



Blood Cleansing Herbs

An exploration of the applications, benefits and popular herbs found in the alterative herbal category.

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Introduction to Alteratives

- The word alterative comes from the verb *alter*.
- Alteratives have been used throughout history to correct disease conditions associated with the blood.
- In the 19th century, alteratives were understood as blood purifiers, today they are used to promote lymphatic flow and to stimulate the detoxifying functions of the body.
- Many traditional cultures around the world regularly consume alterative herbs as part of their daily diets or as tonics at certain times of the year.



Introduction to Alteratives

- Alteratives are known for their ability to cleanse the blood, tissues and organs of elimination such as the liver, kidneys, and skin.
- They also facilitate proper nutrient assimilation, which has a normalizing action on overall physiology.
- There are over 100 herbs in the alterative category.
- Alterative herbs are used more often than any other group of herbs in natural therapies.
- Alteratives are also called sometimes called anti-scorbutics, blood purifiers, depuratives or blood sweeteners.



Introduction to Alteratives

- Alteratives are similar to tonics, which help both the overall system as well as aiding particular organs, tissues and cells.
- Most alteratives are common weeds, therefore they are inexpensive and very accessible for most people.
- Alterative herbs are often used for "the diseases of civilization" such as high blood pressure, arthritis, cancer and heart disease.
- They are also helpful in treating conditions such as allergies, chronic fatigue, blood infections, skin eruptions and depression.



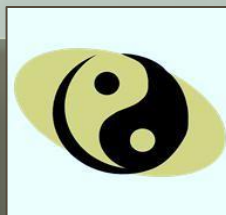
Introduction to Alteratives

- Alteratives may need to be taken for several months or more to see the full benefits. Ideally these herbs are used along with a change in lifestyle such as improved diet and exercise.
- They can be classified as stimulating, toning or relaxing.
- When alternative herbs are used over a long period of time, they allow for gradual detoxification of the entire bloodstream which will work to improve digestion, assimilation, and glandular secretions.



Eastern Herbal Perspective

- Alteratives are herbs that clear internal heat.
- Heat is any type of toxic congestion.
- Congestion in the body will transform heat into stagnation.
- The body's first response is to become cold, but as it fights off the pathogen or infection it changes to heat, which can deplete yin.
- Yin tonics are generally recommended along with alteratives.
- Caution should be use when working with individuals with low appetite, loose stools and diarrhea.



Organs of Elimination

1. Liver

- If the liver is contaminated with waste and sluggish skin eruptions will appear.
- Skin eruptions are one of the first signs of contamination in the organs of elimination.

2. Kidneys

- If the kidneys are dehydrated the bloodstream will become toxic as the kidneys are unable to sufficiently remove waste from the blood.

3. Lungs

- If the air breathed is not clean the lungs will not be able to oxygenize the blood.

4. Spleen

- If the spleen is not functioning properly red blood cells will not be properly filtered and immune function will be poor.

5. Bowel

- Removes digestive waste, if the digestive system is not working properly waste will reenter the bloodstream.

6. Skin

- Removes toxins through sweat.



Actions of Alteratives

Primary Action

- Positively alter disordered metabolic and catabolic processes, especially those associated with the break-down and elimination of metabolic waste.

Secondary Action

- Enhance better overall absorption and assimilation of nutrients.

Together the primary and secondary actions balance metabolic and catabolic activities, normalize overall physiological chemistry and thereby restore vital health.

Some alterative herbs contain hormones or hormone-like substances that act like endocrine secretions. Others improve the function of the endocrine glands, so that they better produce their own secretions.

When are Alternatives Recommended?

- In cases of retrograde metabolism, which are disorders associated with delayed breakdown and excretion of metabolic waste, deterioration of normally healthy tissues and slow reconstruction of new tissues.
- Symptoms may include loss of vitality and strength, loss of appetite, weight loss, wasting and general debility, usually during chronic disease.



Choosing Alternatives

- When recommending alterative herbs it is very important to first identify the organ or organs that are not working properly.
- Many alterative herbs contain substances that stimulate the action of specific organs.
- Some herbs will relieve congestion from the liver by stimulating liver secretions; others will work on the kidneys and bowels through a diuretic or laxative action. Others increase circulation to the skin to promote perspiration.
- Therefore the properties of the chosen alternative should match the nature of the condition.



