



The Magazine for the Everyday Herbalist

SURVIVING THE ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE: THE HERBIE WAY

Molly Sams

So I think we can all agree that the end of the world is upon us. The Gulf of Mexico is exploding, UFOs are reportedly seen in China's sky, and the public's growing fascination with Lindsay Lohan shows that the end is nigh. Though humanity may not know when it will hit (and it will), you must be ready for it. Luckily, with a bit of herbie knowledge your chances of survival will increase quite a bit.

One of the safest places to be during a zombie outbreak is a rural or forested area. Even though it may be the setting for many a zombie movie, it is safe because even before the dead began reanimating it was scarcely populated so zombies won't see much point in going there. However, in order to survive in these areas, you must know the land and how to put it to use.

After you get your shelter and a source of water, you will want to find a certain plant that is unfortunately a bother to pick. Stinging Nettle is nutritious, mineral-rich, tasty, and can be prepared in a number of ways. It can be made into a tea, a soup, or a veggie with another dish as long as you steam or boil it before eating to get rid of the painful sting.

Minerals are not the only thing you will need when trying to keep up with your reanimated neighbors. Wild Leeks or ramps, grow wild and are extremely useful during the zombie apocalypse. They are known for being "antiseptic, [and have] antiviral properties as well as the benefits to blood pressure and the respiratory system" as Tina Sams wrote in *The Essential Herbal* blog. During the winter, the antiviral properties will help you stay healthy and with its respiratory benefits, you can keep on running perhaps literally.

However, ramps give off a particularly potent scent which can secrete from your pores, you may want to cover this with an earthy smell such as patchouli to convince the zombies there is no all-you-can-eat-buffet in the woods.

While on the topic of smells, you may also want to avoid smelling like garlic. These are not vampires, they do not sparkle, they do not drink blood, they eat you. Garlic reminds them of the tastes they enjoyed when living, like garlic chicken or pesto. It may also have something to do with brains (their prime source of "nourishment") and spaghetti being somewhat similar in appearance. This will only attract them more. Basil is much worse, though scientists are unsure as to why, they say, "it's like crack to them." So avoid basil at all costs.

Despite popular belief, during large outbreaks a zombie bite is not the most likely thing to kill you. Due to scrapes,



friendly fire, or cuts, infection is possibly the most common way to die in any apocalypse.

Packing and bandaging a wound with Plantain can help clean and hinder infection until you have the proper amount of time and tools to treat the wound. At one point, scientists studied the effects of a combination of plantain and chickweed for their drawing properties, hoping that it might fight off the effects of a zombie bite. A zombie bite however is completely incurable. It will not heal no matter what, and the person will die and reanimate into a zombie. The best thing to do in the case of a zombie bite is to shoot the infected quickly as to save others and preserve the dignity of the bitten.

Red clover may be the best plant to have during any zombie outbreak, or just for whenever. Women of all ages should take it in a zombie apocalypse in order to keep them healthy, awake, and alert. The plant is supposed to ease menstrual cramps and menopausal symptoms so you can keep moving and red clover may also help with bronchitis and asthma and is even said to help with cardiovascular problems amongst women going through menopause.

On a more agricultural note, it is a great green manure. It has been used for many years to help put nutrients in the soil so you can grow all the things you need to keep you fighting.

Comfrey is another good, healing herb to know. It will help with the lacerations of life on the run.

Now, there is much more to learn when it comes to the eventual reanimation of the dead. You've taken the first step towards survival by reading this article but if you value your survival in the dark times that will soon be upon us I'd suggest you'd keep reading *The Essential Herbal*, and then find out all you can about the undead.

Happy Apocalypse!

We've put together this miniature sample of the magazine to share so that you can get an idea of what we do here at The Essential Herbal. The regular magazine is 32 full sized pages. Into each issue, we pack practical information, recipes, instructions, and ideas. Many thanks to our contributors for making this possible. They come up with some unique ideas that are fun and do-able. Hopefully you will find something useful to you and worth saving on these pages.

We began publication in 2002, and in 2012 we started offering print or pdf delivery options. **In the coming year, we'll be transitioning to PDF only and sending something different on the "off" months.**

Since we began, we have found that although we never know exactly what material we will have for each generally seasonal issue right up until the deadline, it always falls together spectacularly with just the perfect blend of medicinal, culinary, fragrant, crafting, and growing information. There are projects and guidance to begin learning something new, keeping our readers busy right up until they start looking for the next magazine. We put out 6 issues a year, and each one is delightful.

