### ALOE

**Family:** Liliaceae  
**Genus and species:** Aloe vera  
**Also known as:** Barbados aloe, Curacao aloe  
**Medicinal Parts:** The gel from the leaves, and the yellow juice extracted from the leaves’ inner skin.  
**Properties and Uses:** Excellent first aid treatment of burns, especially if the area had been flushed with cold water immediately after the burn occurred. Also used for wounds, scalds, scrapes, and sunburn. May help prevent infection in injured skin.  
**Preparation:** Split a lower leaf from the plant and apply directly to the injury. Aloe gel is also available in bottles at many drug stores (chemist’s).  
**Cautions:** Do not take internally. Consult a physician if wounds/burns do not heal significantly within two weeks.

### BUCHU

**Family:** Rutaceae  
**Genus and species:** Barosma betulina, B. crenulata, B. serratifolia  
**Also known as:** Bookoo, buku, bucky, bucco  
**Medicinal Parts:** Leaves  
**Properties and Uses:** Most often used as a diuretic  
**Preparation:** Infusion. Capsules are available in many health food stores and pharmacies.  
**Cautions:** Increase potassium intake (bananas and fresh vegetables) when using any diuretic, including buchu.

### BALM

**Family:** Labiatae  
**Genus and species:** Melissa officinalis  
**Also known as:** Lemon balm, melissa, sweet balm, cure-all  
**Medicinal Parts:** Leaves  
**Properties and Uses:** Most often used as a mild, natural tranquilizer. Also known to be useful in treating colic and fighting infection-causing bacteria in wounds. Lemon balm (one of my personal favorites) is a good herb for beginners because it is not only safe and tasty, it works noticeably! Have a cup of lemon balm tea when you’re feeling “down” or “stressed out.” Just in case you question whether its effects on you are imaginary, offer a cup to a friend or family member who’s been showing signs of slight depression without discussing its “possible” medicinal effects. (A cup of lemon balm tea is harmless and tastes good.)  
**Preparation:** Infusion for tranquilizer. To help treat wounds, make a hot compress using 2 teaspoons of leaves per cup of hot water. Boil 10 minutes, strain, and apply with a clean cloth.  
**Cautions:** Anyone with a thyroid condition should first consult a physician concerning balm’s thyrotropin-inhibiting effect.

### CARAWAY

**Family:** Umbelliferae  
**Genus and species:** Carum carvi  
**Also known as:** Carum  
**Medicinal Parts:** Seeds (“fruits”)  
**Properties and Uses:** Digestive aid; also relieves menstrual cramps.  
**Preparation:** Fresh seeds may be mixed into food or chewed a teaspoonful at a time. A pleasant infusion may be made after bruising or crushing the seeds.  
**Cautions:** None known.

### CASCARA SAGRADA

**Family:** Rhamnaceae  
**Genus and species:** Rhamnus purshiana  
**Also known as:** Cascara, sacred bark, chittern bark  
**Medicinal Parts:** Dried, aged bark  
**Properties and Uses:** Constipation  
**Preparation:** Decoction  
**Cautions:** Never use for more than two weeks. The bark must be stored for a year before use. The fresh bark contains chemicals that can cause severe intestinal cramps.

### BARBERRY AND OREGON GRAPE

**Family:** Berberidaceae  
**Genus and species:** Berberis vulgaris (barberry) and Berberis aquifolium or Mahonia aquifolium (Oregon grape)  
**Also known as:** Berberry, jaundice berry, pepperidge bush, sowberry  
**Medicinal Parts:** Root bark  
**Properties and Uses:** The berberine in barberry has remarkable infection-fighting properties. Studies show it kills microorganisms that cause wound infections, diarrhea, dysentery, cholera, giardiasis, urinary tract and vaginal yeast infections. Barberry has a traditional (and effective) use in treating conjunctivitis (pinkeye).  
**Preparation:** Decoction, compress  
**Cautions:** Do not administer to children under two.

