

Mullein Tincture

Mullein (*Verbascum thapsus spp.*) is an expectorant herb that is probably growing not far from your back door. For identification, see photos below or look online. This herb has been proven time and again as a beneficial and safe remedy that tones the mucous membranes, reduces inflammation and stimulates fluid production. This results in expectoration which gets the mucous “out”. Its other properties include demulcent (soothing), diuretic (increases urine passage), nervine, anti-spasmodic, alterative (cleanses waste), astringent (constricts secretions), anodyne (pain reliever), and anti-inflammatory.

During the Civil War (1861-1865), the Confederates turned to Mullein to treat respiratory problems when their conventional medical supplies ran out. Mullein is helpful in clearing the lungs and relieving spasms. It has been used to treat lymphatic congestion and is quite effective for a broad range of respiratory issues and swollen membrane conditions. Using mullein will strengthen the sinuses and allow for freer breathing. And it also calms the nerves which can get inflamed due to coughs or cramping from spasms.

Mullein leaf tincture provides mucilaginous protection to the mucous surfaces and therefore inhibits the absorption of allergens through the mucous membranes. It is successfully used for asthma conditions.

It was used for centuries as a bacteriostatic to successfully treat tuberculosis.

Other common names: Bunny ears, Jacob’s-staff, Flannel Flower, Velvet Leaf

Tinctures are easily created at home. You can purchase dried mullein from companies like Mountain Rose Herbs or simply harvest it in your own area. Find it growing wild as far from a heavily traveled road or highway as you can. Best time of year to harvest fresh mullein leaves and flowers is throughout the early to mid summer. Roots should be dug in the fall after a frost.

For respiratory support, harvest the leaves on a sunny morning by snipping them at the stalk after the dew has evaporated. Using fresh leaves is faster and easier than processing the leaves and dehydrating them. We will be using fresh leaves in our formula.

Parts used: the leaves are used for respiratory issues; flowers are used to make infused oil for ear infections. I usually add a few fresh flowers to my leaf tincture for good measure.

How to make a mullein tincture using the Simpler’s Method

Instructions for tincturing freshly harvested mullein leaf:

1. Large Mouth Glass Quart Jar with lid (or larger if you want to make a larger quantity)
2. Enough mullein leaves to fill the jar. Compost any unused leaves.
3. High quality vodka. I use quadruple filtered Burnett’s easily found at liquor stores across the country. Don’t buy the cheapest. You can buy organic. If you use Everclear, the tincture gets a very strong taste so only tincture for 2 weeks.
4. Finely chop the fresh mullein leaves into small pieces; this helps the menstruum efficiently extract the constituents from the plant matter
5. Pack the finely chopped leaves into the jar until they are close to the top.
6. Fill the jar with the vodka until it reaches close to the top of the jar and all plant matter is covered.

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7. Place lid on jar. If using a metal cap, place a square of wax paper over the top of the jar and then add the cap and close tightly. I use the white plastic caps that can be washed and reused.
8. Create a label on some masking tape with date made, ingredients and date it will be ready
9. Shake the tightly closed jar a few times
10. Place in a dark cabinet or closet.
11. The next day, check to make sure the vodka is still covering the leaves. If not, add more to cover.
12. Shake daily for the next 14 days (2 weeks) or up to 4-6 weeks. The tincture will become stronger but the taste will be stronger too. Two weeks is the minimum. I usually go 4 weeks and I usually use vodka rather than Everclear due to strong taste.

Dosage:

Adults: 1-3 droppers, 3-5 times a day in a small amount of tepid water

Children 4-12years old: 4-10 drops in 1/8 cup hot water. Leave sit for 5 minutes or until cool. The hot water dissipates the alcohol. This method can be used for adults who are recovering from alcoholism or do not use alcohol due to religious beliefs.



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