So please enjoy this small sample. Hang onto it, and if you find that you'd like to become a part of it - as a subscriber, writer, or advertiser (or even all three!), visit our website or email us for more information.

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The Essential Herbal Magazine

The Magazine for the Everyday Herbalist

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5 HERBAL WINTER REMEDIES EVERY HOME NEEDS

Essential Herbal Magazine readers probably know these remedies, and many other ways to stay up and at 'em over the winter time. Even with the best preventative care, we all catch a bug sooner or later. When we do, or even just suffer a little discomfort from the dry winter air, it's good to know some simple ways to take care of yourself.

We hope you'll try some of these.

1. Fire Cider

We make this every year, and have counted on it to ward off viruses, heartburn, and all kinds of aches and pains in our home. You don't really need a recipe. Get a quart mason jar. Add a chopped onion, a few chopped garlic cloves, a few cayenne peppers, and a few inches of horseradish and the same of ginger. Chop up a lemon and/or orange. Cover with good apple cider vinegar and use a non-metal lid (or line lid with waxed paper) for a few weeks. Strain and add 30 to 50 percent honey. Or, put your feet up and watch Rosemary Gladstar make it!



2. Elderberry Syrup

I refuse to enter winter without a goodly supply of berries and myriad preparations made with them. They kept me virus free for 3 years when I absolutely could not bring an illness into the house, and that was all the proof I needed. Here's my recipe...

3 cups fresh (I use frozen) elderberries (or 1 - 1 1/2 cups dry)
1 lemon sliced
1" or more of ginger, sliced
6" cinnamon stick broken up or 1 tsp powder
4 or 5 cardamom pods
I add a few inches of vanilla bean for no other reason except flavor.

If using fresh or frozen berries, add a cup or less of water to the ingredients in a pan. If dried, add 3 cups of water. Simmer very gently for an hour.
Measure the liquid after it is simmered, and then add EITHER an equal amount of honey
OR

one and a half the amount in sugar.

If using honey, stir into the hot juice.

If you use sugar, heat until boiling, and allow to simmer for 3 minutes or so.

When you've been exposed to someone sick, take 1 T several times a day for 3 days. That's the same thing to do if you start coming down with something.

This recipe will work even if the only thing you use is the elderberries. The rest of the spices and lemon do have purpose, but the elderberry is great on its own.



3. All Purpose Salve

Things get pretty arid in the winter, and our skin shows it. Our lips, faces, hands and feet are the worst, but elbows, knees and all kinds of patches of skin need help. This salve is also very nice for scratches and scrapes. In the spring it can help with stings, bites, and rashes of many sorts, too.

Recipe:

¼ oz Plantain
¼ oz Chickweed
¼ oz Calendula flowers
6 oz olive oil
2 T beeswax
40 to 50 drops Lavender essential oil

Combine the herbs and olive oil & simmer 25 minutes; strain herbs. Add beeswax, stir until melted. Add essential oil. Pour into containers and let cool.

Note: You can use one or all of the above herbs - or none at all.



1 T wild cherry bark

Add 3 - 4 cups water to the ingredients in a pan. Simmer very gently for an hour.

Once you have the decoction prepared as described above and have strained the roots and barks well, you can proceed in a number of ways.



4. Warming Winter Tea

There are several reasons you might want a specific tea in the winter.

Sore throats can be a problem. In my part of the world, sage, thyme, and horehound are all still doing well in the garden, even if they're covered by snow. I have to be in agony to add horehound to a tea - but it will do the trick. Usually its this:

5 or 6 nice sage leaves

1 sprig of thyme

1/2 lemon

1 T honey

1 pint of hot water

I don't remove the herbs, but use a licorice root stick to push them out of the way. This is really a delicious tea.

For cough and colds I add

1 T chopped fresh ginger root

1 t elecampane root (dry)

1 t slippery elm bark

to the sore throat tea.

As with the recipes above, you can use as many or as few herbs as you have on hand to help with the situation. For sore throat, I'd suggest especially the sage. For the cough/cold, ginger and elecampane (with lots of honey).

