



HERBAL INFUSIONS

Infuse and extract fresh herbs to preserve their goodness year round.

Oil Infusion

Herbs, especially summer blossoms such as calendula, chamomile, hypericum and lavender, can be infused into oil to make beautiful topical applications. These infusions bring deep healing and beauty as body & scalp massage oils and may also be used to make balms, lotions and more. The plant material must be harvested on a dry day, as excess moisture will ruin the oil. Fill $\frac{2}{3}$ of a clean dry jar with fresh cut herbs and cover with an oil of your choosing, leaving only a small space ($\frac{1}{2}$ inch) at the top. Cover the jar and place a label on the top. Let sit for 4 weeks in a dry location away from direct sunlight (check often to make sure it doesn't mold). Strain out the herbs (don't squeeze, just let the oil drain out) and store in a clean dry bottle with a label.

Vinegar Infusion

Preserving and extracting herbs in vinegar is an excellent way to derive the benefits of the plants all year long, especially the minerals! Herb-infused vinegars can be used for all your cooking needs and are especially good for salad dressings and marinades. Herb vinegar can also make a great topical application for skin and hair and may be a useful remedy to have on hand. Fill a jar with herbs of choice $\frac{2}{3}$ full and then fill the jar with apple cider vinegar. Place the lid on (put a liner under a metal lid to prevent rust).

Your vinegar will be ready to strain and use within a month.

Medicinal Alcohol Extraction- in 100 Proof vodka

Certain plant constituents can be extracted effectively in alcohol. These are sometimes referred to as "tinctures" and have a wide range of uses. One of my favorites is Yarrow Tincture which I use daily. The method is quite the same as the previous preparations but the maceration time is a bit longer for optimal extraction. Pack a jar $\frac{2}{3}$ full with the fresh cut herb you want to extract and then top off with 100 proof vodka. Place a lid on the jar, label and then set in a cool dark place to infuse for *at least* 6 weeks, shaking every now and then. After 6 *or more* weeks, strain and press the herbs to extract all the liquid. Bottle and label clearly.

Gentle Alcohol Extraction - in 40% vodka

Lighter extractions can be made, as above, but by using regular 80 proof vodka. I harvest and infuse fragrant plant material to make effective insect repellents as well as lovely personal body sprays which are especially nice when blended with aloe and witch hazel.

Infused Honey

Preserving herbs in honey is simply divine. Put fresh herbs in a jar, cover with honey and let sit for 2 weeks or more. Use strained or with the plant material still in it for cooking or take by the spoonful as a year-round treat. A spoonful in a cup with boiling water makes instant herb tea!

Yours in green abundance,

Rebecca Ingalls



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