Examples of How Alteratives are Used

1. Red clover is used for cancer because of its effects on protein assimilation.
2. Echinacea is used to neutralize acid conditions in the blood associated with stagnation of the lymphatic fluids.
3. Sarsapilla can be used when its diuretic properties are needed in cases of gout.
4. Cascara sagrada can be used when a laxative is needed for constipation conditions.
5. Dandelion has hepatic properties and diuretic properties and can be used for stagnant liver conditions.
6. Elder flower have diuretic properties and can be used to purify the blood for colds and flus.



List of Popular Alterative Herbs

• Alfalfa	• Cleaver	• Ginkgo biloba	• Pau d'Arco	• Wild Indigo
• Aloe Vera	• Clover	• Ginseng	• Pipsissewa	• Yarrow
• Angelica	• Comfrey	• Grape Root	• Plantain	• Yellow Dock
• Barberry	• Damiana	• Goldenseal	• Poke root	• Yucca
• Bayberry	• Dandelion	• Gotu Kola	• Prickly Ash	
• Black Cohosh	• Devil's Claw	• Horsetail	• Psyllium	
• Blessed Thistle	• Dong Quai	• Irish Moss	• Red Clover	
• Blue Vervain	• Echinacea	• Kelp	• Red Raspberry	
• Buckthorn	• Elderberry	• Licorice root	• Rhubarb	
• Burdock Root	• Elecampane	• Mandrake	• Sarsaparilla	
• Chamomile	• Elder Flower	• Marshmallow	• Sassafras	
• Capsicum	• Fenugreek	• Milk Thistle	• St. John's Wort	
• Cascara Sagrada	• Eyebright	• Nettle	• Schisandra	
• Cayenne	• Garlic	• Hawthorn	• Suma	
• Chaparral	• Gentian	• Nettle	• Uva Ursi	
• Chickweed	• Ginger	• Oregon grape	• Willow Bark	



Burdock (*Arctium Lappa*)

Common Names: Lappa, clotburr, thorny burr, fox's cloth, beggars buttons, hardock, hareburr, burrburr, turkey burr, bardana

Parts Used: Roots (ideally the first year's growth), leaf, seeds, stalk. The roots have the most alterative properties.

Actions: Alterative, tonic, diuretic, stomatic, aperient, depurative, anti-scorbutic

Burdock root is an excellent blood cleanser. It benefits the skin, kidneys, and relieves congestion in the lymphatic system.

Medicinal Uses: skin ailments, rashes, eruptions, eczema, rheumatism, cancer, gout, catarrh, urinary deposits, swelling, canker sores, colds and fevers.



Burdock (*Arctium Lappa*)



- Burdock is popularly known as gobo root in Japanese cuisine.
- Burdock is an excellent restorative cleanser/detoxifier for the liver and kidneys and is especially indicated in chronic skin conditions like eczema and psoriasis. It gently increases the circulation to the skin, which helps to detoxify the tissues there.
- Burdock also soothes and cleanses the lymphatic vessels, serous membranes, and mucous membranes and is indicated in inflammation and congestion of bronchial tissue.
- Burdock improves the function of the liver by stimulating its secretions and breaking up stagnancy. It's soothing to the digestive tract with mild laxative and diuretic effects.

Burdock Preparations & Dosages

Preparations: decoctions, liquid extracts, powders, tinctures

Dosages:

Decoction: 2 ounces, 3-4 times daily

Liquid extract: ½-1 teaspoon, daily

Powder: 2- grams daily

Tincture: 30-60 drops 3-4 times daily

Administration: oral or topical



Burdock Formulas



Decoction of Burdock Root

- 4 ounces Burdock root, chopped or powdered
- 3 pints of purified water
- 8 ounces of vegetable glycerin (preservative)

Instructions: Simmer the herb in the distilled water for 30 minutes, strain and return to heat. Reduce by simmering to one pint, strain, allow to cool and add vegetable glycerin, mix well and store in a dry place.