5. Colds/Cough Syrup

Roots and Barks Syrup:

3 or 4 nice pieces of osha root, broken up

2 T elecampane root (dried, chunks)

6" licorice root, broken up

6" cinnamon stick, broken up

1 lemon sliced

1 or 2 inches ginger root, chopped coarsely

handful fresh horehound (probably about 1 Tbsp dried)

handful fresh thyme (1tsp dried)

Method One - Sugar

Add 1.5 parts sugar to 1 part decoction. So if you have one cup of liquid, you'd add 1 and 1/2 cups of sugar. Combine and heat to a rolling boil. Hold for three minutes. Cool and bottle. The sugar acts as a preservative, but I refrigerate the syrup for longer shelf life.

You can also add about 10% 100 proof alcohol to further preserve the syrup if you'd like.

Method Two - Honey

For a syrup made with honey (local please!), you would use 1 part honey to 1 part decoction. For a honey syrup, I really like to add a little alcohol to increase the shelf life. The honey syrup shouldn't be boiled - just add the honey to the warm decoction and stir to blend thoroughly.



YOU MIGHT BE AN HERBIE IF...

Back in spring '11, Marnie Plunkett suggested on our email list that it might be fun to try to answer this question. It was! And we turned it into an article, which I'm shaking out for some chuckles today. Remember Jeff Foxworthy's "You might be a redneck if..." standup? Let's play "you might be an herbie if..."

So - You might be an herbie if...

- You say "excuse me, but, you're standing on my dandelion".
- You spend a lot of time scraping labels off food jars that will be just perfect for herbs later on.
- Your herb seed budget exceeds the gross national product of some small countries.
- You have lost a room or two of your house; the ceiling beams have become drying racks... ..
- While showing people your gardens, you unconsciously reach down, grab a leaf and start munching on it. ..
- You can name plants that other people call weeds.
- Latin has become your second language.
- Your neighbors are used to see you early in the morning in your PJ harvesting or taking care of your garden....
- You've been reported to the local sheriff for walking along the roads putting what is considered a "noxious weed" in a gallon jar! (St. John's Wort!)
- You might be an herbie if your kid is the one on the playground fixing boo-boos with plantain growing in the grass....
- You know you're a (city) herbie when.....
- You visit your relatives in the country but can't concentrate on conversations because you are constantly eyeballing...



- My, this one hit home! For us though there is a little different twist. We live in the country, but often we'll be riding down the road and I'll scream things like, "JEW-ELWEED! Stop! Back-up"! Now to an outsider this might seem weird, but at our house in invariably means that

one of us will ask the other, "do you think anyone would mind?"

- You MIGHT be an herbie if.....your neighbors show you wee ones their flowers and they ask 'can you EAT IT???
- If you spend hours picking chamomile by hand even though it would cost you just pennies because you know yours has been treated the best!
- You name your kids after herbs
- If there is no way you can pass a rosemary plant without touching it!...
- You empty your daughter's playhouse and set up a table in the corner because the windows are perfect for infusing oils!
- You think Scented Geraniums make great room deodorizers



- Or you might be an herbie if you you go out of your way to walk past the nursery just to see what new plants they have out. ...
- Your family has been disappointed many times after finding you working in the kitchen over non-food creations....
- You have a blender, a coffee grinder, an immersion blender, and a crockpot - all of which you wouldn't dream of using to cook with....
- Your child has to plan sleepovers for those days when there are NOT herbs spread on sheets on the guestroom floor....
- People hate to have you in the car with them because you shriek so often at the sight of herbs in the wild....
- Your daughter brings home a date while you're cleaning a pile of dried herbs, and he gives you the hairy eyeball.....
- Friends and family realized I was an herbie when they saw me buying gallons and gallons of cheap vodka (for tinctures), none of which I was going to drink. (they also wanted to stage an intervention...but that's another story~)
- Your wine cellar is full of shelves with containers of dried herbs, tincture and seeds.
- Or you might...just might be an herbie if your wine store guy knows you by name and tells you when he sees you on the street, "we've gotten another shipment of that crys-

tal palace vodka in today?”

- If there is no room in your refrigerator because it is stuffed with remedies, infusions and half finished Lavender Wands....



