

Home Herbalist Series Homework – Class 2

Stress & Energy Herbs ~ Tinctures

Your Name: Zoe DeWitt

Date: 2/9/2022

RELAXING & ENERGIZING HERBS

1. Give me 5 ways in which stress damages your body.
 - (1) Stress decreases immune system functioning.
 - (2) Stress slows the rate of digestion.
 - (3) Stress decreases the body's ability to heal wounds over time.
 - (4) Stress increases blood sugar levels.
 - (5) Stress temporarily increases brain function.
2. What are the 4 traits of an adaptogenic herb?
 - (1) An adaptogenic herb is relatively safe and nontoxic.
 - (2) Adaptogenic herbs benefit a variety of body systems.
 - (3) Adaptogenic herbs can normalize body functions depending on what needs to happen within the body.
 - (4) Adaptogenic herbs are likely to work through the regulation of hormones.
3. What are some common side effects of the more stimulating adaptogens?

Sometimes, the more stimulating adaptogens (including ginseng, eleuthero, rhodiola, and codonopsis) can become overstimulating, and should be used with caution for people with anxiety disorders, high blood pressure, or mania. Common side effects of the most stimulating adaptogens include insomnia, a rise in blood pressure, and irritability.

Which herb would you use, and why? (May be more than one possible answer.)

4. What herb might you recommend for zippy energy?
Rhodiola
5. What herb might you use for calm energy?
Holy basil
6. What herb might you use to boost your mental energy & brain power?
Schizandra
7. What herb might you use for energy and libido?
Ashwagandha

Name that herb!

8. This popular adaptogenic root has been overharvested and is often adulterated and expensive.

Ginseng

9. This herb is often used as a substitute for the above root as an energizing adaptogen.

Codonopsis?

10. This calm energy adaptogen is believed to give you the strength, vitality, and virility of a horse.

Ashwagandha

11. This creeping vine-like herb looks a bit like Swedish ivy and can be used for calm energy, circulation, wound healing, and memory.

Gotu kola

12. This herb is revered in India/Ayurveda, where it is named after the goddess Tulsi, a great worshiper of Vishnu. The leaves and flowers have many uses, including reducing stress hormones (like cortisol) and helping to stabilize blood sugar and curb sugar cravings.

Holy basil

FEATURED HERB: ELEUTHERO

13. Give me at least two uses for eleuthero:

- (1) Eleuthero can help the body resist environmental stresses.
- (2) Eleuthero helps to stimulate an immune response in the body.

FEATURED HERB: HOLY BASIL

14. Give me at least two uses for holy basil:

- (1) Holy basil helps to relax and calm and can also uplift in times of grief or trauma.
- (2) Holy basil minimizes sugar cravings, especially cravings that are a stress response.

MAKING TINCTURES

15. How do you make a tincture with FRESH herbs?

To make a tincture with fresh herbs, you will need:

- Fresh herb, chopped
- Alcohol, preferably 100+ proof
- Clean glass jar with lid
- Optional but helpful: Scale, measuring cup, tamper

The ratio for creating a fresh herb tincture is 1:2, so for every 1 ounce weight of fresh herbs, you will add 2 ounces volume of the alcohol. Figure out this math to determine the best jar size for your tincture. Then, shove the herb into the jar, using a tamper if your fingers are not able to fully get it in. After, fill the jar to the tippy top with alcohol, screw on the lid, and leave it to sit. It may be necessary to come back a day or two later to top off the tincture. Other than that, let it sit for at least a month for full extraction, macerating occasionally if desired. After the month has passed, strain the tincture through a clean cloth, making sure to squeeze out as much as possible. Put the strained tincture in a bottle, label, and store in a cool, dark, and dry area.

16. How do you make a tincture with DRY herbs?

To make a tincture with dry herbs, you will need:

- Dried herb
- Alcohol, 100-proof
- Clean glass jar with lid

- Scale
- Optional but helpful: Grinder, measuring cup

The ratio for creating a dry herb tincture is 1:5, so for every 1 ounce weight of dry herbs, you will add 5 ounces volume of alcohol. Weigh out your dry herb and grind it. Grinding is optional but will overall help with extraction and fitting the herb into the jar. Put the dried herb into the jar and fill with the appropriate amount of alcohol. Let this sit for at least a month, macerating every day to help with extraction. Once the month has passed, strain through a clean cloth and also through a coffee filter if lots of sediment is still present. Put the tincture in a bottle and store in a cool, dry place.

