

HERBAL TRANSITIONS



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Standardized Herbs/Women's Herbs

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Standardized Herbs

Due to the increasing popularity of herbs, the media has inundated the public with the word, **standardized**. What exactly is a standardized herb and is this form superior to the historical whole herb? I, an herbalist of many years and a board licensed naturopathic physician, write this article to you in the hopes of presenting an herbal truth. It is comprised of experienced opinions, researched facts and just plain ol' common sense.

Classification of Standardized Herb

How are standardized herbs classified - as drugs or herbs? Many standardized products are very close to being the 'drugs' that people have been trying to shy away from by using herbs. The standardized constituents that are extracted from potentially toxic plants are typically alkaloids, which are classified as drugs. Other standardized constituents are somewhere between an herb and a drug. The classification of standardized herbs

has 3 basic categories:

1. Guaranteed potency herbs

These products have been tested for constituent content and the constituent(s) content is listed on the label. These herbs have not been altered.

2. Fortified herbs

Fortified herbs are products that have a constituent(s) added to them. This is okay if the constituent(s) is added to a whole, vital herb that has been organically and properly grown, harvested and dried. If an herbal company is unaware of these important factors or the only interest is economic, the quality of the herb may be very poor, producing an inferior product. This is similar to whole grain bread versus fortified 'white' bread. The 'white' bread must be fortified with vitamins and minerals to be beneficial. But whole

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grain breads contain these wonderful vitamins and minerals naturally and require no fortification. Herbal companies making whole, unrefined herbal extracts have no reason to fortify their herbs.

3. **Phytopharmaceuticals**

A phytopharmaceutical no longer has any whole herb in the product. It is simply a constituent or group of constituents in a filler base usually of cornstarch or cellulose. The other active constituents that add to the herb's medicinal effect and the buffering compounds that decrease potentially toxic reactions that may be found in the whole herb are lost.

Herbs often get standardized to a particular constituent(s), but later it is necessary to include other equally active or more active constituents to the standardized product. Examples are *Valerian* which has been standardized to various constituents over time such as essential oils, valepotriates, and valerenic acid. Another example is *Hypericum* which was standardized to hypericin alone before it was known how important hyperforin and bioflavones were.

Analytic Tests

Since there is no universally accepted analytical tests for herbal constituents, different tests for the same constituent produce varying results, making it impossible to compare products. There is also disagreement as to what should be tested. For example, different companies may be testing different substances in a particular herb. This does not allow for comparison between the products.

Some analytical tests actually produce false positives and/or negatives. The German standard of analysis to test hypericin content in *Hypericum* has been the UV/VIS spectrascopic method. Red food coloring added to the test material can yield a false positive that the constituent is present when in fact it is not. Some labs in the US also use this testing method. It is extremely easy for an unethical herbal company to sell standardized *Hypericum* extract that in reality is a standardized red food coloring extract.

Wholism VS Reductionism

Wholism means preserving the integrity of the whole plant. Using a whole herb extract is similar to eating whole foods; whole foods are the best form of foods to provide optimal nutrition and whole herbs are the best form of herbs to sustain health. They support the vital force, contribute to good health and help maintain a higher quality of life. Herbalists, naturopathic physicians and other holistic practitioners who treat individuals rather than treating diseases use whole herbs.

Reductionism is a fortified herb or the phytopharmaceutical that has been reduced to a single constituent or a few chosen constituents. Reductionism raises several questions: Is this constituent the most active ingredient in the herb? Are there other active ingredients? Are other constituents necessary for the desired effect? In most cases there is an undeniable loss when the constituent is placed in a filler base rather than a vital, whole herb base. If the standardized product has been reduced to a single constituent or group of constituents, it can no longer support the vital force and is limited to acting on a chemical or pharmaceutical level. These phytopharmaceuticals fit into the allopathic rather than naturopathic model of medicine. They are used to treat illnesses rather than individuals.

The Beginning of Standardization

The major forces behind standardization have been pharmaceutical companies. In *Natural Foods Merchandiser*, February 1999, Michael Tierra wrote, "Cutting-edge standardization processes may cost more than \$500,000 per herb - only feasible for the most vested of pharmaceutical companies." (Reprinted with permission of New Hope Communications a division of Penton Media, in Boulder, Colorado.) Standardization is allowing companies to patent herbal constituents and their manufacturing processes. There are cases where these products may be genuinely useful. But there are also cases where these products are no better or even less efficacious than the whole herb that costs much less to the end user.

Usually the phytopharmaceutical is a chemically extracted constituent or group of constituents in a capsule

with filler. I would argue that it is no longer an herb just as vitamin C is no longer a food. Although standardization appears to be beneficial for certain constituents, many of the phytopharmaceuticals are still in their trial stages and therefore do not have the long historical use behind them like whole herbs. In the race to sell all herbs as a standardized product, the pharmaceutical industry is flooding the market with standardized products before they are thoroughly tested by nonaffiliated clinical researchers. To date, the results show a variety of outcomes, in some research standardized and whole herbs performed similarly, some revealed new uses for standardized herbs and other research confirmed that the standardized constituent was insufficient and missing the necessary constituents from the herb.

There are companies that choose to place extracted constituents in a base of the actual herb. Hopefully, it will be in a base of a whole, vital herb. Unfortunately the herb used to fill the capsule may be inferior in quality and yet they can proclaim this is a whole herb product standardized to a constituent(s). Even worse is when the constituent is in a filler such as cornstarch or in some other herb entirely. The Los Angeles Times ran an article August 31, 1998 about the inaccuracy of potency claims on herbal labels. They chose 10 different standardized *Hypericum* products from a health food store and sent them to an independent lab to be tested for the hypericin content. Eight out of ten products had less than 90% potency. The lowest 2 contained 20% and 22.2% of the label claim.

Industry Standards & The Pharmaceutical Companies

The herbal industry today does not have accepted standards for manufacturing herbal extracts. There is a need for basic standards concerning cleanliness, correct identification of raw herbs, truth in labeling, etc. However, I think it is incorrect to assume the quality of herbal products can be improved by standardizing herbs to particular constituents. Standardizing to a chemical constituent does not make the product more potent or efficacious than a whole herb extract that is non-standardized.

An alternative to standardization could be “finger-

printing,” or as David Lytle, owner of Peak Botanical Laboratory, calls it, “profiling” the herb. Fingerprinting/profiling is an analysis of the herb for ALL of its constituents, not just one or two. Unfortunately, this is expensive and would increase the price to the end-consumer.

Businesses or groups often fund scientific research with a vested interest in a particular substance or product. Herbal research is no exception. It is not uncommon for a company manufacturing an herb to fund the research on the herb and therefore a company manufacturing a standardized herb will fund research supporting the validity of standardizing the herb.

Companies have claimed the standardized product is superior to the whole herb which they claim has no medicinal effect. They should remember that whole herbs have been used medicinally for hundreds and sometimes thousands of years with great success. It is the historical medicinal effect of the whole herb that has led pharmaceutical companies to extracting constituents from them.

