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TERMINOLOGY OF PLANT USEAGE

ABORTIFICANT: Induces or causes premature expulsion of a fetus
ACRID: Causes heat or irritation when applied to the skin
ADAPTOGEN: Strengthening to immune, glandular or nervous systems for overall strengthening and adaptability to stress. Normalizes systems.
ADJUVANT: Herb added to a mixture to aid the affect of the principle ingredient
ALTERATIVE: Produces a healthful change without perceptible evacuation
ANALGESIC: Relieves pain
ANESTHETIC: Reduces pain in an area by desensitizing the nerves
ANODYNE: Relieves pain
ANORECTIC: Decreases appetite for food
ANTHELMINTIC: Expels worms
ANTIBILIOUS: Acts on the bile and gall bladder, relieves biliousness
ANTIBIOTIC: Capable of killing viruses, bacteria combats infection
ANTICATARRHALS: Eliminates or counteracts the formation of mucus
ANTICOAGULANT: Prevents or decrease clotting of blood
ANTIEMETIC: Stops vomiting
ANTIPILECTIC: Relieves fits or seizures
ANTIHLITIC: Prevents the formation of calculi (stones) in the urinary organs
ANTIHYDROTIC: Reduces or suppresses perspiration
ANTIPERIODIC: Arrests morbid periodic or intermittent diseases
ANTIPHLOGISTIC: Reduces inflammation
ANTIPYRETIC: Prevents or reduces fever
ANTIRHEUMATIC: Relieves rheumatism
ANTISCORBUTIC: Relieves and prevents scurvy
ANTISEPTIC: Opposed to putrification, prevents infection
ANTISPASMODIC: Relieves or prevents spasms
ANTISYPHILITIC: Having effect on certain venereal diseases
ANTITUSSIVE: Relieves coughing
APERIENT: Mild laxative
APHRODISIAC: Increases sexual power or excitement
APPETIZER: Increases or excites the appetite
AROMATIC: Having a fragrant smell and pungent taste
ASTRINGENT: Causes contraction of tissue and arrests discharges
BALSAM: Soothing or healing
CALMATIVE: Relaxes, usually affects the nervous system
CARDIACS: Affects the heart
CARMINATIVE: Expels gas from intestines or stomach
CATHARTIC: Evacuating the bowels
CAUSTIC: Corrosive substance that burns or eats away tissue
CEPHALIC: Used in diseases of the head
CHOLAGOGUE: Increase the flow of bile
COAGULENT: Induces blood clotting
CONDIMENT: Improves the flavor of food
DEMULCENT: Soothing, relieves inflammation, helps irritated membranes
DEOBSTRUENT: Removes obstructions
DEODORANT: Destroys or masks odors
DEPRESSANT: Lessens nervous or functional activity
DEPURATIVE: Purifies the blood
DETERGENT: Cleansing to boils, ulcers, and wounds
DIAPHORETIC: Produces perspiration, expands capillaries
DIGESTIVE: promotes or aids digestion
DISCUTIENT: Dissolves and removes tumors
DISINFECTANT: Cleanses wounds by destroying micro-organisms

DIURETIC: Increases the flow and secretion of urine
EMETIC: Produces vomiting
EMMENAGOGUE: Promotes menstruation
EMOLLIENT: Softening and soothing to tissue
ERRHINE: Promotes sneezing and nasal discharges
ESCULENT: Eatable as food
EUPHORANT: Induces abnormal sense of vigor and happiness
EXANTHEMATOUS: Remedy for skin eruptions and diseases
EXPECTORANT: Helps loosen and expel phlegm
FEBRIFUGE: Reduces fevers
GALACTAGOGUE: Promotes lactation
HALLUCINOGEN: Induces hallucinations
HEMOSTATIC: Stops bleeding
HEPATIC: Pertaining to the liver
HERPATIC: Remedy for skin eruptions such as ringworm
HYDRAGOGUE: Produces abundant watery discharge
HYPNOTIC: Promotes or induces sleep
IRRITANT: Causes inflammation or sensitivity to tissue
LAXATIVE: Promotes bowel movements
LITHONTRYPTIC: Dissolves calculi in urinary organs
MATURATING: Ripens or brings boils, tumors, and ulcers to a head
MUCILAGINOUS: Soothing to inflamed parts
NARCOTIC: Relieves pain or induces sleep, large doses may induce coma, convulsions, and death
NAUSEANT: Produces vomiting
NEPHRETIC: For diseases of the kidney
NERVINE: Acts of the nervous system, helpful to the parasympathetic system
NUTRITIVES: Provides nourishment
OPHTHALMICUM: For diseases of the eye
OXYTOCIC: Stimulates contraction of uterus to induce or speed up labor
PARASITICIDE: Destroys parasites in intestine or in skin
PARTURIENT: Induces and promotes labor for childbirth
PARASYMPATHOMIMETIC: A substance that mimics parasympathetic function
PECTORAL: Relieves chest and lung affections
POISON: Harmful or destructive to living tissue
PERGATIVE: produces vigorous emptying of the bowels
REFRIGERANT: Cooling to body part
RESOLVENT: Dissolves and removes tumors
RUBIFACIENT: Increase circulation, induces reddened skin
SEDATIVE: Quieting or sedative to nerves
SIALAGOGUE: Increase the secretion of saliva
STIMULANT: Increases or strengthens physiological function
STOMACHIC: Strengthens the stomach
STYPTICS: Contracts tissue and blood vessels, helps slow or stop bleeding
SUDORIFIC: Produces profuse perspiration
SYMPATHOMIMETIC: A substance that mimics adrenalin (epinephrine)
TONIC: Herb which is invigorating and strengthening
VASOCONSTRICTOR: Narrows blood vessels, raises blood pressure
VASODILATOR: Relaxes and causes dilation of blood vessels, lowers blood pressure
VERMICIDE: Destroys intestinal worms
VERMIFUGE: Expels worms
VESICANT: Produces blisters
VULNERARY: Used to treat wounds, or helpful for cell regeneration