17. What are the advantages and disadvantages of tinctures?

Advantages:

- Convenient
- Fast to take
- Long shelf-life
- Fast absorption
- Most effective in extracting plants' properties
- Best method for extracting/preserving fresh plants
- Easy to combine different tinctures together
- You still taste the herbs

Disadvantages:

- Not everyone wants or tolerates alcohol
- Small doses
- Not good at extracting minerals, mucilage, mushrooms, fiber
- No ritual
- Not as experiential
- Usually tastes bad

DO THIS/REMEDY REPORT: TINCTURE

Make a tincture of your own using fresh or dry plant material. Let me know which herb you chose, how you made it, and how you plan to use it. **Please do make sure to wait until you've finished making (which might take several weeks for it to finish macerating and then be strained) and tried the remedy before sending in your homework.**

1. What did you try?

I made a schizandra berry tincture with apple cider vinegar, as I do not have access to alcohol.

2. How did you make it? Specific ingredient(s)? Fresh or dried herbs? Where sourced? Quantities/percentages?

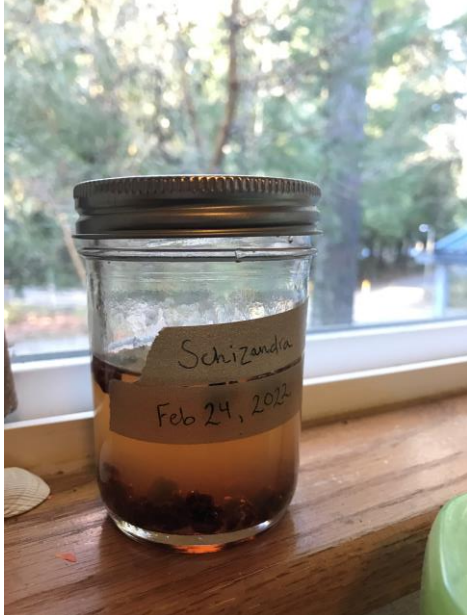
The specific ingredients I used were the dried schizandra berries provided in the Home Herbalism Herb Kit, which I crushed up before adding. I also used apple cider vinegar.

3. Process for making it? How much herb material per how much alcohol? What proof of alcohol? Did you add anything else like water or glycerine and, if so, how much? How long did you let it macerate before straining?

I'll be honest, I was not too precise when making my tincture as I did not have access to too much plant material or to a scale for accurate weight measurements. I mostly eye-balled the amounts of berries and vinegar to use, making sure to keep the amount small as I am not sure if this is a tincture I intend to use often

or not. I started my tincture quite late after Class 2 of the series so I only let it sit for around two weeks, with maceration every day.

4. Your experience tasting and trying it - Did you like it? Did you notice anything while or after taking it?
5. How do you plan to use it? For what health benefits?
6. Photo(s) of your process welcome and encouraged!



Materia Medica

Name: Zoe DeWitt Date: 2/11/2022

Common Name: Ashwagandha (1,2,3), Winter cherry, Indian Ginseng (2)

Latin Name: *Withania somnifera* (1,2,3)

Plant Family: Solanaceae (2)

Photo/drawing/pressing: ***

Part(s) Used: root (1,2,3), occasionally leaves and berries (2)

Flavor: sweet, bitter (2)

Energetics: sweet, astringent, bitter, moist, warming (2)

Key Actions: adaptogen (1,2), anti-inflammatory (1,2), antioxidant (2), anxiolytic (2), aphrodisiac (1,2), immuno-modulator (1,2), cardio-protective (2)

Identification/Growth/Habitat:

Ashwagandha grows up to two feet as a small shrub in semi-arid conditions. This herb is native to arid areas of India and is easy to cultivate; if you are able to grow tomatoes in your climate, you will most likely be successful with ashwagandha as they favor similar conditions. The leaves of the ashwagandha herb are alternate and oval in shape and can grow to be around 10 cm long. Ashwagandha flowers vary in color from yellow to green. The herb produces a red berry in the fall that is protected in a papery sheath, similar to a groundcherry. Although the leaves and berries are occasionally used as medicine, it is most often the ashwagandha root that is used medicinally. The roots are long, fleshy, and cream colored, and can be harvested at the end of the herb's first year (2).

Harvesting/Preparation/Dose:

After harvesting the roots of ashwagandha after its first year of growth, the plant is most commonly taken as a powder, but it can also be used as a tea, in an oil, or in a tincture. A general dosage of ashwagandha powder is 3-6 grams, or around a teaspoon, per day (1,2,3). As for a tea, anywhere from 3 to 30 grams can be decocted in boiling water or heated milk to be drunk daily (2,3).