I can foresee standardized herbs turning into synthetic copycats. This will happen when the patent for the standardized constituent or process ends and the pharmaceutical companies start synthesizing the previously standardized constituent. These chemical copycats will be deemed superior to the standardized herbs, just as standardized herbs are now being deemed superior to whole herbs. The pharmaceutical companies will be selling the pure chemicals, eliminating the entire history and purpose of herbal medicine.

The Energetic Influence of Herbs

Although I often give pharmacological doses of herbs when it is the best solution for a particular patient, I have also seen results with as little as two drops of a liquid extract or a few sips of tea. Since the theory of standardization is to increase the activity of a particular constituent, giving a single drop of liquid extract and getting good results is contrary to that idea. The energetic nature of the whole plant or

whole plant extract is why very low doses produce healing effects. Matter is energy vibrating at different frequencies. Herbalism and homeopathy capture this energetic essence by using quality substances and proper processing methods. High quality herbs must be used to get specific results with small doses. The health care practitioner should have a comprehensive understanding of the patient as well as herbal medicine. The realm of herbal medicine includes extensive knowledge of herbals, including how they effect individuals not only on the physical level but also the spiritual, emotional and mental levels. With knowledge and experience, the practitioner can match the patient and the herbs, thus utilizing the energetic qualities of the plant.

Crude products can be effective in small amounts if the raw herb or crude product has maintained its energetic quality. Therefore, growing and harvesting techniques are as important as manufacturing. Exposing a plant to harsh growing environments or harsh processing methods can alter or damage it. A processed plant whose integrity has been maintained will possess attributes far beyond just chemical constituents alone.

A standardized product does not contain the benefits of the whole plant unless the extracted constituents are in a base of whole herb extract or the standardized extract is a guaranteed potency herbal product.

These wonderful plants must be harvested from the earth with respect and reverence as we receive their energetic gifts of health and healing. This innate vitality of plants will be maintained if properly grown, harvested and extracted. Standardization, which involves chemicals and waste, does not allow for this spiritual aspect of the plant.

The less we process and the more we use raw whole foods and herbs, the healthier we will be. Using plants in the freshest, most vital form possible is life enhancing for the entire planet.

An inferior extract made from mediocre plants will yield mediocre results. A superior extract made from

vibrant, life-supporting plants will yield superb results! This is true of all forms of extracts.

Women's Reproductive Tract Health & Herbs

In the article following you will see reference to looking things up in the "Herbal Reference A-Z" at www.herbaltransitions.com - This is a free reference you can access at this website. I have referenced it when the data was extensive and could be easily looked up at the website.

Healthy Practices:

- Yoga postures or exercises such as kegels that tone the pelvic area and increase circulation.
- Yoga postures that affect glandular activity.
- Spinal and pelvic manipulation.
- Breast massage, pelvic massage.
- An active, joyful sex life.
- Eat whole, fresh biodynamic/organic foods.
- Use herbs that support and stimulate the liver.
- Consume nettles, dandelions, burdock, chickweed and seaweed for their nutritious content as well as medicinal qualities.
- Identify and eliminate food allergens.
- **Avoid:**
 - Sitting on cold floors and hot radiators.
 - Swimming in chlorinated pools.
 - Commercial vaginal douches and sprays containing perfumes and dyes.
 - Soaps that contain perfumes, dyes.
 - Vaginal intercourse after anal intercourse.
 - Sexual partner with dirty fingers.

Nutrition For Total Reproductive Tract Health:

Consume foods high in water soluble fiber, low sugar, high magnesium and calcium, vitamin B rich, vitamin A and vitamin E rich foods. Eat foods high in essential fatty acids.

Some foods to consider: Liver, cold water fish, almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, fresh fruits and berries, fresh green leafy veggies, other vegetables raw or cooked, well cooked legumes (not soy), Parsley, brown rice.

Support your liver for total reproductive health:

Dandelion root teas, burdock root teas, burdock soups, burdock casseroles & stir fries, Schisandra berry tea, Milk thistle powder

(Powder enough seeds for a weeks use and refrigerate)

Liver Herbs with specific indications:

For general liver support: *Silybum marianum* - Milk thistle

For liver inflammation with or without viral illness & adrenal support
- *Glycyrrhiza glabra* - Licorice or *Schisandra chinensis*

Liver stimulation: *Arctium lappa* - Burdock root, *Taraxacum* - Dandelion

Liver stimulation and antimicrobial: *Mahonia spp.* - Oregon grape

Herbs for the uterus:

This organ is a muscular organ that builds and sheds its inner lining each month. Using nourishing teas high in calcium and magnesium keeps the muscle tissue from cramping and additionally feeds the organ other multiple nutrients it needs to go through this monthly cycle. Some of my favorite herbs to use are:

Nettles - *Urtica dioica* (dried aerial or fresh greens, prior to flowering)
supplies calcium and magnesium as well as other nutrients, tone to the uterus and urinary tract

Red raspberry leaves - *Rubus idaeus*

increases blood supply and increases tone to uterus

Calendula officinalis - lymphagogue to pelvic region and breasts, antiinflammatory

Burdock - *Arctium lappa* root - too much to write - see "Herbal Reference A-Z" at www.herbaltransitions.com

Licorice - *Glycyrrhiza glabra* - too much to write - see "Herbal Reference A-Z" at www.herbaltransitions.com

Red root - *Ceanothus spp.* - lymphagogue and supports liver

Activities to keep your vulva, and vagina healthy:

A healthy immune system is needed for a healthy vagina. Half the lymphoid system is connected with the mucosa. The major antibodies found on mucous membranes are secretory IgA, which function primarily by binding microorganisms and thereby preventing their contact with the host tissues. This first line of defence in mucous membranes including the vagina is necessary for protection against infectious disease as well as keeping normal vaginal flora in balance. Eating foods high in nutrients that support the immune system or using herbs to support the immune system can benefit a woman who tends to get repetitive vaginal infections. Foods high in flavinoids such as berries, including herbs such as rose hips, roots such as carrots and burdock, beets, green leafy veggies, dark green veggies, pumpkin seeds, fruits such as apples and oranges are good choices. Herbs such as *Astragalus*, *Schisandra*, *Urtica* - Nettles.

Wear loose and natural fiber underwear such as organic cotton. Tight, synthetic underwear leads to increased heat and moisture as well as decreased blood and lymph flow. Good bacteria die in this condition and bad bacteria will flourish.

Keep your vulva clean. Soap and water is adequate. Just clean water will usually do the trick. Douching is usually unnecessary and not wise,

but if you do, use 2 T unpasteurized apple cider vinegar and 2 cups of warm water. If an herbal vinegar is needed, a healing, antimicrobial, antifungal one to consider is calendula, and Oregano as opposed to store bought, chemical laden douches. If you have an STD you need to see a health practitioner for advice. See "Prevention of Urinary Tract Infections" in the fall ezine, for additional details. The same preventative measures used to decrease urinary tract infections will also tend to keep your vulva and vagina happy and healthy.