Blood Purifier Formula

- 4 Tbsp. Burdock root
- 4 Tbsp. Yellow dock
- 1 Tbsp. Bloodroot
- 1 pint vegetable glycerin

Instructions: Place the herbs in 1.5 quarts of boiling water and simmer, reduce to one quart, strain and add the vegetable glycerin. Mix well and store in a cool place.

Eczema Wash

- 1 ounce Burdock root
- 1 ounce Yellow dock
- 1 ounces Yarrow
- 1 ounce Marshmallow

Instructions: Simmer the herbs in 2 quarts of water and reduce to 2.5 pints, and strain. Wash infected parts with decoction at least 2 times daily.

Oregon Grape (*Berberis aquifolium*)

Common Names: mountain grape, wild Oregon grape, rocky mountain grape, hull-leaved barberry, California barberry, training mahonia,

Parts Used: Rhizome and roots

Actions: Alterative, tonic, hepatic, stimulant, diuretic, nervine, laxative, anti-scorbutic

Oregon grape is a wonderful liver stimulant and blood cleanser. It can be used to increase the appetite, encourage digestion, improve assimilation, and increase strength. It helps heal the bowel, and urinary tract, lymphatic system and skin.

Uses: Skin imbalances, psoriasis, constipation, weak digestion, jaundice, kidney and liver ailments, uterine imbalances and diarrhea



Oregon Grape Dosages & Preparations

Preparations: decoction, fluid extract, powder, tincture

Dosages:

Decoction: 2 ounces, 3 times daily, one hour before meals

Liquid Extract: .5-1 teaspoon

Powder: 1-3 grams, daily

Tincture: 30-60 drops, 3 times daily

Administration: oral or topical



Oregon Grape Formulas

Basic Decoction of Oregon Grape

- 2 ounces Oregon grape root, cut or powdered
- 1 quart distilled water

Instructions: boil the herb slowly for 20 minutes in a well covered pot, strain and sweeten with honey if desired, cool and store in a dark cool place.

Dosage: 1 teaspoon, 3-4 times daily

Syphilis Formula

- 2 teaspoons Oregon grape root, cut or powdered
- 1 1/4 teaspoon Red clover
- 1 teaspoon Burdock seeds
- 1 teaspoon Cascara sagrada
- 1 teaspoon Blue flag
- 2/3 teaspoon Prickly ash berries
- 2/3 teaspoon Bloodroot

Instructions: soak herbs in one quart of water for one hour, simmer for 15 minutes, strain, and store in a cool dark place.

Dosage: 2 tablespoons, 3 or 4 times daily.



Sassafras

(*Sassafras albidum*)

Common Names: Sassafrax, saxifrax, knutze, saloop, agu tree, cinnamon wood

Parts Used: root bark, root, bark, stem, pith, oil

Actions: Alterative, aromatic, diuretic, stimulant, emmenagogue, antirheumatic



Sassafras is a blood purifier that destroys pathogens and micro-organisms. It is a good diaphoretic when consumed hot. Effectively cleanses the whole body, namely the digestive system and alimentary canal. Can also be used to cover bitter herbal flavors, which is often the case with alterative herbs.

Uses: Skin imbalances, poison ivy, poison oak, colds, eye inflammation, kidney issues, diarrhea, colds, indigestion, amenorrhea

Sassafras Preparations & Dosages

Preparations: fluid extract, oil, poultice, tincture

Dosages:

Fluid Extract: ½ - 1 teaspoon

Infusion: 1-2 ounces, 3-4 times daily

Oil: ½-1 teaspoon, externally as needed

Powder: ½-1 gram, daily

Tincture: 30-60 drops, 3 times daily

Administration: oral and topical

❖ Contraindicated if pregnant.



Sassafras Formulas

Spring Tonic (to purify and thin the blood)

- 1 part sassafras
- 1 part sarsaparilla
- ½ part Mezereon bark
- ½ part Guaiac

Instructions: simmer all the herbs in one quart of water for 10 minutes, strain

Dosage: ½ cup, 3-4 times daily

Rheumatic Liniment

- 1 ounce Sassafras tincture
- 1 ounce prickly pear tincture
- 1 ounce cayenne tincture
- 1 ounce myrrh tincture
- 1 ounce camphor tincture
- 8 ounces distilled water

Instructions: mix all ingredients well and apply to affected area



Yellow Dock (*Rumex crispus*)

Common Names: yellow dock, curled dock, sour dock, culry dock, narrow dock, garden patience

Actions: alterative, tonic, astringent, cathartic, anti-syphilitic, nutritive

Yellow dock is considered to have the most medicinal qualities out of all the herbs in the dock family. The roots are a very good source of iron, making it a great remedy for building blood. It is also good for the lymphatic system and skin conditions.

