

Summary of Interviews

Below is a brief summary of the herbs mentioned in all the oral interviews; for detailed usage, please refer to the transcripts.

With Loretta Watkins from Ohley:

- “Acifidity teabag” – for croup
- Salt water – gargle with; for sore throat
- “Betsy bug” – for ear-ache
- Ground ivy tea – for baby’s yellow jaundice
- Lotion with baking soda – for chicken pox
- Peach tree leaves – for cuts
- Bible verse – for warts
- Ginseng, sassafras – make tea
- Yellow root tea – for sore throat
- Bacon fat, inside of an egg shell – for boils
- Aloe Vera – for burns
- Muddober’s nest – for cuts
- Toothpaste – for bee sting
- “Roanote” – for poison ivy
- Mustard plaster – for cold

With Robert and Betty Farley from Eskdale:

- Cornstarch – for chicken pox and baby’s diaper rash
- Canned evaporated milk – for sunburn
- Milk weed – for poison ivy and poison oak
- Diluted Clorox – for poison ivy
- Warm smoke – for ear-ache
- Baking soda – for bee sting
- Castro oil – for constipation
- Raw chopped-up onion – for cold and fever
- Sassafras, ginseng – spring tonic; make tea
- Ramps – spring tonic; eat
- Yellow root tea – external use for sore
- Bible scripture – stop bleeding
- “Acifidity” bag – for good health
- Poke root – for poison ivy
- Mustard plaster – for cold
- Boiled whiskey – for diarrhea

With Don and Geneva Lacy from Sharon:

- Iodine – for sore throat
- Turpentine – for cleaning wounds
- Honey bee – sting; for Bell's Palsy
- Cranberry pill – for urinary tract problems

With Robert Darby from Red Warrior:

- Black cohosh – make tea
- Ramps – spring tonic
- Red sassafras, Yellow root, ginseng – make tea
- Blood root – make toothpaste
- Sidewood stick – for baby to grow
- Jewelweed/ "Touch-me-not" – for any kind of itch

With Fairlena Foster from Sharon:

- Vinegar, olive oil, honey – everyday use
- Yellow root – detoxification of the body
- Turpentine and horse manure – for cut
- Vaseline – for burn
- Mustard plaster – for cold
- Sulfur and lard – for itch
- Mustard – for cramps
- Horse radish mustard – for tooth decay
- Ground ivy tea – for baby
- Catnip tea – for infection

With Peggy Fisher from Glasgow:

- Vick salve for cold
- Salt water – gargle with; for sore throat
- Mercurochrome – paint throat with; for sore throat
- Genetian violet – an antiseptic
- Cod liver oil
- Lavender – for sleep
- Tobacco spit – for ring worm
- More herbs: <http://www.wvculture.org/history/wvhs1041.html>

With Debbie Bostic from Campbell's Creek:

- White oak tea – a laxative for constipation
- Red oak tea – for inflammation
- Comfrey and aloe – for wounds
- Tobacco – for bee sting and snake bite
- Comfrey and chick weed – make a cream; for wound
- Osha root – good for voice; for sore throat
- Chamomile, ginger – for upset stomach
- Dandelion – good for stomach and bowel

Reference on some of the herbs from various books:

Bloodroot – [Algonquian Indians] used its copious red latex to color clothing and baskets, and applied it to their bodies and faces as ceremonial paint. In the latter capacity, it also served as an insect repellent (Allen, 351).

Catnip – Use catnip tea compresses on the forehead to release pressure from the eyes and overcome a headache. The tea will also relieve the pain of bee stings (Buchman, 83).

Chamomile – chamomile is a wonder herb for digestion, weak stomach, stomach spasms, and for anything related to digestion... chamomile is soothing and sedative for the body, especially for a tummy-ache (Buchman, 9).

Comfrey – For medical purposes, mainly the root is used, but the leaf has excellent healing powers, too. Comfrey root ointment is really healing for almost any kind of sore or bruise or abrasion

Dandelion – this seeming pest is a favorite eating herb of many cultures... the salts in dandelion act to neutralize the acids in the blood, and thus dandelion is considered a cleansing tonic. But the leaves have to be gathered when they are young, otherwise they are too bitter (Buchman, 49).

Foxgloves – science learned that dropsy can be symptomatic of heart disease, and that digitalis, the drug derived from foxgloves, is an effective treatment – as well as a dangerous poison (Allen, 434).

Ginger – The fresh ginger, as well as a small amount of the powdered ginger, is stimulating to the digestive organs. While it may seem sharp to the tongue, it seems to quiet and tone the system. Ginger tea can be used to help with nausea, and the hot tea also helps to relax and calm any internal spasms (Buchman, 31).

Ginsengs – Our experience with ginseng is that it is a terrific tonic and pick-me-up. It does indeed sharpen the memory for very special occasions, is a specific for coughs, and a help (along with vitamin C and other herbs) in warding off a cold (Buchman, 34).

Ground Ivy – the leaves are rich in vitamin C, which is used to counteract lead poisoning (Allen, 427).

Jewelweed/ Touch-me-not – the juice of Jewelweed... contains a soothing fungicide that makes it an effective treatment for athlete's foot. It also helps ease the burning of nettle stings and inflammation from Poison Ivy (Allen, 402).

Mustard (Black) – [The powder] will quickly bring blood to the surface of the skin. This rubefacient ability is very useful in preparing poultices to alleviate chest and other congestions, and as an ingredient in hot footbaths to draw chest or nasal congestions or headaches away from the upper extremities. Mustard flour is an antiseptic and a deodorizer for the kitchen (Buchman, 99).

Oak bark – oak bark is a strongly astringent and may be used to contract the tissues when this is necessary (Buchman, "Mouth and Gum", 168). Oak bark... contains calcium. The strong, concentrated tea should be used for frequent compresses... It certainly reduces the pain considerably (Buchman, "Varicose Veins", 179).

Peppermint – Peppermint has a strong effect on the digestive system and will help control diarrhea, spasms, and relieve indigestion (Buchman, 74).

Pokeweed – "Useful but dangerous" best characterizes these weedy plants... Young shoots and leafy tips are edible if boiled in at least two changes of water, but children have died from eating the berries. The seeds and roots are also quite poisonous, and so are the mature stems and leaves (Allen, 353).

Sage – it is a useful for health purposes, including sleep, gargles, breath cleansing, fever, rough skin, sprains, as a mild diuretic, as part of an antiseptic, and as a tea to lift mild depression (Buchman, 108).

Sassafras – the root bark makes a spicy tea, once imbibed as a tonic (Allen, 299).

Sea lavenders – the thick rootstocks yield an astringent that was once a popular mouthwash. Some cultivated species, known as statice ("stopping"), were used in ancient times to treat dysentery, hemorrhage, and other ailments (Allen, 364).

Allen, Durward L. North American Wildlife. Pleasantville, New York/Montreal: Reader's Digest. (The year of publication could not be found in the book, since a page was torn; but it should be after 1979)

Buchman, Dian Dincin. Herbal Medicine. New York: Gramercy Publishing Company, 1980.