Vaginal Milieu: The walls of the vagina continuously release small amounts of secretions that maintain a slightly acidic environment and inhibits infections. The normal vaginal pH is usually 3.8 - 4.5. The color and consistency of the discharge responds to the changing hormone levels at various points in the menstrual cycle. At the end of menses a woman's hormones are lower and the vaginal discharge decreases. Over the next ten days the discharge increases as hormones increase and the discharge becomes white or yellow. At ovulation the discharge becomes transparent and stringy or rubbery. After ovulation the discharge becomes white or yellow and decreases again. This vaginal discharge and cyclic change in discharge is normal and a healthy part of how your female organs function. Abnormal changes in discharge should be attended to. The vagina is a dark, moist, warm, nutrient rich environment that can support abnormal bacteria, or yeast if the normal bacterial milieu or the pH gets disrupted. Disruption can be caused by tampons, douches, sprays, vaginal creams or spermicides, IUD's, irritation from soaps on clothes, perfumes on toilet paper, fecal matter from improper wiping, or lack of washing, sexual intercourse can introduce bacteria via dirty fingers, anal intercourse followed by vaginal intercourse or from STD's. The seminal fluid is alkaline and repeated exposure can increase the pH of the vaginal canal and increase susceptibility to infection. Vaginal pH can also be altered by sugar or refined carbohydrates. Of course diabetic women are going to have an increased susceptibility to infections, especially yeast.

Drugs are an additional problem. Antibiotics can kill the normal bacterial colony in the vagina, allowing yeast to take over.

Birth control pills and other female hormones can encourage yeast infections too, as can corticosteroids, and use of IUDs. Women who are immunocompromised, are diabetic, or pregnant are more prone to yeast infections.

Three most common infections:

Yeast (*Candida albicans*) - White discharge, thick, may be lumpy, cottage cheese like and smells yeasty, itches a lot. pH is under 4.5. Can be transmitted sexually, although not generally considered a STD.

Bacterial vaginosis (*Gardnerella vaginalis*) - Gray or milky discharge, thin, pH of 4.5 or higher, fishy smell. Caused by a replacement of the normal vaginal flora by an overgrowth of anaerobic microorganisms. May be sexually transmitted although 50-60% of women carry one or

more of the organisms with no symptoms. Symptoms are often during or after menstruation.

Trichomoniasis (*Trichomonas vaginalis*)- protozoan organism- Yellowish green discharge, frothy or foamy, copious, foul smelling, pH of 4.5 or higher, usually sexually transmitted. May have a fishy smell. May have a coexisting anaerobic infection. The partner should always be treated.

Prevention: See "Prevention of Urinary Tract Infections" in the fall ezine issue for info that applies here too. Also see: "Nourishing the Reproductive Tract" previous in this article.

Possible Treatments:

Antifungal & antibacterial douches:

1. Goldenseal/Coptis/Oregon grape- One of these - 1-2 Tablespoons per cup water (2 cups per douche usually)
2. Vaginal douche - equal parts - made as a vinegar tincture - 1 tablespoon of tincture per cup of warm water
Usnea, Yarrow, Calendula, Oregano, Oregon grape, Comfrey
3. Phellodendron bark - chinese herb - used with Trich - (1-2 T/cup as douche)

Immune Supportive & Antibacterial treatments for internal use

1. Echinacea
2. Echinacea 30-40%, Goldenseal 20-30%, Myrrh 10-15%, Ginger 10-15%, Wild indigo 3-7%, Prickly ash 3-7%.

Good bacteria

1. Internal use of gut bacteria with yeast infection
2. Acidophilus douche/caps vaginally for yeast infection
3. Inulin herbs as oral food to feed good gut bacteria - Dandelion, Burdock, Elecampane all as a tea or as a food.

Suppositories

1. Yarrow, Usnea, Goldenseal, Comfrey, Echinacea, Allantoin, Vitamin A, Vitamin E
2. Tea Tree Oil
3. Vaginal Depletion Pack
- mag sulphate, ferric sulphate, goldenseal, vitamin A, tea tree essential oil, bitter orange essential oil, thuja essential oil,

For Irritation

Suppositories of marshmallow, calendula (comfrey would be in here but the FDA no longer allows it for internal use)

Phytoestrogens

The term phytoestrogen is used loosely in the herbal community. There is no current agreed upon definition for this term. Basically the term is used for any plant that: 1) Has one or more constituents with similar chemical or anatomical structure to estrogen. 2) Is changed into a similar compound in vivo. 3) Clinically produces effects that the clinician would expect from giving exogenous estrogens.

Plants may have compounds that are structurally similar to human endogenous estrogens. These compounds mimic estrogenic activity or affect estrogen metabolism. Some plants may show an estrogenic effect in laboratory studies, animal studies or in clinical settings but the specific constituent or mode of action has not been identified. It is thought that the weaker phytoestrogens can compete for estrogen receptors with the more potent endogenous estrogens thereby decreasing the estrogenic activity. When endogenous estrogens are low and phytoestrogens are used in large quantities they have been shown to exert an estrogenic effect in animals.

Most of the identified phytoestrogen constituents consist of sterols, coumestans and isoflavones. There are more than 300 plants, which have been identified as possessing estrogenic or uterotrophic activity. Phytoestrogens compete with estradiol for estrogen binding sites in the reproductive tracts of animals in vivo and in human breast cancer cells in vitro. Phytoestrogens will produce similar results to estrogens such as growth and increased weight of the uterus. Research measuring weight increase of uteri in mice showed sterols to have the most activity, followed by coumestans and then isoflavones.

Coumestans have a high affinity for the human estrogen receptor. They are estimated to be 200 times less potent than estrone and 3000 times less potent than diethylstilbestrol, and 30-100 times more potent than isoflavones. Animal studies have shown coumestans can reduce follicle stimulating hormone and luteinizing hormone levels. Coumestans produce uterine growth in rats at natural dietary levels and competitively inhibit binding to the estrogen receptor.

Not all isoflavones have estrogenic effects, but many of them do. Some of them need to be converted by gut bacteria to other compounds to be effective. If a person is using antibiotics or ingesting other substances that destroy

gut flora, there would be decreased isoflavone conversion in the gut, and the herb would not work as expected. The isoflavone, Genistein, has shown antiproliferative effects against estrogen-dependent and independent human breast carcinoma cell lines. There were synergistic effects when used with the anticancer drug adriamycin.

Lignans are phenolic compounds with weak estrogenic activity. They have additionally been linked to a lowered incidence of breast cancer. The highest concentrations of estrogenically active lignans are in the defatted portion of flax seeds. They are converted by gut bacteria to mammalian lignans, the primary ones being enterolactone and enterodiol. They are structurally similar to estrogen and bind with low affinity to estrogen receptors. They also increase sex hormone binding protein.

