that ditch. So that beautiful milk thistle is off limits because its job is to soak up toxins, so it will surely be full of roadside toxins.

I love growing herbs in my garden so I can see what they look like, then later I can recognize them in the wild. These are some of the places I have ordered seeds:

Strictly Medicinal Seeds has a big selection.

<https://strictlymedicalseeds.com/>

I also love Bake Creek Heirloom Seeds.

<https://www.rareseeds.com/?srsltid=AfmBOopChDoY65s4ROqw6SxEgZu2JGaBG6osCtGzkmJAXTEZSp84G9Ue>

Make sure you research what can grow in our climate. I wasted money on seeds that don't grow well in the South.

Most medicinal plants are weeds, which means they usually grow without assistance in the wild and will do well in your garden, but some are native to different climates.

If you don't want to grow your own plants, and would prefer to purchase dried herbs online:

this is a good quality site, although they are on the pricier side:

<https://mountainroseherbs.com/>

I have also been happy with this company: <https://www.herbco.com/>

As well as: <https://pacificbotanicals.com/>

***Not to be a conspiracy theorist 🧐 but unfortunately a lot of the best medicinal plants are often listed as “invasive” or “dangerous to consume”. When you start reading through these medicinal books you’ll see a lot of first hand stories on these plants that have been used medicinally for hundreds, sometimes thousands of years.

***An example I shared with the class was on the use of comfrey, which is listed online as “do not consume internally”.

I had just gotten back into an exercise routine and was pushing it too hard with the heavy kettlebell. I don’t know what I did but I had a LOT of pain in my abdominal muscles. I think I might have torn a ligament because it hurt to twist my body, bend over, pick things up or push, just about anything. It went on for about a week and was not getting better. One day I had a full cart at the store and had to walk away from it because it hurt too bad to push the cart. On the way home I remembered the healing benefits of comfrey. I quickly re-read some of my favorite herbalist stories on comfrey and decided that the best thing to do was apply several poultices throughout the day, while also drinking comfrey tea. I did that one whole day and by the next morning I noticed a huge improvement on the pain. I continued the internal/external use of comfrey and by the end of the 2nd day I had no pain.

***I have since used it on the top of my foot when I dropped something heavy on it and bruised it pretty bad, and when I hit my ankle pretty hard and had some difficulty walking without pain. Both of those injuries healed very quickly and I attribute that to the comfrey.

***You do need to research comfrey before using though. Never use on an unclean wound because the skin could close up too quickly and seal in the bacteria. Never use on a broken bone that has not been properly set back in place or it will mend too quickly in the wrong place.

Once again, do your own research before making a decision on whether or not to use these kind of herbs.

Adding this because it just happened. My husband sharpened our knives a few weeks ago. I was cutting carrots and sliced the end of my index finger BAD. I have cut myself many times but this one must have hit just the right nerve endings because it hurt like crazy. My knees went weak and I was feeling dizzy. I don't know how I could have given birth twice with no medication but a cut makes me almost pass out. 🤕

I could not get it to stop bleeding with pressure so I piled some dried yarrow on it and applied light pressure (fresh would have been even better but I wasn't thinking correctly and the dried was in my kitchen already) Within a minute or so the bleeding had stopped.

My husband said "that looked like it really hurt!" I said "You know what? It did, but now I don't feel anything, it's almost numb!"

I knew yarrow stopped bleeding but had no idea it stopped pain like that. Definitely adding yarrow to my pain formulations now.

These are some fun recipes you can try:

Honey/Onion Cough Syrup

Ingredients-

- 1 raw onion (white, yellow, red, or purple)
- 1 jar of local honey
- 1 large mason jar with lid

Instructions:

Chop and dice onion.

Place 1/4 c of onion in the bottom of 1 mason jar.

Then drizzle 1/4 c of honey over.

Repeat onion, honey layers, until you have used up all your onion; typically 4-5 layers will be made.

Secure lid, turn upside down until all onion has been covered by the honey and then back to right side up.

Let sit for 24 hours at room temperature.

Next, place another mason jar under a small mesh strainer and gently pour to separate the onion from the syrup. Set onions and strainer aside.

Place lid on honey onion syrup and place in the refrigerator and use as needed.

Keeps indefinitely (if it lasts that long).

Instructions for use:

At first sign of cough or sickness:

Adults 1 tsp 3 times a day.

Children 1/2 tsp 3 times a day.

Toddlers 1/8 tsp 3 times a day.

Infants not recommended.