Uses: skin imbalances, glandular tumors, swelling, itch, liver congestion, cancer, fevers, cough, anemia, sour stomach



Yellow Dock Preparations & Dosages

Preparations: decoctions, liquid extracts, infusion, powder, solid extract, tincture, ointment

Dosages:

Decoction: 2 teaspoons-1 tablespoon in 1 cup of water, 3 times daily

Liquid extract: ½-1 teaspoon, 3 times daily

Infusion: 2 ounces, 3-4 times daily

Powder: 1-4 grams, daily

Solid extract: 325 milligrams to 1 gram

Tincture: ½-1 teaspoon

Administration: oral, topical, vaginal

- ❖ When taking yellow dock avoid black and Chinese tea and coffee as it will produce toxins within the body.



Yellow Dock Formulas

Blood Purifier

- 1 part Yellow dock
- 1 part Red clover tops
- 1 part Brigham tea
- 1 part Burdock root
- 1 part Figwort root



Instructions: simmer the herbs in 1 quart of water for 20 minutes and strain.

Dosage: 2 ounces, 3 times daily. Can also be used externally as a wash.

Anemia Remedy

- 1 ounce Yellow Dock
- 1 ounce Buckbean
- 1 ounce Comfrey

Instructions: simmer all herbs in 1 quart of water for 20 minutes.

Dosage: 2 ounces, every 3 hours.

Garlic (*Allium sativum*)

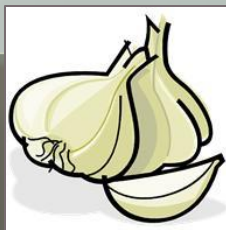
Common Names: garlic, poor man's treacle, rhoblauch

Parts Used: fresh bulb

Actions: Alterative, stimulant, diaphoretic sudorific, diuretic, expectorant, anti-spasmodic, tonic, nervine, cathartic, emmenagogue, carminative, digestant, rubefacient

Garlic has a very powerful volatile essential oil and has been used throughout history in nutrition and as a nervine tonic to lower hypertension. It is also beneficial for the respiratory tract by influencing bronchial secretions and can be used as a steam or inhalant. Garlic stimulates the digestive system and has carminative properties to balance gas and indigestion. It also promotes the growth of beneficial bacteria in the stomach.

Uses: Asthma, bronchitis, stomach ulcers, boils, worms, kidney disease, psoriasis, nausea, vomiting, cholera, hypertension, colds, eczema, cancers, swollen glands, necrosis, vomiting



Garlic Preparations & Dosages

Preparations: Fresh juice, fresh bulb, syrup, tincture, oil. Garlic juice should not be boiled as it will reduce the active constituents. The fresh juice is medicinally more effective than other diluted and preserved forms.

Dosages:

Fresh bulb: ½-1 teaspoon or 1-2 cloves

Juice: ½ -1 teaspoon

Oil: several drops to 2 teaspoons

Syrup: 1-2 teaspoons

Tincture: 30-60 drops



Administration: nasal, oral, topical, vaginal

Garlic Formulas

Garlic Oil

- 8 ounces of garlic peeled and minced
- Warm olive oil

Instructions: Place the garlic in a large jar and pour in enough olive oil to cover the garlic. Agitate daily and allow the mixture to stand for 2-3 days, then strain and store in a cool dry place.

Tincture-syrup of Garlic

- 1 pound of garlic clover minced and peeled
- 4 ounces apple cider vinegar
- 4 ounces purified water
- 1 pint of vegetable glycerin
- 3 pounds of pure honey



Instructions: Place the garlic in a jar and cover with apple cider and water, close and agitate daily for four days. Add the glycerin and macerate for another day, strain and add the honey. Store in a sealed jar in a cool dry place.

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