The most potent phytoestrogens are the phytosterols. Common foods, which contain phytosterols, are chestnuts, sesame, safflower, sunflower, corn, soy and pumpkin seeds. They are most common in whole grains, nuts, seeds and legumes. Plant oils are high in phytosterols.

Flaxseed has been found to have an estrogenic effect. Ten grams per day created a tenfold increase in enterodiol and enterolactone in omnivorous females.

The sterol, beta-sitosterol has phytoestrogen activity (228) as well as anti-inflammatory activity and antipyretic activity (229). It can be found in *Anemone pratensis*, *Angelica sinensis*, *Calendula officinalis*, *Glycyrrhiza glabra*, *Hypericum perforatum*, *Larrea* spp., *Panax* spp., *Piscidia erythrina*, *Plantago psyllium*, *Serenoa repens*, *Symphytum* spp., *Taraxacum officinale*, *Trifolium pratense*, *Turnera* spp., *Tussilago farfara*, *Valeriana officinalis*, *Viburnum prunifolium*. (289, 290)

A fat soluble extract of *Humulus lupulus* was found to contain small amounts of estradiol. (225) Water-soluble glycoproteins from Hops strobiles are antigonadotropic and suppress progesterone production by luteal cells in rats. (226,227)

The phytoestrogen formononetin in *Trifolium* (Red clover) has caused infertility in animals grazing on it. Formononetin is converted in the gut to equol (4'-O-methylequol) which has estrogenic effects. Sheep are more sensitive to it than cattle or horses.

Dioscorea species contain the steroidal sapogenin called

diosgenin. Diosgenin is manipulated chemically in laboratories to create estrone, testosterone, and progesterone as well as adrenocortical hormones. In current research on animals, it appears that diosgenin usually turns into smilagenin due to action on it by gut flora. Both animals and humans poorly absorb diosgenin itself. When diosgenin was given orally to female rats they had an increase in uterine weight, vaginal opening and vaginal cornification. When injected into ovariectomized mice there was a growth of mammary epithelium. *Chamaelirium* and *Aletris* both contain diosgenin and have produced estrogenic activity in rats.

Cimicifuga (Black cohosh) contains the isoflavone formononetin and two other unidentified endocrine-active compounds, which appear to have estrogenic activity via competition for estrogen receptors. Black cohosh has been shown to suppress luteinizing hormone secretion in menopausal woman and competes in vitro with 17-beta-estradiol for estrogen receptor binding sites. Black Cohosh has an inhibitory activity in vitro and in vivo on bone resorption in ovariectomized rats as well as rats on low calcium diets. The active constituents in black cohosh are thought to be 1.) triterpene glycosides, principally actein, 27-deoxyactein, cimicifugoside and cimigenol 3-O-alpha-L-arabinopyranoside and related aglycones, 2.) isoflavones including formononetin, 3.) aromatic acids including isoferulic acid, ferulic acid, and salicylic acid.

Legumes are a good source of edible phytoestrogens. Soybeans are one of the most highly researched and they are currently thought to be one of the best sources of edible phytoestrogens. Additionally, soybean sprouts have the highest concentration of isoflavones.

Health care practitioners have been concerned about giving plants with phytoestrogens to patients that have estrogen sensitive breast cancer. Research has shown that women consuming high amounts of phytoestrogens in their diet have had a decreased incidence of breast cancer rates.

Practitioners should be wary of giving phytoestrogens to patients on tamoxifen or other anti-estrogenic drugs since the phytoestrogens could interfere with the drug therapy.

Phytoprogestones

Some herbs contain diosgenin, sarsasapogenin or other related compounds that can be manipulated chemically in laboratories to create progesterone as well as estrone, testoster-

one and adrenocortical hormones. Some people have thought these herbs have had a progesterone type action in the body. It appears the body can not turn these constituents into progesterone. This is something that is chemically undertaken in a laboratory setting. In current research on animals, it appears that diosgenin usually turns into smilagenin due to action on it by gut flora. Both animals and humans poorly absorb diosgenin. When diosgenin was given orally to female rats they had an increase in uterine weight, vaginal opening and vaginal cornification. When injected into ovariectomized mice there was a growth of mammary epithelium. This shows a clear estrogenic activity on rat tissue. Chamaelirium, Aletris, Caulophyllum, Dioscorea, Smilax, Trigonella, Trillium and Yucca all contain diosgenin.

Commonly Used Women's Herbs

Cramp bark - *Viburnum opulus*

in the Caprifoliaceae or Honeysuckle family.

Parts used: Bark.

Taste/smell: Astringent, aromatic.

Tendencies: Drying.

Dosage: Decoction: 1 heaping teaspoon per cup of water; or 1:5 dry strength liquid extract: 20-60 drops 1-4 times per day. For spasms: 1 teaspoon per hour, or 15 drops every 15 minutes, as needed, for several hours.

Mental picture and specific indications: Cramp bark can be used for most spasmodic pains but is specific for spasmodic and congestive conditions of the female genitourinary tract. It is indicated when pelvic pains extend down the thighs and are accompanied by nausea. The mental picture of the spasms is usually worse lying on the affected side, in warm rooms and in the evening; and better in open air and from resting.

Uses: (a) Antispasmodic, beta 2 receptor agonist, (b) Astringent, (c) Nervine, (d) Cerebrospinal vaso-stimulant, (e) Hypotensive (f) Carminative, (g) Restores sympathetic and parasympathetic balance in voluntary and involuntary muscle spasms.

Cramp bark is used for bronchial, gastrointestinal, genitourinary and skeletal muscle spasms. Due to its astringent and antispasmodic nature it is useful for menstrual cramps with excessive blood loss. Cramp bark's astringent action also benefits atonic conditions of the pelvic organs, like uterine prolapse. Cramp bark is also helpful with asthma and threatened miscarriage where there is a spastic uterus. As a skeletal muscle relaxant, it is wonderful for leg cramps. In pregnancy it is used to prevent morning

sickness and habitual miscarriages due to spasmodic uterus. In labor it prevents premature contractions. Postpartum it prevents hemorrhage, prolapse and malposition of the uterus. It also restores normal tone and capillary circulation to the uterus.

Viburnum prunifolium (Black haw), a relative in the Caprifoliaceae family, is used similarly although *V. opulus* is thought to be a stronger antispasmodic. Although research has shown dose-dependent uterine antispasmodic action both in vivo and in vitro with *V. prunifolium* extract, *V. opulus* extract was shown, in vitro on rat uteri, to be four times more active than *V. prunifolium* at relaxing uterine contractions. *V. prunifolium* contains the antispasmodic constituent, esculetin, and *V. opulus* contains the more potent antispasmodic, viopudial. Both species have demonstrated uterine sedative activity. Initially research thought *V. prunifolium* contained salicin which was proven later to be arbutin. A volatile oil extracted from *V. opulus* has uterine sedative activity.