- When you are the only one without a chemically treated manicured lawn in the neighborhood.
- Or, When you ask your neighbor to stop treating their lawn so that you can make more dandelion jelly.
- If you're considering getting rid of the dining room furniture to make more room for your "stuff"! Good bye pretty dishes and glasses Hello HERBS!!
- Your kids think everyone chews on licorice roots when they come down with a sore throat.
- You grow your own weed! LOL
- You get 'spices' from your office cupboard....
- You ask your husband not to mow yet because you want to make soup....
- You carry fennel seeds in your purse instead of rolaids.
- You overseeded your "lawn" with dandelions....
- You own more mason jars than the mason jar company :)"



- You got any herb, man?" is greeted with "Yes, I do! I've got French tarragon, English tyme, evening primrose, rosemary, scented geraniums, golden oregano, painted sage, cuban oregano, feverfew, marshmallow, horehound, peppermint, curled spearmint, flat parsley...

- When the "uninformed" starts to complain about their mint growing all over the place you tell them that there is a mint for mojitos!
- You know and have a cooking or medicinal use for every "weed" in your yard.
- You are out there digging under the snow to see if anything is growing yet.
- You never take a sick day from work..because you're never sick!



- You're known to go off the road often, looking at road side more so than road!
- Or, you carry a shovel in your trunk.
- When you are walking and you tell others these flowers are good to eat, or say or I wonder what that green plant over there is and what I can use it for.
- You might be an herby if you're scared to death the neighbors will see you distilling herbs through your kitchen window & turn you in for making meth or moonshining!!
- You routinely refer to things by their latin names/species names... ie. what a nice patch of anthemis!!!

Being an herbie adds a certain spice to life, wouldn't you say? We're having a bit of a gray, dreary day today, so a little smile came over me when reading these again. Hope you enjoyed them!



WARMING MASALA CHAI FOR WINTER DAYS

Mary Ellen Wilcox

The word chai simply means tea in many parts of the world. When we Americans speak of chai we actually mean Masala chai which is a beverage made using black tea, spices, milk and sweetener.

Masala chai has existed for 1,000's of years, and lore says that it began in an ancient royal court in India 9000 years ago. Others say it is of Thai origin. Whether India or Thailand, it is believed that it was created as an Ayurvedic mixture and cleansing remedy for minor health problems.

In its early history it was made

with a diverse mixture of spices, was served hot or cold, and prepared by many different methods. Blends varied from area to area, and even from home to home in a particular area.

In the 1830's Britain established a tea plantation in Assam, India. The black teas grown there eventually became part of the original spice recipes, and became masala chai as we know it today.

In India, tea was not popular with the masses because most of it was exported, and was too expensive for use by the Indian people. Then in the early 1900's the British owned India Tea Association began to promote the use of tea within India. To keep costs down, vendors used the milk, spice and sugar to give the brews flavor and sweetness, and make it affordable to the Indian people.

Masala became even more popular when a mechanized method of production of the black tea made it affordable to the average person. This method, called CTC (Crush, Tear, Curl), may have lacked the nuances required of whole leaf tea connoisseurs, but its strong tannic flavor made it a perfect product for the sweet, spicy masala blends.

Masala chai is usually made with the Assam CTC black tea, but Assam full leaf, Ceylon black teas, Darjeeling black teas, and even green tea (usually gunpowder green). Rooibos (red tea) can also be used.

The milk is usually whole milk, but half & half, low fat milk or other dairy substitutes can be used. The sweetening used in India is an unrefined cane sugar from crushed sugar cane stalks with a flavor similar to molasses. Turbinado sugar is a good substitute for this, and honey makes an excellent sweetener.

Spices vary by location and personal preference. Typical combinations include cinnamon, cardamom, ginger, cloves and peppercorns. Allspice, fennel, coriander, cumin, nutmeg, mace and star anise can also be used.

In India chai is served by street vendors and train vendors (called wallahs). Chai is used to welcome guests into the home. A popular time for chai is an afternoon snack around 4 P.M. and usually includes savory treats.



Basic Masala Chai

2 C milk or milk substitute
2 C water
4 whole cloves
2 crushed green cardamom pods
2 crushed peppercorn
1 cinnamon stick
1 small piece peeled chopped ginger root
2 T turbinado sugar
2 T black tea leaves (preferably Assam)

Combine milk, water and spices in a medium saucepan. Simmer over medium heat for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add sugar and tea leaves. Stir and simmer for 5 minutes. Strain into mugs.

