Dictionary of Herbal Remedies Used by Migrant Farmworkers

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By

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For the

MCN

MIGRANT CLINICIANS NETWORK

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Introduction

Herbal remedies have been used to treat every illness known to man for longer than there have been written records. Herbal treatments are still the traditional medicine in a major portion of the world. The recent trend toward more natural products has spurred growth in this area, and this trend is expected to increase in the future.

Some concern exists about the safety of these products. Most herbal remedies have not been studied very extensively due to the cost of research. Herbs are natural products which cannot be patented, so it is difficult to capture significant return on capital invested in research. Therefore, companies find little financial incentive to study herbs. Consequently, not enough is known about many herbs to be able to determine safe or toxic doses.

There are many variables that affect the quality of an herbal remedy. Many distributors do not have strict quality control, so potency can vary greatly. Other factors that affect the quality of these herbals are purity, climate where they are grown, time period when they are harvested, storage conditions, and method of preparation. Contaminants in these products include molds that can cause allergic reactions, insects, and poisons such as arsenic and lead from the soil. Other areas of concern are nomenclature and appearance. One plant may be known by several names, or various plants may have similar-sounding names. Serious consequences could result due to confusion caused by similar appearances between a safe plant and a more dangerous one.

Studies indicate that migrant and seasonal farmworkers often use herbal, home, or folk remedies instead of or simultaneously with conventional medical treatment. Many modern medications, such as digoxin, warfarin, and vinca alkaloids, are derived from plant sources. These examples of herbs highlight the fact that many herbs are not innocuous, and they should not be ignored. While some herbs have positive therapeutic effects, there are some which cause adverse reactions, and could even have drug interactions with conventional medications. Some herbs may potentiate the effect of prescribed medications, while others may nullify these effects. In some cases the herbs are safe but ineffectual, causing a deterioration of the patient's condition due to ineffective "treatment." Patients do not always tell their doctor or pharmacist that they are using herbal remedies. They may not think of them as medications, or they may feel embarrassed to admit using them. Not telling their health care provider of their use of herbal remedies could have negative results, since it is possible to dangerously ignore or delay effective treatment.

It is important to know when an herbal remedy should be discontinued, as well as those that need not be. Health care providers can gain substantial rapport with their patients by being open to the use of herbal remedies when appropriate.

Many clinicians have expressed a need for an herbal formulary as a guide to prevent interactions between herbal and prescribed medications. The Migrant Clinicians Network conducted a survey of migrant health centers to gather information about herbal remedies which had been used by patients of these health centers. The resulting dictionary of herbs contains both English and Spanish names for each herb, in addition to other pertinent information.

This booklet is designed as a reference tool only. It is not intended as an instruction manual, and does not claim to be complete since so little scientific information is available on this subject. No responsibility can be assumed by the author or the publisher for the application of any of the information contained herein.

Alfalfa

Spanish Name: Alfalfa

Scientific Name: Medicago sativa

Form
Tea

Constituents
Saponins (2-3%), sterols, high molecular weight alcohols and paraffins

Therapeutic Effects
None proven

Safety/Toxicity
Safe in moderation; no evidence of any toxicity

Adverse Effects
Persons predisposed to systemic lupus erythematosis (SLE) should avoid this product since it may induce this condition. Large amounts could induce SLE in normal persons.

Potential Drug Interactions
None known

Comments
Reputed to relieve arthritic conditions and to stimulate appetite, thereby inducing an increase in weight. The vitamin P or rutin contained in alfalfa builds capillary strength and reduces inflammation of the stomach lining; vitamin A helps maintain stomach health; enzymes present aid in food assimilation.

Perceived Use by Patient
Used as a nutrient to increase vitality, appetite, and weight in humans; also as a diuretic and for ulcers.

Where Obtained
Health food stores

Aloe, Aloe Vera Gel (Lotion)

Spanish Name: Sabila

Scientific Name: Aloe barbadensis

Form
Topical lotion

Constituents
Various carbohydrate polymers (glucomannans or pectic acid)

Therapeutic Effects
Moisturizer, emollient, promotion of wound healing, promotion of cell growth

Safety/Toxicity
Safe for topical use

Adverse Effects
None known

Potential Drug Interactions
None known

Comments
Gel from freshly cut leaves is efficacious, while commercial aloe gel products are not. The peeled fresh gel is applied to inflamed eyes and on all kinds of skin inflammations, sores, and burns. It has been recommended in the treatment of third degree x-ray and atomic radiation burns.

Perceived Use by Patient
Swelling of extremities, burns, marks, scars, asthma, cancer

Where Obtained
Home gardens

Aloe, Aloe Vera Latex (Juice)

Spanish Name: Sabila

Scientific Name: Aloe barbadensis

Form
Tea

Constituents
Anthraquinone glycosides, barbaloin

Therapeutic Effects
Cathartic properties acting on the colon

Safety/Toxicity
Aloe is safe as a tea for moderate ingestion, but is contraindicated in pregnancy and in individuals afflicted with hemorrhoids; also is apt to cause kidney irritation.

Adverse Effects
Overdosage causes abdominal pain, bloody diarrhea, hemorrhagic gastritis, and sometimes nephritis.

Potential Drug Interactions
None known

Comments
The laxative action of aloe occurs 8 to 12 hours after ingestion

Perceived Use by Patient
Purgative, anthelmintic

Where Obtained
Home gardens

Anise

Spanish Name: Anis

Scientific Name: Pimpinella anisum

Form
Tea

Constituents
1-3% volatile oils (80-90% anethole), 3-4% fixed oils, calcium oxalate, coumarins

Therapeutic Effects
Carminative, diuretic, diaphoretic, expectorant, stimulant, pesticide (topically for body lice), moisturizer

Safety/Toxicity
Its major component, anethole, has been reported to be the cause of dermatitis (erythema, scaling, and vesiculation) in some people.