Contraindications: The leaves and fruits contain a bitter principle, viburine, which may cause gastroenteritis. Although used sometimes for prevention of miscarriages, it is generally contraindicated in pregnancy unless used by a trained health care practitioner. Cramp bark should not be taken with blood thinning agents because of the coumarin constituents in the plant. It may cause hypotension in large doses or even in average doses if given to previously hypotensive individuals.

Red raspberry - *Rubus idaeus*

in the Rosaceae or Rose family.

Part used: Leaf.

Taste/smell: Bitter, sweet, aromatic, astringent.

Tendencies: Cooling.

Dosage: Infusion: 1 tablespoon per cup of water; or 1:4 dry strength liquid extract: 10-60 drops 1-4 times per day.

Use: (a) Mild, soothing astringent, (b) Preparatory parturient, (c) Uterine tonic, (d) Nutritive

Red raspberry Improves uterine tone and blood supply. It is often used during pregnancy. A strong tea can be made into ice cubes and given as ice chips to the women during labor. It will help prevent post-partum hemorrhage. This herb is also useful in passive uterine hemorrhage, menorrhagia and symptoms of diarrhea.

Contraindications: Although this herb is commonly used in pregnancy, Dr. Francis Brinker says in his book *Herb Contraindications and Drug Interactions* that it is contraindicated where there is a history of precipitate labors. He also claims it has antigonadotropic activity.

Beth root - *Trillium spp.*
in the Liliaceae or Lily family.

Parts used: Bulb/rhizome

Taste/smell: Earthy smell and taste, slightly acrid.

Tendencies: Cooling, drying.

Dosage: Infusion: 1 teaspoon of the newly dried herb or 2 teaspoons of the fresh root per cup of water 3-4 times per day; or 1:1 fresh plant liquid extract: 1-30 drops as necessary every 15 minutes, using up to but not exceeding a total of 240 drops or two teaspoons in a 24 hour period.

Mental picture and specifics: This is an herb for hemorrhagic tendencies, cramping pains and atonic pelvic organs. It is indicated for tenacious mucus discharge or uterine hemorrhage with poor pelvic tone.

Use: (a) Alterative, (b) Astringent, (c) Genito-urinary tract tonic, (d) Expectorant

Beth root is used for conditions due to atonic pelvic organs such as uterine prolapse, and menorrhagia due to atony. It is also useful in passive hemorrhage from fibroids and wasting disorders, especially disorders of the lungs and reproductive tract.

Beth root is used for threatened miscarriage due to poor uterine tone and incompetent cervix. It is used prior to labor to facilitate contractions and ensure an easier delivery. It will also decrease the occurrence and severity of post-partum hemorrhage. The whole plant was poulticed by the Native Americans to use externally to treat ulcers, tumors and generalized inflammatory skin conditions.

This plant is disappearing on the East United States coast. There is concern it may become endangered on the East coast and perhaps follow suite on the West coast. It should be used sparingly.

Contraindications: It is contraindicated in pregnancy (400) unless ready for delivery.

Chaste tree berry - *Vitex agnus castus*
in the Verbenaceae or Verbena family.

NW Herb Fest 2005

Herbal Medicine

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Parts used: Fruits.

Taste/smell: Pungent

Tendencies: Drying.

Dosage: Infusion: 1 teaspoon of crushed fruits per cup of water; or 1:3 dry liquid extract: 20-60 drops 1-4 times per day.

Uses: (a) Female reproductive tract, (b) PMS (320), (c) Menstrual cramps, (d) Premenstrual herpes, (e) Premenstrual acne, (f) Polymenorrhea, (g)

Secondary amenorrhea, (h) Menopause with hot flashes.

Chaste tree is thought to increase luteinizing hormone production and inhibit the release of follicle stimulating hormone. This shifts the ratio of estrogens to progestagens in favor of the progestagens with a corpus luteum hormone effect. This progestagen effect is used in some cases to negate miscarriages.

Prolactin is inhibited by Chaste tree. The luteinizing hormone release and progesterone synthesis has been attributed to inhibition of prolactin activity. It appears to directly bind to dopamine receptors in the anterior pituitary and inhibits prolactin synthesis and release, according to animal research. It is thought to be useful in all ailments due to hyperprolactinemia and luteal phase defect.

For amenorrhea, the herb must be used for months before results are noticed.

Contraindications: Although used sometimes for prevention of miscarriages, it is generally contraindicated in pregnancy due to its emmenagogue effect. It is also contraindicated in lactation.

It may counteract the effectiveness of birth control pills, and other hormone therapy.

Dong quai - *Angelica sinensis*

in the Umbelliferae or Parsley family.

Part used: Root.

Taste/smell: Sweet, bitter, slightly pungent.

Tendencies: Warming, moistening, stimulating.

Dosage: Decoction: 1 heaping teaspoon per cup of water; or 1:4 dry liquid extract: 10-60 drops 1-4 times per day.

Mental picture and specific indications: Dong quai is beneficial for gynecological complaints with spasms and pain, chills, dryness of skin, constipation due to dryness and uterine or ovarian masses.

Uses: (a) Warming female tonic, (b) Enriches the blood, (c) Promotes blood circulation, (d) Regulates and normalizes menstruation and the menstrual cycle, (e) Mild laxative, (f) Diuretic, (g) Sedative, (h) Hepatoprotectant, (i) Anti-inflammatory, (j) Analgesic, (k) Antibacterial, (l) Hypotensive, (m) Calcium channel blocker, (n) Antispasmodic, (o) Stimulates the uterus if the volatile oil is decocted off and an antispasmodic if made as a proper infusion with the volatile oil intact or as a liquid extract.

Experiments have shown dong quai stimulates uterine cell multiplication. It is beneficial with gynecological problems, including PMS, cramps, menopausal related symptoms, uterine bleeding due to stagnation and chronic pelvic infections. It is also indicated for constipation, headache due to blood deficiency, thrombosis, anemia, vasculitis, arthritis, sciatica and chronic bronchitis.

Contraindications: Due to furocoumarin content of dong quai, it is contraindicated when taking blood-thinning agents. The furocoumarins also sensitize the skin to the sun and can increase the chance of sunburn. Since it is a uterine vasodilatory, it may worsen heavy clotted menses. It may also aggravate gastroesophageal reflux due to the gastric stimulating effects. This herb is best used in 'cold, dry and stagnant' conditions and is contraindicated in conditions associated with 'heat' signs or symptoms. Dong quai is contraindicated in pregnancy.

Black cohosh - *Cimicifuga racemosa*

in the Ranunculaceae or Buttercup family.

Part used: Root.

Taste/smell: Bitter, sharp, spicy, pungent.

Dosage: Decoction: 1 heaping teaspoon per cup of water; or 1:3 dry plant liquid extract: 10-60 drops 1-4 times per day in a little water.