Masala Chai

2 C water
4 t loose black tea
1 piece dry ginger
3 cardamom pods, crushed
3 whole cloves
1 cinnamon stick
Milk and sugar to taste

Chop up ginger into fine pieces. Break up cinnamon stick. Bring 2 cups water to a boil. Add tea leaves and all spices.

Let everything brew at the boil for 30 to 45 seconds. Remove from heat and steep for 1-2 minutes. Serve with only a bit of milk and sugar.

Masala Chai with Fennel

1 C water
1 C whole milk
3 t tea leaves (Assam, Ceylon, Darjeeling)
1" piece dry ginger
3 cardamom pods, split open
2 peppercorns
2 cloves
1" piece cinnamon
1 t fennel seeds
Sugar to taste

Grind all spices together coarsely and set aside. Mix milk and water in a saucepan and bring to a boil on high. As the milk/water mix rises to a boil, add the spice mix and reduce to a simmer. When it rises to a boil again, add the tea leaves. Allow to rise then turn off heat. Cover and steep for 2 minutes. Strain, add sugar and enjoy.



Green Tea Chai

2 tbsp. green tea leaves
6 whole cloves
1/2 t ground ginger
1/4 t ground cloves
1 t ground cinnamon
1 C milk
4 C water

Boil water, then simmer with cinnamon, ginger, and cloves for about 10 minutes. Add tea and steep 5 minutes. Add milk and heat to near boiling. Turn off heat, strain out spices and tea leaves. Serve with honey.



Cardamom Herbal Chai

4 C water
12 slightly crushed green cardamom pods
4 whole cloves
4 black peppercorns, cracked
3 t chopped ginger
Honey to taste
Milk to taste

Bring water to a boil. Reduce to simmer and add spices. Keep at simmer for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat. Stir in honey. Add milk to taste. Makes 3 cups



HANDMADE HOLIDAYS

Kristin Henningsen M.S., R.Y.T. Banyon Moon Botanicals

More and more people are turning to handmade gifts this holiday season. Whether it is from the current economic climate, a greener conscience, or a brilliant burst of creativity, the trend is certainly catching on.

Handmade gifts are a great way to show appreciation for the ones you love. This season, celebrate by helping those you love decrease their stress and increase their health and wellness.

Two simple, but powerful ways to do this are by soaking in a bath and/or drinking a cup of herbal tea. Herbal baths and teas have strong medicinal value. Benefits can range from gently soothing a sore muscle, to invigorating yourself on a dreary winter's day. Follow these herbal recipes below to make quick and easy, yet thoughtful gifts. Think of them as templates, and feel free to let your creative juices dictate the final product.

Muscle Ease Bath Salt

1/2 cup Sea Salt
1/2 cup Baking Soda
1/2 cup Epsom Salt
20 drops Tea Tree Essential Oil
15 drops Lavender Essential Oil
5 drops Rosemary Essential Oil
Mix all ingredients well.
Add to bath by tablespoons to desired strength.



Dreamy Bath Salt Blend

1/2 cup Sea Salt
1/2 cup Baking Soda

1/2 cup Epsom Salt
5 drops each of Rose, Chamomile, Lavender, and Jasmine Essential Oil
~Mix all ingredients well.
Add to bath by tablespoons to desired strength.



FairyTale Tea

1/2 cup Raspberry Leaf
1/2 cup Lemon Balm
1/2 cup Chamomile
1/4 cup Peppermint
1/4 cup Spearmint
1/4 cup Rose hips
1/4 cup Lavender
~Blend all ingredients together for a delicious and fragrant tea blend. *yields 20 oz.

Minty Magic Tea

2 cups Peppermint
1 cup Spearmint
1/4 cup Lemon Balm
~Blend ingredients together for an uplifting and refreshing tea blend. *Yields 20 oz.

You can store Bath Salts and Teas in simple Ball Mason Jars, or any interesting jar you find. Hot glue pretty paper onto the jar for a label, tie a ribbon around the top, and you have a beautiful homemade gift for family and friends. While you're at it, go ahead and make one for yourself too.

Let your gifts come from the heart this holiday season. You and your family will truly feel the benefits in body, mind, and spirit.