

# HERBAL MEDICINAL TREASURES IN PARADISE

## at Heavenly Herbs and Acupuncture

By Sheryl Sanchez

The past two years have brought a lot of change and upheaval for the community of Paradise and the surrounding areas. We have all been through so much! But it is possible to obtain herbal medicinal treasures in Paradise, just like you can in any major metropolitan area.

Here is a quick list of herbal and natural medicine treasures to help you through these times:

### IMMUNE SYSTEM SUPPORT

Astragalus root is a Chinese herb with the wonderful ability to boost the immune system, being rich in polysaccharides. Research has shown that it can prevent infections, both bacterial and viral. It will also help prevent allergic reactions, especially hay fever symptoms such as rhinitis and sneezing. It is combined with other herbs for improved efficacy in a traditional Chinese medicine formula for the prevention of colds, flus and allergies. This formula dates back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

Vitamin D3 is a fat-soluble vitamin that has proven efficacy against bacterial and viral respiratory infections, has an ad infinitum number of health benefits, and is inexpensive. I describe

it to patients as “the Vitamin C of today” and that it is needed by everyone. As recently as 2019, research noted that Vitamin D deficiency is a major global public health problem in all age groups. Vitamin D can also be toxic in very high levels, which is only possible if someone has taken very high dosages long-term. This is due to several factors, such as the lack of our bodies to synthesize it as effectively as it did in previous times (when outdoors in the sun) and our typically poor absorption of foods that are fortified with it (‘leaky gut’ and other malabsorption syndromes are very prevalent). The many health benefits include improving our general defense against any infection, benefiting healthy gut flora (the ‘microbiome’), reducing inflammation and improving moods. I generally recommend to most patients to take 5000 IU/day and remind them to take it with healthy fats for improved absorption.

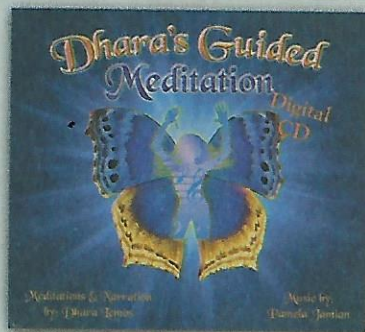
Elderberry is a traditional herbal medicine, used by indigenous peoples in North America and in Europe, and is now widely used in Western herbal medicine. Research has shown it is high in flavonoids, which may be why it has shown to be effective against the influenza virus, including H1N1. Elderberry is native plant in Butte County and can be found in the mountainous areas, preferring to be near streams and creeks.

### ADAPTING TO STRESSORS

We all react to different stressors in different ways. In Chinese Medicine we believe that excessive emotions often lead to disease and illness by damaging our organs physically, energetically, or both. For example, some of us will become withdrawn and depressive or sad while others will become angry and reactive. Others will become more fearful or more worried. A pattern most of us can understand is when one is often upset or angry, that person ends up with hypertension (red face, ears, or eyes indicates anger rising in that individual, leading to the pattern of disharmony resulting in hypertension).

### ADAPTOGENIC HERBS

Adaptogens or adaptogenic herbs aid the body in adapting to or resisting the effects of stress, both physical and psychological. This means they have a calming effect on our brain by helping modulate the ‘fight or flight’ (adrenaline) reaction to stress and can offer a substantial ability to prevent and cure stress-related degenerative diseases. A Chinese herb Eleuthero, referred to in the past as “Siberian Ginseng”, is an excellent adaptogenic herb. It is mild in flavor and is not a stimulant, so it can be used by anyone. It is one of the superb herbs in a tea called “Spring Dragon”, formulated by a modern Chinese



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Medicine scholar and now used widely for its healing benefits. Tulsi or Holy Basil is another revered adaptogen and comes from the Ayurvedic tradition. In India it is very popular and consumed daily by many, as it has numerous healing properties. Besides aiding in calming our adrenals, it is high in antioxidants, has antibacterial and antiviral effects, and normalizes blood glucose. In a sense, B vitamins are also adaptogenic. Our bodies utilize more of our B vitamins when we are under stress, and is why one sees versions of 'Stress B' complexes. Certain B vitamins will help support the adrenal system and immune system, while others help support our central nervous system. Ideally we should get enough of these in our diets, but we generally do not, even those that eat a healthy diet. So supplementation is important. Most people who are meat-eaters are considered deficient in vitamin B12 from a naturopathic viewpoint.

**ANXIETY, DEPRESSION OR INSOMNIA REMEDIES**

'Xiao Yao Wan' is a very commonly prescribed Chinese medicine formula for general stress, especially when irritability, frustration and anger issues are common and when these emotions affect digestion, pain or create insomnia. It can also be useful for depression. If anger leads to hypertension or headaches, another formula is more appropriate. For tension, anxiety and mild insomnia,

calming herbs such as chamomile, passionflower and lemon balm are Western herbs that can be found in many herbal tea formulas, in one's own garden or at your local natural practitioner's apothecary. Chamomile is known to be a mild sedative, often used in insomnia formulations. It is also a great anti-spasmodic, especially for the gastric tract. Passionflower is another mild herbal sedative, known for its gorgeous flowers. It grows easily in Butte County, both in the mountains and the dry valley. It is both drought and frost tolerant, being a native to the southwestern US. Lemon balm is another mild sedative that grows easily and has many healing benefits including a specific anti-viral activity against herpes infections. My favorite combinations using these herbs are two homeopathic remedies "BHI Calming" and Professional Formulas "Anti-Stress Drops", as well as Metagenics "Myocalm Plus".

Keep in mind that herbal teas are an easy way to consume many of the herbs mentioned, either hot or cold, depending on the season. However, most herbal teas have only a small amount of the herb (unless specially formulated for medicinal purposes), so it is much better to consume daily in pills or tinctures to have a stronger medicinal benefit. Ideally, if one has chronic immune

system issues, infections, anxiety or other chronic mental health issues, one should seek professional help with a natural



medicine practitioner who can prescribe to your specific case using differential diagnosis.

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