Mental picture and specific indications: Consider black cohosh when there are spasms, achy pains, chilliness, fevers, nervous system irritation or excitement, depression of a deep, dark and heavy nature, incessant talking and neuralgia. It is specific for headaches in the late luteal phase associated with low estrogen levels. Many symptoms are worse

in the morning, during menses and with cold applications. Symptoms are better with warmth and after eating.



Use: (a) Antispasmodic, (b) Sedative, (c) Diaphoretic, (d) Digestive stimulant, (e) Mild expectorant, (f) Peripheral vasodilator, (g) Hypotensive, (h) Female reproductive tract tonic.

Black cohosh is used for menstrual cramps, amenorrhea, oligomenorrhea, late menstruation, menopausal complaints or post hysterectomy. It is

thought that the salicylic acid in the herb may be responsible for alleviating myalgias and neuralgias. The constituent, ferulic acid, has an anti-inflammatory effect that could also alleviate pain. It will increase and normalize uterine contractions during labor. It is also useful for after-pains following labor. Especially consider black cohosh with reproductive tract problems related to congestion, nervous irritability of the reproductive organs, achy muscles, and emotional irritability or depression. Black cohosh is well known for its support of the female reproductive tract function. It appears to act as a phytoestrogen. Black cohosh has been shown to suppress luteinizing hormone surges associated with hot flashes in menopausal woman. Constituents of Black cohosh compete in vitro with 17-beta-estradiol for estrogen receptor binding sites. (37) Research with rats shows a reduction of serum levels of luteinizing hormone in ovariectomized rats with a methanol extract of Black cohosh and substances in the extract were shown to bind with estrogen receptors in the rat uteri.

Research has shown black cohosh to have an inhibitory activity in vitro and in vivo on bone resorption in ovariectomized rats as well as rats on low calcium diets. The extract has significantly decreased the growth of the breast carcinoma cell line 435 when tested in vitro. It appears to be a beta 1 antagonist and beta 2 receptor agonist.

It relaxes the smooth muscles of the blood vessels, relaxes the uterus and skeletal muscles as well as dilating the bronchioles. The active constituents are thought to be (a) triterpene glycosides, principally actein (aglycon acetylacteol) and cimifugoside (aglycone - cimigenol), (b) isoflavones including formononetin, (c) aromatic acids including isoferulic acid, ferulic acid, and salicylic acid. (281)

Contraindications: Do not use in the first trimester of pregnancy due to emmenagogue effect. Large doses can slow the heart, create hypotension and bradycardia. Signs of toxicity are nausea, vomiting, injected conjunctiva, flushed face, dilated pupils, light headed, frontal headache with a severe bursting sensation, stiffness and trembling limbs, decreased pulse and blood pressure, and joint pain.

Motherwort - *Leonurus cardiaca*

in the Lamiaceae or Mint family.

Part used: Aerial parts in bud stage.

Taste/smell: Bitter.

Tendencies: Neutral temperature, drying.

Dosage: Infusion: 1 tablespoon per cup of water; or 1:1 fresh strength liquid extract: 20-40 drops 1-4 times per day.

Mental picture and specific indications: Motherwort is used for melancholy, restlessness and disturbed sleep from emotional or physical ailments of the heart. It strengthens the heart.

Use: (a) Female tonic, (b) Diuretic, (c) Antispasmodic, (d) Nervine, (e) Emmenagogue.

Motherwort is used for premenstrual cramps with delayed menstruation, congestive amenorrhea or dysmenorrhea, nervous palpitations, premenstrual nerve tension, high blood pressure due to stress and nerve pain from herpes zoster and herpes simplex. It should be taken over a period of months for best results.

Contraindications: It is contraindicated in pregnancy due to the emmenagogue effect and because it contains the animal uterine-stimulating constituents, stachydrine and leonurine.

Wild yam - *Dioscorea villosa*

in the Dioscoreaceae or Yam family.

Part used: Root.

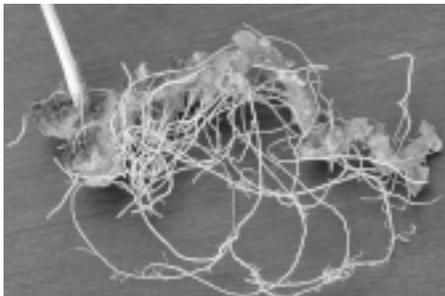
Taste/smell: Bitter, astringent, soapy.

Tendencies: Cooling, drying.

Dosage: Decoction: 1 teaspoon per cup of water; or 1:2.5 dry strength liquid extract: 20-60 drops 1-4 times per day.

Mental picture and specific indications: Wild yam is indicated for spasmodic, shooting, aching or shifting pain. The specific indications for this herb are paroxysmal pain due to contraction of

non-striated musculature of tubular organs caused by irritation or an excited nervous system. The pain often keeps the individual awake at night. Symptoms are worse in the evening and night, lying down and bending double and better standing erect, with motion in open air and with pressure.



Use: (a) Antispasmodic, (b) Carminative, (c) Diaphoretic.

Wild yam is an autonomic nerve relaxant useful in painful gastrointestinal conditions due to irritation and spasm, neuralgic

conditions and restlessness. It relieves the cramping pain of smooth muscles like the gall bladder and uterus. It is best given in hot water for dysmenorrhea. It is used for low progesterone/high estrogen related problems and has shown results with mid-cycle spotting, premenstrual symptoms, painful menstruation, nausea of pregnancy and spontaneous abortions due to a spasmodic uterus. It supports the liver and nervous system.

Dioscorea species contain the steroidal sapogenin called diosgenin. Wild yam contains .5-1.2% diosgenin. Diosgenin is manipulated chemically in laboratories to create estrone, testosterone, and progesterone as well as adrenocortical hormones. In current research on animals, it appears that diosgenin usually turns into smilagenin due to action on it by gut flora. Both animals and humans poorly absorb Diosgenin itself. When diosgenin was given orally to female rats they had an increase in uterine weight, vaginal opening and vaginal cornification. When injected into ovariectomized mice there was a growth of mammary epithelium. There are other *Dioscorea* species that contain up to 5 times as much diosgenin as wild yam but wild yam is the most commonly used species. Although many of the species have been used to manufacture progesterone, there is no evidence of the human body creating progesterone from wild yam.

Contraindications: Information unavailable at this time.

Summer Solstice Celebration & Open House

June 18th (Saturday) 11:00 AM - 11:00 PM

A fun event. Admittance is free. Please bring something for the potluck lunch if so inclined. The gathering is at a working farm. See the list of events below for activities and times. The first 100 people arriving at the event and presenting to the Wise Acres booth, will receive a coupon for a \$10.00 discount on any event offered at wise Acres in 2005.