### COLTSFOOT

**Family:** Compositae  
**Genus and species:** Tussilago farfara  
**Also known as:** Cough plant, coughwort, horse foot  
**Medicinal Parts:** Leaves, flowers  
**Properties and Uses:** Coltsfoot has been a cough suppressant mainstay of Asian, and European herbalists for over 2,000 years. A German study showed that the herb increases the activity of microscopic hairs in the breathing tubes that move mucus out of the respiratory tract.  
**Preparation:** Infusion. (Note: coltsfoot used to be smoked in order to obtain positive results until recently.)  
**Cautions:** In very large quantities, may cause liver damage. Anyone with a history of alcoholism or liver disease should not use coltsfoot.
COMFREY
Family: Boraginaceae
Genus and species: Symphytum officinale
Also known as: Bruisewort, boneset, knitbone
Medicinal Parts: Leaves and roots
Properties and Uses: Wound healing and casts for minor broken bones
Preparation: Ointment, Poultice
Cautions: Do not use the ointment on dirty wounds; comfrey will heal the wound so quickly that dirt and pus could be trapped. Do not use internally without having researched further.

CRANBERRY
Family: Ericaceae
Genus and species: Vaccinium macrocarpon or Oxycoccus quadrripetalus
Also known as: No other common names.
Medicinal Parts: Juice from the berries
Properties and Uses: Urinary tract infection prevention.
Preparation: Cranberry juice is available in most supermarkets.
Cautions: If urinary tract infection develops, consult your physician. Antibiotics are usually necessary.

ECHINACEA
Family: Compositae
Genus and species: Echinacea angustifolia, E. purpura
Also known as: Purple coneflower
Medicinal Parts: The root
Properties and Uses: Infectious diseases (colds, flu, tonsillitis, bronchitis, tuberculosis, meningitis, wounds, abscesses, pertussis, and ear infections); may help preserve white blood cells and protect radiation patients from infection; rheumatoid arthritis.
Preparation: Decoction or tincture.
Cautions: For children over 2 and adults over 65, start with a small dosage and adjust if necessary.

ELECAMpane
Family: Compositae
Genus and species: Inula helemenum
Also known as: Wild sunflower, velvet dock, horseheal
Medicinal Parts: Root
Properties and Uses: Intestinal parasites, lowering blood pressure
Preparation: Decoction or tincture
Cautions: Begin with low-strength dosages in children over 2 and adults over 65.

EPHEDRA
Family: Ephedraceae
Genus and species: Ephedra sinica, E. vulgaris, E. nevadensis, E. antisiphilitica
Also known as: Ma huang, Mormon tea
Medicinal Parts: Stems, branches
Properties and Uses: Decongestant. E. sinica has the most potential as a decongestant; the other species have milder effects.
Preparation: Decoction, tincture
Cautions: Do not use if suffering from heart disease, diabetes, glaucoma, or an overactive thyroid gland. May cause insomnia.

FEVERFEW
Family: Compositae
Genus and species: Matricaria parthenium, Chrysanthemum parthenium, Tanacetum parthenium
Also known as: Febrifuge plant, wild quinine, bachelor’s button
Medicinal Parts: Leaves
Properties and Uses: Migraine headaches
Preparation: Chew two fresh leaves a day or take a capsule containing 85 milligrams of leaf material. Use as an infusion to help lower blood pressure.
Cautions: May inhibit blood clotting; do not use if taking anticoagulant medication. May cause mouth sores. Feverfew suppresses migraines but does not prevent them. Migraines typically return once usage is stopped.

GARLIC
Family: Amaryllidaceae
Genus and species: Allium sativum
Also known as: Stinking rose, heal-all
Medicinal Parts: Bulb
Properties and Uses: Antibiotic; reduces blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar levels; eliminates lead and other toxic heavy metals from the body.
Preparation: Cook with garlic; may also be used as an infusion.
Cautions: Do not use if you have a blood clotting disorder; do not use garlic if it causes a rash.

GINGER
Family: Zingiberaceae
Genus and species: Zingiber officinale
Also known as: Jamaican ginger, African ginger, Cochin ginger
Medicinal Parts: Root
Properties and Uses: Motion or morning sickness
Preparation: Infusion. Drink about 30 minutes before traveling.
Cautions: Do not use while pregnant if you have a history of miscarriages.