TERMINOLOGY: METHODS OF PRESERVING & USING HERBS
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BATH: A foot, sitz, or whole body being placed in warm water with strongly infused herbs or other preparations. Usually for 20 minutes or more.

CAPSULE: One of the least effective methods, especially when using roots or seeds. Convenient, but the active ingredient in the herb may not be fully utilized by the body. Fillers, buffers, and other ingredients are commonly added.

COMPRESS: Similar to a poultice, but usually the plant part is wrapped in cloth to protect from hairs or prickles, or cloth is just dipped into a strong infusion and applied. Often warm, similar to fomentation.

DECOCTION: A more potent infusion, often made and stored for later use involving reduction of liquid and longer use of heat. 20 minutes to a couple of hours would be a normal length of time for simmering.

ESSENTIAL OIL: Pure oil extracted from a plant through chemical, heat or pressure. Very large amounts of plant material must be used, and the process varies widely depending on the plant and the manufacturer. The quality of the essential oil will also vary widely.

EXTRACT: Grain alcohol, 100 proof vodka, vinegar, glycerin, water are all commonly used to extract constituents from a plant part. While alcohol is the most effective medium for most herbs, vinegar excels with minerals, and water is effective for most nutrients. The extract can then be used diluted in water, (common with alcohol based tinctures), used in capsules and pills (often standardized for one or more components), or used as is (for example a vinegar extract used for calcium supplementation). Extracts would commonly take time and sometimes heat and agitation to make. There is great variation depending on the medium, the type of plant, and the plant part.

FLOWER ESSENCE: A preparation made with "essence" from flowers soaked in water or placed in water in the sun, then diluted a specified number of times in water and/or alcohol. Most flower essences do not actually contain any physical part of the plant.

FOMENTATION: A cloth soaked and wrung out from an infused herb applied to the body, often as hot as is comfortable.

HOMEOPATHIC PREPARATION: A plant (or other substance) that has been diluted, percussed, and repeated dilutions made with percussion a specified number of times. The final tincture is often mixed with milk sugar tablets and taken under the tongue. The more dilute, the more potent the remedy is.

INFUSION: Water based, steeped herb for 20 minutes to 8 or more hours. Use sealed jar to retain full vitamins and minerals. Especially effective when seeking nutritive benefits from an herb.

INHALING: Especially for congestion and sinus relieve, herbs are placed in hot water and the vapor is inhaled, often with a cloth over the head while you lean over the pot. Also, herbs can be smoked and inhaled such as with comfrey and mullein.

LINIMENTS: Similar to a tincture, only prepared in rubbing alcohol. Only for external use.

MOXIBUSTION: Common term for using mugwort prepared and wrapped in mulberry paper to burn near or on the body, in conjunction with acupuncture points or needles. While the "sticks" are the most common form, mugwort can also be used alone.

OIL: Plants are either soaked cold for days or weeks or "cooked" in hot oil and then the oil is drained and preserved. For external use only.

POULTICE: Applying plant parts to the body directly, usually after they have been macerated, steeped or warmed to bring forth the healing properties of the plant.

SALVE: A preparation usually made with oil or lard and beeswax for external application. The salve can be made from herbal oils, or by adding herbal extracts.

SMUDGING: Burning herbs, usually for ritual purposes.

SUPPOSITORY & BOLIS: Infused, tinctured, herb oil, or fresh herbs which are used anally or vaginally; often mixed with beeswax which melts with body heat.

SYRUP: A preparation made with honey or sugar, often used for cough formulas or to disguise bitter tasting herbs. A decoction would be a preparation that is then made into a syrup. With refrigeration, may last for months.

TINCTURE: Alcohol or vinegar infusion, often taking six weeks or more to make, will store for years and usual dose is commonly 5-20 drops (in water) at a time. Especially effective in utilizing and preserving alkaloids from plants.

TONIC: Especially refers to an infusion of herbs known for their tonifying effects, herbal tonics can best be used rhythmically and regularly, in season. The intention is to have a strengthening or rejuvenating affect on systems of the body.

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