Information about this event

- free herb walks/farm tours
- song circles • games
- music (bring an instrument) - spontaneous music is always welcome
- vendors of live medicinal plants as well as tinctures, salves, desserts etc.
- first 100 people through the gate after 11:00 am receive choice of free gift at the Wise Acres booth
- No pets please

Schedule of events

- 11:00 am - 6:00 pm Health & Herbal Bazaar - See below
- 11:15 am - 12:00 pm Farm Tour lead by Erin Walkenshaw of Wise Acres
- 12:00 pm Potluck lunch
- 1:00 pm - 1:30 Water Balloon Toss
- 1:30 pm - 3:00 pm Spiritual Songs From Around the World, lead by Wali Via of Wintergreen Farm
- 2:30 pm - 3:30 pm Planting Calendula seeds - a kid (or kid at heart) event
- 3:30 pm - 4:30 pm Herb Walk lead by Emily Pachecho of Living Earth Herbs
- 4:45 pm - 5:45 pm Herb Walk lead by Sharol Tilgner of Wise Acres
- 6:00 pm Snacks & Drinks
- 6:15 pm - Set up and begin the No-Talent Show - You don't have to be talented to enter. Sing, play an instrument, tell a joke, dance routine, a skit, or anything your imagination can come up with to entertain new and old friends. There will be a sign up sheet at the Wise Acres booth.

Summer Solstice Herbal Bazaar - A Magical Medicine Show - A free venue that will take place on the summer solstice weekend (June 18th, 2005). Vendors will display their wares for sale or trade. Both herbal companies as well as individuals with home made herbal items will be at the bazaar. If you wish to have a booth (cost is a mere \$25.00) at the bazaar contact us at info@herbaltransitions.com

Need Solstice Volunteers: We need help getting the farm ready for this free event. If you would like to volunteer to help, please call Sharol at 541-736-0164.

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Common Women's Herbs Compared

Actions	Angelica sinensis	Glycyrrhiza	Vitex	Alchemilla	Mitchella
Menstrual cycle	<p>Dong quai is a warming female tonic that enriches the blood, promotes blood circulation, regulates and normalizes menstruation and the menstrual cycle. It will stimulate the uterus if the volatile oil is decocted off and acts as an antispasmodic if made as a proper infusion with the volatile oil intact or as a liquid extract.</p> <p>It is beneficial with gynecological problems, including PMS, menstrual cramps, menopausal related symptoms, uterine bleeding due to stagnation and chronic pelvic infections.</p> <p>Specific for gynecological complaints with congestion, spasms and pain, chills, dryness of skin, constipation due to dryness and uterine or ovarian masses.</p> <p>Experiments have shown Dong quai stimulates uterine cell multiplication.</p> <p>Since it is a uterine vasodilator, it may worsen heavy clotted menses.</p>	<p>Licorice is anti-inflammatory and a hepatoprotectant. Used primarily for menopausal complaints.</p>	<p>Chaste tree berry is thought to be useful in all ailments due to hyperprolactinemia and luteal phase defect.³⁰⁹</p> <p>Consider for infertility, dysmenorrhea, uterine fibroids, fibrocystic breasts, amenorrhea and sporadic periods.</p>	<p>Lady's mantle is indicated for hemorrhage; prolapsed uterus and abnormal tissue growth such as fibroids.</p>	<p>Partridgeberry is a uterine tonic indicated in generalized edema, uterine congestion, dark, red, swollen cervix, dysmenorrhea and uterine bleeding with bright red blood. It is beneficial for female reproductive tract weakness and improves neuromuscular/vascular tone of the uterus. Partridge berry is used in atonic uterus and uterine bleeding due to atony.</p>
Pregnancy	<p>Dong quai is contraindicated in pregnancy.</p>	<p>Contraindicated in pregnancy due to hormonal effects including phytoestrogens as well as aldosteronism effect.</p>	<p>This progestagen effect is used in some cases to prevent miscarriages. However, it is generally contraindicated in pregnancy due to its emmenagogue effect.⁴⁰⁰</p> <p>It may counteract the effectiveness of birth control pills and other hormone therapy.⁴⁰⁰</p>		<p>Used in the later part of pregnancy as a tonic to promote easier childbirth.</p>
Labor & Postpartum				<p>Lady's mantle antagonizes the drug pitocin. Used for post-partum bleeding.</p>	<p>Used for post partum hemorrhage.</p>
Phytohormonal	<p>Contains the phytoestrogenic sterol, beta-sitosterol.</p>	<p>Contains the phytoestrogenic isoflavone, formononetin and beta-sitosterol.</p>	<p>Chaste tree is thought to increase luteinizing hormone production and inhibit the release of follicle stimulating hormone. This shifts the ratio of estrogens to progestagens in favor of the progestagens with a corpus luteum hormone effect.</p> <p>Prolactin is inhibited by chaste tree. The luteinizing hormone release and progesterone synthesis has been attributed to inhibition of prolactin activity. In animal research it appears to directly bind to dopamine receptors in the anterior pituitary and inhibits prolactin synthesis and release.</p>		

