



CALENDULA FLOWERS: FIRST AID IN WAR AND PEACE: *Stops Bleeding and Promotes the Healing of Wounds.*

Calendula, a brilliant, hearty flower, with a sunny disposition otherwise known as Pot Marigold has been used as a “First Aid” in wound healing for thousands of years. Towards the end of the civil war the anti-coagulant and anti-bacterial flower that grew in the south was used by battlefield physicians to stop bleeding. (1) Calendula was a wondrous warrior in World War I and saved many a man’s life in battlefield hospitals. England’s top garden diva, Gertrude Jekyll, organized gardeners to grow loads of calendula flowers for the hospitals and then coordinated shipping it by the bushel across the channel to British field hospitals. (2)

A Dr. Hoyle serving French, British and American troops in World War I, attributed calendula in providing “quick sweetening” to the wounds of torn flesh that had not been dressed for 4 days. He also wrote he poured calendula solution directly on compound fractures and black wounds. He claim in fours years he did not see a single new case of tetanus or gangrene during this time. (3)

Today its used in many creams, soaps, tinctures and salves. I absolutely love this quote from the practical herbalist blog.

“Calendula’s medicinal affinity is for moving that which has stagnated in our defense system. He isolates and quarantines what doesn’t belong, and he helps warm the whole system, urging the body toward healthy circulation.” (4)

This eloquently explains Calendula’s ability to work with the body’s innate healing system through its coaxing and nurturing the tissue to heal. It’s hearty nature, ability to self-seed and needing minimal care mirrors its healing characteristics. It is inexpensive and abundantly available showing that its wealth is available to everyone. The epithelial tissue starts to mend and close the wound rapidly. Common uses for first aid are:

- Laceration, cuts and septic wounds:
Flowers, powder from the dried petals.
Tinctures (best in a spray bottle)
- Gunshot wounds; Calendula prevents supuration and infection of gunshot wounds.
- Promotes healing after dental extraction
- Promotes healing and maturation of abscesses.
- Skin rash, insect/snake bites, burns.

When traveling, packing calendula petals, salves, tinctures are helpful on those adventures hiking, canoeing, vacationing or taking a day trip to the sports field. The creams, salves and tinctures really seem to be sunshine in a bottle, putting smiles on little and big faces when the compassionate hand applies a little golden tincture on a fresh wound. Calendula helps bring a little hero out of all of us.

In Chinese medicine I use calendula for sores, cuts, and slow healing skin conditions. The meridians involved are the Liver, Spleen and Heart. Liver moves our qi and blood, Spleen nourishes our blood and tissues and the heart makes our blood but also houses our mind. It reduces inflammations, increases circulation, moistens dryness, clears toxins, sweating, moves stagnation and has

been know to calm the heart. (5) All good attributes of a wound healer.



picture and recipe from <https://moonypotamus.com/>

Calendula is used all over the world. In the U.S. the most popular first aid preparation home remedy is a tincture. (Other natives of other cultures may use other preparations)

- The most recommended tinctures are made slowly (4-6 weeks)
- Dried petals. You can crush them in a coffee grinder or by hand.
- Immerse the petals or powder in Vodka or grain alcohol in a glass jar
- Seal jar, place in a paper bag and set out in the sun for 4-6 weeks.
- The less irritating tinctures are made in glycerine, oil and distilled water.
- You can also get a faster tincture by cooking the jar in a slow cooker for 3 hours.

In any emergency, its recommended to call 911 and be taken to an Emergency Room or Urgent Care. Its also recommended to test a patch of skin before applying liberally in case of allergy.

If you have any questions on brands, tinctures, where to get dried petals or how to apply to abrasions, I would love to talk more about this nourishing flower at your next visit.



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