

10 NATURAL REMEDIES THAT WORK

You don't have to live in the rain forest to take advantage of nature's healing power. Herbs that heal are as close as your local supermarket, health-food store or herb outlet. Experts recommend the following natural healers for men. (Look for standardized preparations. Make sure you use each in consultation with your physician and alert your doctor if they don't alleviate your symptoms):

RED PEPPER

WHAT IT'S GOOD FOR: Indigestion; arthritis; rheumatism; shingles

HOW TO USE IT: While the common thinking is that red pepper upsets the stomach, in reality it soothes and aids digestion. To enjoy the benefits, use more of it in your cooking. The capsaicin in red pepper is also effective when used externally—it blocks pain signals from nerves just under the skin. There are several skin creams containing capsaicin on the market.

MILK THISTLE

WHAT IT'S GOOD FOR: Protecting and healing the liver; improving liver function

HOW TO USE IT: Since the active ingredient in milk thistle, silymarin, is not very soluble in water, the herb is not effective as a tea. You can, however, buy milk-thistle capsules at health-food stores or herb shops.

HAWTHORN

WHAT IT'S GOOD FOR: Hawthorn dilates the coronary arteries and is effective in lowering blood pressure, preventing heart attacks and treating circulation and heart problems

HOW TO USE IT: Hawthorn is a powerful medicine. If you want to take it, discuss it first with your physician and see a natur-

opath or pharmacist for a standardized extract.

VALERIAN

WHAT IT'S GOOD FOR: Fighting insomnia and restlessness

HOW TO USE IT: Drinking tea made with one or two teaspoons of dried valerian right before bedtime will make you sleepy. The herb does have a strong, disagreeable odor, however, so if you find the tea unappetizing, try valerian capsules. They also stink, but it's over in one gulp.

GINKGO

WHAT IT'S GOOD FOR: *Ginkgo biloba* improves cerebral blood flow, so it can be an effective treatment against vertigo, ringing in the ears, and the mental lapses that sometimes affect older men. Since it also improves circulation, it may be helpful in treating some age-related impotence as well.

HOW TO USE IT: Health-food stores and pharmacies sell commercial preparations containing ginkgo extract. Take the dose recommended on the package.

PEPPERMINT

WHAT IT'S GOOD FOR: Soothing your stomach; unclogging your chest and sinuses

HOW TO USE IT: Drink a cup of mint tea. If you prefer to make

your own, steep 1 teaspoon of fresh mint leaves or 2 teaspoons of dried leaves per cup of boiling water for 10 minutes. Commercial preparations containing peppermint—including tea bags, gum and candy—can also be effective.

ECHINACEA

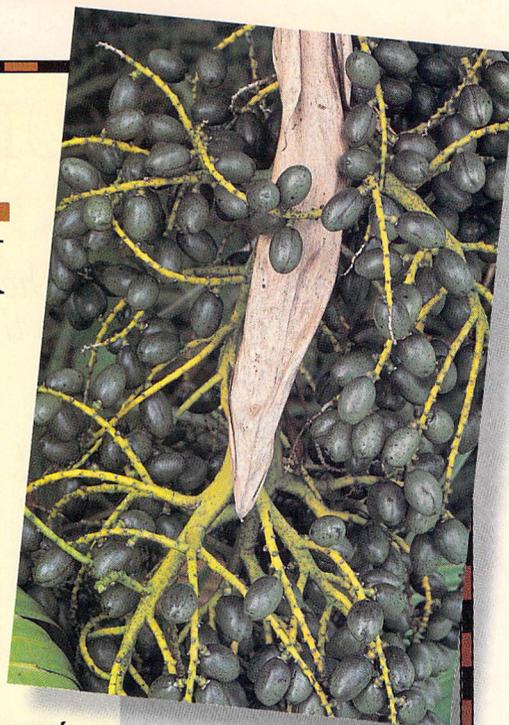
WHAT IT'S GOOD FOR: Strengthening your immune system; combating colds and flu; healing wounds, sores and burns

HOW TO USE IT: When you feel a cold or flu coming on, take echinacea (extract or capsules are the easiest way) until the symptoms fade. Echinacea is also effective when used externally: Prepare a plaster using the powdered form of the herb and spread it on a difficult-to-heal wound.

CHAMOMILE

WHAT IT'S GOOD FOR: Easing tension; relieving indigestion; treating colds and flu; healing cuts, scrapes and burns

HOW TO USE IT: To ensure potency, it's best to buy your chamomile in an herb market. Use 2 or 3 heaping teaspoons of dried or fresh flowers per cup of boiling water. Steep for 10 to 20 minutes. Supermarket-bought chamomile tea bags also can be effective, as long as they're



SAW PALMETTO

WHAT IT'S GOOD FOR: Reducing an enlarged prostate

HOW TO USE IT: If you're having prostate or urinary tract problems, don't take this herb without your physician's permission. The easiest route is to take it in capsule form.

steeped for 15 minutes in a covered pot. For cuts, scrapes or burns, simply take a moistened tea bag and place it on top of the wounded area.

ALOE

WHAT IT'S GOOD FOR: Healing minor cuts and burns (including sunburn); preventing infection of scrapes and cuts.

HOW TO USE IT: Grow your own live aloe plant, since the jury is still out on the benefits of commercial products containing aloe gel. Wash the affected area of your skin with soap and water, then snip a fleshy leaf off the plant, cut several inches off it, slice it lengthwise, and scoop out the gel. (Be careful to avoid the yellowish resin beneath; it can irritate your skin.) Apply the gel three or four times a day. Leave the wound or burn uncovered.

—Tom McGrath