Common Women's Herbs Compared

Actions	Cimicifuga	Anemone	Caulophyllum	Dioscorea	Capsella	Leonurus
Menstrual cycle	Black cohosh is used for dysmenorrhea with congestion, aching pains and muscular soreness. Used for amenorrhea, oligomenorrhea, late menstruation, and menopausal complaints or post hysterectomy. Specific for above situations when accompanied by congestion, chilliness, nervous system irritation or excitement, depression of a deep, dark and heavy nature, incessant talking and neuralgia. Many symptoms are worse in the morning, during menses and with cold applications. Symptoms are better with warmth and after eating. It is specific for headaches in the late luteal phase associated with low estrogen levels. Pulsatilla is indicated for menstrual	complaints in women who are anemic, intolerant of fatty foods, have coated tongues, cold extremities and a feeble pulse. It is specific for amenorrhea following wet cold feet, acute endometriosis, ovarian neuralgia and congestive ovaritis with inflammation, dull, nagging, aching, tearing pains; not cramping pains. Often the person who responds to pulsatilla will have nervous conditions like fearfulness, general nervousness, dejection, and weep easily. The individual is gentle, with a yielding disposition, and has changeable symptoms and moods. The body discharges are usually yellow. Animal research has indicated pulsatilla reduces uterine contractions in vitro has a sedative and analgesic activity in vivo. ^{207, 208}	Blue cohosh is a reproductive tract tonic. Consider this herb when there is reproductive tract debility arising from chronic inflammatory conditions. It is both tonifying to atonic uterine tissue while it is also relaxing to spastic uterine muscles. It is used for menstrual cramps of a spasmodic nature as well as pelvic pain with heavy, achy, congestion and prolapsed lax tissues. Specific for uterine spasms on the first day of the menstrual flow, pain in the thighs and lower back, spasmodic muscular pains, rheumatic pains and a dull frontal headache with thirst. Used with cervical varicose veins, amenorrhea, as well as premature or profuse menstruation.	Consider Wild yam for all spasmodic pains for all hollow organs, including uterine spasms. Used for dysmenorrhea and premenstrual tension headaches. It is used in conjunction with other herbs for menopausal symptoms.	Shepherd's purse is indicated for atony and prolapse of pelvic organs and passive bleeding. It is used for hemorrhoids, atonic enuresis, atonic menorrhagia and metrorrhagia and bleeding fibroid tumors. Specific for hemorrhage with a colorless flow.	Motherwort is used as an emmenagogue, antispasmodic and in lumbar discomfort and bearing down pains from debilitated reproductive systems. Specific for premenstrual cramps with delayed menstruation, congestive amenorrhea or dysmenorrhea, menopausal complaints, nervous palpitations, premenstrual nervous tension, high blood pressure due to stress and nerve pain from herpes zoster and herpes simplex. It is specific for symptoms that include nervousness, anxiety, restlessness, sleeplessness and cardiac palpitations or tachycardia.
Pregnancy	Used as an emmenagogue and should be avoided in the first trimester. ⁴⁰⁴	It is a uterine stimulant, and is contraindicated in pregnancy. ⁴⁰⁴	Because blue cohosh can increase blood to the pelvis, it should be used cautiously in woman with heavy menstruation. In rat studies, it has inhibited ovulation. ³³ Generally not recognized as safe during pregnancy due to uterine stimulation. ^{33, 400} It may be used in the 9th month of pregnancy, but only under the guidance of a trained health care professional.	Used for nausea of pregnancy and miscarriages associated with low progesterone levels.	It is a uterine stimulant and is contraindicated in pregnancy.	It is contraindicated in pregnancy due to the emmenagogue effect. It contains the uterine-stimulating constituents, stachydrine and leonurine. ^{400, 404}
Labor & Postpartum	It will increase and normalize uterine contractions during labor. It is also useful for after-pains following labor and prevents post-partum hemorrhage.		Blue cohosh is used to relieve false labor pains, while increasing the strength of the contractions during actual labor. It decreases pain in childbirth and alleviates after-pains."			
Phytotohormonal	It appears to act as a phytoestrogen. Black cohosh has been shown to suppress luteinizing hormone surges associated with hot flashes in menopausal women. Constituents of Black cohosh compete in vitro with 17-beta-estradiol for estrogen receptor binding sites. ³⁷ Research with rats shows a reduction of serum levels of luteinizing hormone in ovariectomized rats with a methanol extract of Black cohosh and substances in the extract were shown to bind with estrogen receptors in the rat uteri. ³²⁷			Wild yam contains no known progesterone. However people have used it for conditions where progesterone-like actions would be of use. Contains the phytoestrogen, dios-genin. See Chamaelirium. Phyto-hormonal information for more details on dios-genin.		

Common Women's Herbs Compared

Rubus

Medicago

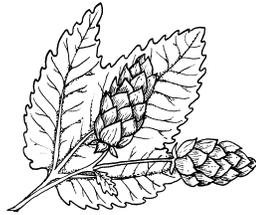
Trillium

Chamaelirium

Viburnum

Actions

Menstrual cycle	Cramp bark is used for dysmenorrhea: Indicated for pelvic pains that extend down the thighs and are accompanied by nausea. The spasms are worse lying on the effected side, in warm rooms and in the evening. They are better in open air and from resting. Antispasmodic, astringent, anti-inflammatory, nervine, balances sympathetic and parasympathetic tone, hypotensive – relaxes muscles and gives tone to atonic tissues.	False Unicorn helps normalize menses if there are problems with engorgement, prolapse, and hormonal imbalance. Helps decrease pain if there is due to relaxed, prolapsed organs such as bladder or uterine prolapse. Pain felt is usually lumbar pain that extends down the thighs and the back of the legs. There is restlessness and general weakness. Often there is a history of hemorrhoids, varicose veins of the legs and labial varicosities	Beth root helps normalize menses if there are problems with engorgement, poor pelvic tone and menorrhagia due to atony. Helps decrease pain if there is due to relaxed, prolapsed organs such as bladder or uterine prolapse.	Alfalfa is a nutritious tonic.	Red raspberry is used as a tonic to the uterus. Useful in menorrhagia due to astringency. May help with uterine muscle relaxation in dysmenorrhea due to calcium and magnesium content in both leaves and fruits.
Pregnancy	Prevents morning sickness. For habitual miscarriage – Given in advance and continued past time of usual miscarriage.	For habitual miscarriages due to incompetent cervix.	Used for threatened abortion due to poor uterine tone and incompetent cervix. Used with excessive mucous discharge.	Plants with coumestans and isoflavones have been shown to decrease fertility in animals that graze on these types of plants. Alfalfa should be used with caution in women or men with fertility problems. It is contraindicated in pregnancy due to the uterine stimulant action seen in animals due to the constituent stachydrine.	Red raspberry is often used during pregnancy to improve uterine tone. Brinker says in his book <u>Herb Contraindications and Drug Interactions</u> that it is contraindicated where there is a history of precipitate labors. He also claims it has antigonadotropic activity. Many women take it throughout their pregnancy as a general tonic.
Labor & Postpartum	Prevents premature contractions. Prevents hemorrhage. After labor restores normal tone and capillary circulation to the uterus. Prevents prolapse and malposition.	After labor helps preserve normal uterine tone and prevent uterine prolapse.	Beth root is used prior to labor to facilitate contractions and ensure an easier delivery. It will also decrease the occurrence and severity of post-partum hemorrhage.	It has been shown to stimulate lactation and increase the quality of breast milk.	A strong tea can be made into ice cubes and given as ice chips to women during labor. It will help prevent post-partum hemorrhage.
Phytohormonal	Contains beta-sitosterol which is a phytoestrogenic sterol.	Contains .0013% diosgenin. Diosgenin is manipulated chemically in laboratories to create estrone, testosterone, and progesterone as well as adrenocortical hormones. In current research on animals, it appears that diosgenin usually turns into smilagenin due to action on it by gut flora. ²³⁰ Both animals and humans poorly absorb Diosgenin. ²³¹ When diosgenin was given orally to female rats they had an increase in uterine weight, vaginal opening and vaginal cornification. ²³² When injected into ovariectomized mice there was a growth of mammary epithelium. (233) This shows a clear estrogenic activity on rat tissue. Chamaelirium and Aletris both contain diosgenin and they both have produced estrogenic activity in rats. ²³⁴		Many isoflavones and coumestans have been and genistein and coumestans coumestrol, 5-methoxy-4'-O-methylcoumestrol, 4'-O-methylcoumestrol, sativol, medicagol, 3'-methoxycoumestrol, trifolol, lucernol. ⁵ Research indicates the isoflavones formononetin and biochanin A, have very weak estrogenic activity compared with natural estrone or synthetic DES. ¹⁸⁰ Research indicates coumestrol and genistein compete with 17-B estradiol binding sites.	



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