GOLDENSEAL
Family: Ranunculaceae
Genus and species: Hydrastis canadensis
Also known as: Yellow root, Indian turmeric, jaundice root, eye balm, golden root
Medicinal Parts: Root and rhizome
Properties and Uses: Antibiotic; may also boost the immune system
Preparation: Infusion or tincture
Cautions: Should not be used by those with histories of high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, glaucoma, or stroke. Goldenseal is difficult to grow, and it is expensive when available. Try the less expensive barberry first.
HOREHOUND
Family: Labiatae
Genus and species: Marrubium vulgare
Also known as: Hoarhound, white horehound, marrubium
Medicinal Parts: Leaves and flower tops
Properties and Uses: Colds, flu, cough. Horehound is an excellent expectorant.
Preparation: Infusion
Cautions: Should be avoided by those with heart conditions.

HYSSOP
Family: Labiatae
Genus and species: Hyssopus officinalis
Also known as: No other common names.
Medicinal Parts: Leaves and flowers
Properties and Uses: Herpes treatment; cough remedy.
Preparation: Compress (for herpes), infusion or tincture (for cough)
Cautions: No reports of harm due to hyssop use; however, make sure that what you are using is H. officinalis, not Gratiosa officinalis or species of the genus Agastache, as these should not be ingested.

MINTS
Family: Labiatae
Genus and species: Mentha piperita (peppermint) M. spicata (spearmint)
Also known as: Many other types of mint.
Medicinal Parts: Leaves and flowers
Properties and Uses: Digestive aid, possible decongestant (peppermint)
Preparation: Infusion
Cautions: Peppermint should not be given to children under the age of 2; use diluted spearmint instead.

MOTHERWORT
Family: Labiatae
Genus and species: Leonurus cardiaca
Also known as: Lion’s tail, heartwort
Medicinal Parts: Leaves, flowers, stems
Properties and Uses: Lowering blood pressure, mild tranquilizer
Preparation: Infusion -- add sugar or honey to improve taste.
Cautions: Those with blood clotting disorders should avoid this herb.

PENNYROYAL
Family: Labiatae
Genus and species: Mentha pulegium (European); Hedeoma pulegioides (American)
Also known as: Fleabane, tickweed, squawmint
Medicinal Parts: Leaves and flower tops
Properties and Uses: Pennyroyal’s main talent is in repelling insects, fleas in particular. Rub fresh, crushed plant around the area to be treated, including pets’ beds. As a mint, pennyroyal is also useful as an infusion to aid digestion and heartburn.
Preparation: See above for flea control. Infusion for digestive aid.
Cautions: Do not use internally in concentrated oil form.

ROSE
Family: Rosaceae
Genus and species: Rosa canina, R. rugosa, R. centifolia
Also known as: Hipberry
Medicinal Parts: Fruits (Hips)
Properties and Uses: High in Vitamin C, rose hips are useful in preventing a variety of ailments -- scurvy and the common cold in particular.
Preparation: Infusion of 2-3 teaspoons of dried, crushed, hips per cup of water.
Cautions: None known.

SAGE
Family: Labiatae
Genus and species: Salvia officinalis
Also known as: Spanish, Greek, or Dalmatian sage
Medicinal Parts: Leaves
Properties and Uses: Traditionally used to treat canker sores, bleeding gums, and sore throat.
Preparation: Infusion, which one may drink and/or gargle.
Cautions: Slight possibility of inflammation. If mouth becomes irritated, discontinue use.

ST. JOHN’S WORT
Family: Hypericaceae
Genus and species: Hypericum perforatum
Also known as: Hypericum
Medicinal Parts: Leaves and flowers
Properties and Uses: Antidepressant; possible AIDS treatment (being studied now). This herb has been clinically proven to provide safe relief from depression. It is widely available in health food stores and even in supermarkets and drug stores in the US.
Preparation: Infusion for depression and possibly to stimulate the immune system: 3-4 cups per day. Other alternatives are capsules and extracts.
Cautions: AVOID SUN while using this herb; contains photosensitizing agents. Overuse may cause diarrhea or nausea.

SKULLCAP
Family: Labiatae
Genus and species: Scutellaria lateriflora
Also known as: Quaker bonnet, helmet flower, mad dog weed
Medicinal Parts: Leaves
Properties and Uses: Tranquilizer, sedative -- first aid for shock.