Mullein Tea

Ingredients:

3-4 cups water

1 large leaf torn up (or 2 Tbsp dried)

2" piece of ginger chopped

1 lemon squeezed

Honey to taste

(This is great for allergies or just general congestion. If we're feeling like a cold or flu is coming on I'll add a sprig of thyme, a few sprigs of lemon balm, a few torn up sage leaves and a small handful of yarrow leaves or flowers)

Steep the ingredients in hot water for 15-20 minutes. This can be for one person, 3-4 cups a day, or for several people one cup each.

Golden Milk for 2 to 3 people

Ingredients:

3 cups any kind of milk

1-2 tsp dried turmeric powder (more is better but it's not super delicious with more)

2 tsp cinnamon

1 tsp ginger

½ tsp cardamom

¼ tsp cloves

¼ tsp nutmeg

Honey to taste (I usually do about ¼ cup plus a tiny bit of stevia)

This is a great immune booster for cold and flu season. Also helpful for inflammation in the body.

Garlic Mullein Earache Oil

Materials

- **6 garlic cloves peeled and crushed or chopped**
- **⅓ cup dried mullein flowers**
- **carrier oil to cover about 1 cup, I like to use olive oil**

Instructions

In a clean jar, combine the garlic and mullein flowers.

Pour the oil into the jar until the garlic and mullein are just covered, ensuring you leave at least one inch of space at the top of the jar to allow for expansion.

Put a lid on the jar and leave it to infuse for at least two weeks (and up to 3 months). Give the jar a shake or stir every few days or so.

When ready, strain the garlic and mullein flowers from the oil and funnel the oil into dropper bottles and screw the lid(s) on tightly. Store in a cool, dry place for up to one year.

To use: use the dropper bulb to dispense 3-4 drops into each outer ear canal. It is necessary to do both since they are connected. Do not stick the dropper into your ear or dispense internally.

Immune Booster Tincture

Get one clean quart jar and chop equal amounts of fresh ginger and turmeric, plus 1-2 Tbsp black pepper, filling the jar about halfway up. Pour glycerine over the ginger and turmeric to cover by about an inch. Cover jar with lid and shake. Let it sit for about 6-8 weeks, shaking occasionally to make sure the ginger and turmeric are still covered. At the end of the 6-8 weeks strain out the liquid and pour into a jar with a lid. Take 1 Tablespoon a day. This will be good for about a year.

Tinctures can be made with apple cider vinegar, glycerin and alcohol.

Apple cider vinegar tinctures seem to get a little funky after 4+ months.

Glycerin tinctures are sweet and good for children, or something you want someone to want to take every day (like a women's vitamin tincture my friend Adrienne and I made (so yummy!).

ACV and glycerin do not pull as much of the medicinal qualities out of the plant as alcohol.

Alcohol tinctures are stronger medicinally and last about 5 years.

***A typical dose of an alcohol tincture has less alcohol than an over-ripe banana, and a lot less than NyQuil.

A good compromise for anyone opposed to the full alcohol tincture is a glycerin tincture with a little bit of alcohol added. It extends the shelf life and pulls more of the medicinal compounds out of the plant.

Some of the books mentioned above give very detailed instructions on making tinctures.

Sleep Tea

1 ounce catnip herb

1 ounce skullcap herb

1 ounce passionflower herb

1 ounce lemon balm herb

½ ounce chamomile flowers

½ ounce lavender flowers

½ ounce hops flowers

Mix herbs in a jar. Use 2 tsp. per cup, steep 5-8 minutes covered. Drink 1 hour before bedtime.

If you are interested in making oil infusions and balms or salves, two good resources are The Herbal Apothecary by JJ Pursell and The Herbal Medicine Maker's Handbook by James Green. You have to make an oil infusion before you can make a salve and those books will give you good instructions on both. Rosemary Gladstar's books are good as well.

At age 55 (me) and 62 (husband), we have found wonderful herbs that help keep us in good health at our age. For each health complaint there's so many different plants that could be used, so lots of options out there. I love the opportunity to help others with herbal remedies and often take mullein tea to an elderly neighbor with breathing issues. It has helped him overcome pneumonia several times.

Use with Caution:

The people I am overly cautious with are pregnant women and anyone taking pharmaceutical drugs, or with life threatening illnesses.

For instance, **sage** is great for the mouth or throat, but it can dry up a nursing mom's milk.

Berberine and cinnamon are good at keeping blood sugar low, but if a diabetic who is already on insulin takes them it could bottom out their blood sugar levels.