Medicinal Uses:

As a calming adaptogen, ashwagandha is wonderful in restoring nervous system health and in turn, restoring a healthy sleep cycle. When taken over a long period of time, ashwagandha can help to increase energy levels and decrease negative responses to stress. Ashwagandha has also been used to increase fertility and libido in both men and women. It can help increase immune system health and is a wonderful support for chronic diseases, such as hypothyroidism, as it can help with rebuilding tissues and with recovering overall health and strength (1,2).

Other Uses:

I had trouble finding other uses for ashwagandha outside of medicine?

Cautions:

Ashwagandha is viewed as generally safe but should not be used during pregnancy unless advised by an herbalist or doctor. Use ashwagandha with caution or avoid when paired with other medications for hypothyroidism and keep in mind that it is a type of nightshade and could have a negative effect if you are sensitive to other nightshade plants. Finally, be cautious of overstimulation when using ashwagandha, which could result in agitation or a disrupted sleep schedule (1).

Personal Experience:

When first diagnosed with anxiety at 14, I was prescribed ashwagandha capsules but eventually stopped taking them after a while. Recently, I was re-prescribed them and am now taking around a gram every day in capsule form (along with some other natural remedies). It has only been a bit over a month of taking them, but I already feel a lot calmer and more relaxed in the face of stress or anxiety which is such a happy switch from the constant state of anxiety I used to exist in.

Sources:

1. Groves, Maria Noel. "The Nervous and Endocrine System Part 1: Stress & Energy - Herbal Tinctures." Home Herbalism Series Class 2. 2022
2. de la Foret, Rosalee. "Ashwagandha Benefits." Web <https://www.herbalremediesadvice.org/ashwagandha-benefits.html>
3. HealthNotes. "Ashwagandha." Web <http://publix.aisle7.net/publix/us/assets/nutritional-supplement/ashwagandha/uses>

Common Name: Schizandra, Five Flavor Fruit, Wu Wei Zi (1,2)

Latin Name: *Schisandra chinensis* (1,2,3)

Plant Family: Schisandraceae (2)

Photo/drawing/pressing: ***

Part(s) Used: berries, stems (2)

Flavor: Primarily bitter, but in Traditional Chinese Medicine, schizandra was believed to contain all five flavors (pungent, sour, bitter, salty, sweet). That's why it is able to do so many things! (1,2)

Energetics: Warm (2)

Key Actions: astringent (1,2), modulates inflammation (1,2), protects liver (1,2), protects cardiovascular system (2), modulates immune system (1,2)

Identification/Growth/Habitat:

Schizandra is a hardy woody vine that can grow to be twenty feet. It is native to China and prefers shady conditions with damp soil. The plant produces white-to-pink flowers which are attractive to pollinators and has hanging red berry clusters, which are most often what is used as medicine (2).

Harvesting/Preparation/Dose:

Harvest the red schizandra berries for use as medicine, taking into account that it will take a few years for new schizandra plants to produce any fruit. Schizandra can be taken in the form of a tincture, tea, oxymel, vinegar, cordial, or the berries can even be eaten alone (1). As a tea, use 4-10 grams of the berries per day. In a tincture using the dried berries, use a 1:5 ratio with 40% alcohol, and take 2-4 mL up to 3 times daily (2,3).

Medicinal Uses:

Schizandra is a restorative adaptogen, meaning it is useful for building strength in those who are feeling chronically worn out. It helps relieve chronic stress and anxiety, which also promotes sleep in those with insomnia. Schizandra is well-known for its use in modulating inflammation, especially in the liver but also in the brain, skin, cardiovascular system, and other organ systems as well. Schizandra has protective qualities for the liver and is commonly used to heal liver injury caused by pharmaceutical drugs. It has also been seen to strengthen the lungs and support the immune system. Its astringent properties make it helpful for any leakages, including chronic runny nose or eyes, chronic diarrhea, and more. Finally, it has been seen as a wonderful ally for menopause, supporting the body in times when it is out of balance (2).

Other Uses:

Cautions:

Schizandra should be avoided during pregnancy as it can stimulate contractions in the uterus. Taking schizandra in large doses may cause a loss in appetite. If heartburn or GERD is experienced when taking schizandra, reduce the dosage or stop taking it altogether (2). Finally, be cautious when taking schizandra with certain pharmaceutical drugs, as schizandra is metabolized by the liver and could have negative effects with these (1,2).

Personal Experience:

Tincture

Sources:

1. Groves, Maria Noel. "The Nervous and Endocrine System Part 1: Stress & Energy - Herbal Tinctures." Home Herbalism Series Class 2. 2022
2. de la Foret, Rosalee. "Schisandra Benefits." Web <https://www.herbalremediesadvice.org/schisandra-benefits.html>
3. HealthNotes. "Schisandra." Web <http://publix.aisle7.net/publix/us/assets/nutritional-supplement/schisandra/~default>