Hawthorn can lower blood pressure so it shouldn't be combined with pharmaceutical blood pressure medicine.

If there's ever a time when access to a hospital is not available, then I will definitely do all I can to help someone with the things I have learned. But right now my goal is to keep my family in the best health possible with diet, exercise, sunlight and naturopathic medicine, while continuing to learn more about the world of healing plants.

The slides below consist of a very small selection of herbs. I picked them because they're easy to grow or forage for in the wild. There are several that we love (like white willow for pain) that we purchase online. I didn't mention those, or the many others we use for the sake of time. But If you have any questions on a particular herb or how to use them feel free to message me at pbrookp@gmail.com. I'll still be learning until the day I die but would love to share the things I have learned so far.

Some easy to grow or forage herbs below:

TEAS
OIL INFUSIONS
SYRUPS
TINCTURES
POULTICES
BALMS
SALVES



GARLIC

ANTIBIOTIC
EXPECTORANT
LOWERS BLOOD PRESSURE
ANTI-DIABETIC
EXPELS WORMS
COLDS & FLU
DIGESTIVE INFECTIONS
EARACHE
FUNGAL INFECTIONS
URINARY INFECTIONS



ONIONS

DIURETIC
ANTIBIOTIC
ANTI-INFLAMMATORY,
COLDS & FLU
EARACHE



MULLEIN

COUGHS & CONGESTION
WOUND HEALER
EAR INFECTIONS
HEMORRHOIDS



YARROW

REDUCES FEVER

MILD DIURETIC

STOPS BLEEDING (TAKE
INTERNALLY AND APPLY EXTERNALLY)

ANTI-INFLAMMATORY

LOWERS BLOOD PRESSURE

COLDS & FLU

BLOOD CIRCULATION

PAINFUL MENSTRUATION

HEMORRHOIDS



LEMON BALM

COLD SORES, CHICKEN POX
& SHINGLES
ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION
OVERACTIVE THYROID
INSECT STINGS
FEVERS
FLU WITH MUSCLE ACHES
ANTIVIRAL



OREGANO

ANTIBACTERIAL &
ANTIFUNGAL,
ESPECIALLY AGAINST E.
COLI AND CANDIDA
STRAINS.
CAN AID MANY ACUTE
AND CHRONIC
INFECTIONS AFFECTING
THE GASTROINTESTINAL
AND RESPIRATORY
TRACTS.



SAGE

SORE THROATS
POOR DIGESTION
IRREGULAR PERIODS
ANTISEPTIC
CLEARS MUCUS
NERVE TONIC
ENHANCES MEMORY
MENOPAUSE SYMPTOMS
DECREASES BREAST
MILK PRODUCTION



WILD LETTUCE



-SAFE SEDATIVE

-CALMS
OVERACTIVITY

-MUSCLE SPASMS
AND PAIN

PLANTAIN

HEPATITIS
URINARY TRACT INFECTIONS
BOILS
STINGS AND BITES FROM
VENOMOUS INSECTS &
ANIMALS
USED AS A TEA TO
STAUNCH HEAVY MENSTRUAL
BLEEDING



COMFREY

ALSO KNOWN AS KNITBONE

ANTI INFLAMMATORY
PAIN RELIEVING
RAPID WOUND OR BONE
HEALING
ACNE & BOILS
INFLAMED SKIN RASHES
STIFF & ACHING JOINTS
FUNGAL SKIN INFECTIONS



THYME

ANTISEPTIC
MILD ASTHMA
FUNGAL INFECTIONS
EXPELS WORMS
COLD & FLU
EARACHE
STOMACH ULCERS
ATHLETE'S FOOT
SCABIES & LICE



ECHINACEA

HEALS WOUNDS

INCREASES WHITE BLOOD CELLS

URINARY TRACT INFECTIONS

TREATS VIRAL & FUNGAL INFECTIONS

SYPHILIS & GONORRHEA

ALLERGIES & ASTHMA

EARACHE

COLD & FLU

VENOMOUS BITES

GANGRENE

ACNE & BOILS

POISON IVY



PEPPERMINT

NAUSEA

HEADACHES

GAS AND BLOATING

RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS

CAN ENHANCE THE
EFFECTIVENESS OF
HERBAL MIXTURES



MiLK THiSTLE

LIVER PROTECTIVE
CHEMO PROTECTIVE
ANTI CANCER
TREATS HEPATITIS &
LIVER CIRRHOSIS
MILD DEPRESSION
JAUNDICE
INCREASES BREAST MiLK
PRODUCTION