Adverse Effects
1-5 ml of the oil may cause nausea, vomiting, seizures, pulmonary edema, and skin irritation.

Potential Drug Interactions
Tetracyclines, verapamil, thiazide-type diuretics, phenytoin, iron salts, quinidine, salicylates, sodium polystyrene sulfonate

Comments
Commonly used as a flavoring agent. Helpful in the relief of cough and congestion symptoms. Its healing properties emanate from its seeds.

Perceived Use by Patient
Stomach cramps, colic, to sweeten the breath, to increase mother's milk

Where Obtained
Mexican grocery or pharmacy, grocery store, herb store

Basil

Spanish Name: Albahaca

Scientific Name: Ocimum basilicum

Form
Infusion

Constituents
Essential oil (mainly estragol), eugenol, lineol, linalol, thymol, tannins

Therapeutic Effects
Antispasmodic, carminative, antiseptic, mild nervine, emmenagogue

Safety/Toxicity
Inbibed as an infusion by nursing mothers, basil is considered a safe, gentle tonic that helps expel gas in the infant and increases lactation in the mother.

Adverse Effects
None known

Potential Drug Interactions
Chloral hydrate, quinine sulfate, alkaloids, salts of heavy metals, albumin, oxidizing substances (permanganates, chlorates)

Comments
Commonly used as a flavoring agent. It is especially recommended for use before and after parturition to promote blood circulation.

Perceived Use by Patient
Gastric distress, headaches, colds, supressed menstruation

Where Obtained
Grocery store, herb store, home garden

Black Cohosh

Spanish Name: Unknown

Scientific Name: Cimcifuga racemosa, Actaea racemosa, Macrotys actaeoides

Form
Tea

Constituents
Triterpene glycosides, isoferulic acid, tannins and volatile oils

Therapeutic Effects
None known

Safety/Toxicity
Adverse affects are very toxic.

Adverse Effects
Bradycardia, tremors, vertigo

Potential Drug Interactions
Digoxin

Comments
There is no rationale for the use of this remedy due to its lack of efficacy and its toxicity.

Perceived Use by Patient
Used for second trimester abortion, rheumatism, bronchitis, uterine disorders, high blood pressure, and as a sedative.

Where Obtained
Health food store, curandero

Borage

Spanish Name: Borraja

Scientific Name: Borago officinalis

Form
Tea

Constituents
Tannins (very low concentrations)

Therapeutic Effects
Slight expectorant, slightly constipating, astringent

Safety/Toxicity
Safe in general; however, borage contains small amounts of two toxins (lycopsamine unsaturated pyrolizidine alkaloids and supindine viridiflorate). Excessive or long-term consumption should be avoided.

Adverse Effects
None known

Potential Drug Interactions
Alkaloids, salts of heavy metals, albumin, oxidizing substances (permanganates, chlorates)

Comments
Relatively ineffective. Has calming and cooling effects and can help break fevers. In Europe, borage tea has been used traditionally as a strengthening tonic for convulsing patients. It is suggested as a good herb for high blood pressure or for persons who are apprehensive or worry a lot.

Perceived Use by Patient
Upset stomach, fever

Where Obtained
Herb store

Chamomile

Spanish Name: Manzanilla

Scientific Name: Anthemis nobilis

Form
Tea, extracts, volatile oil preparations

Constitutents
Volatile oils (chamazulene and (-)-α bisabolol), bisabololoxides A and B, spiroethers, various flavones (especially apigenin, luteolin, patuletin, and quercitin coumarin derivatives)

Therapeutic Effects
Anti-inflammatory, spasmolytic, carminative, protection against peptic ulcers, antibacterial, antifungal, nervine

Safety/Toxicity
As a nervine, chamomile is safe and effective. It is gentle to the stomach, so it can also be used to treat indigestion.

Adverse Effects
May cause anaphylaxis, other severe hypersensitivity reactions, and contact dermatitis in persons allergic to ragweeds, asters, chrysanthemums, or related plants.

Potential Drug Interactions
Aspirin, warfarin (coumadin)—same as those for warfarin

Comments
A cup of chamomile tea is a classic remedy for nervous or hysterical conditions. Persons allergic to any plant in the compositae family should avoid this herb. Roman chamomile is emetic in large doses. Roman chamomile has been reported to exhibit anti-tumor activities *in vitro* against human tumor cells.

Perceived Use by Patient
Diarrhea, menstrual cramps, colic, upset stomach, insomnia, infantile convulsions, toothache, bleeding, and swollen gums

Where Obtained
Mexican pharmacy, herb store, home garden

Camphor

Spanish Name: Alcanfor

Scientific Name: Cinnamomun camphora

Form
Topical lotion, tea

Constituents
Camphor oil contains camphor (2-bornanone), safrole, borneol, heliotropin, vanillin, terpineol, sesquiterpene alcohols

Therapeutic Effects
Antipraritic (external only), rubefacient (external only), counter-irritant (external only), antiseptic and carminative (internal)

Safety/Toxicity
Toxic doses of camphor taken internally result in convulsions accompanied by vertigo and mental confusion, and may lead to delirium and even coma and death. 700 mg can cause narcosis.

Adverse Effects
Camphor phenol lotions have caused skin ulceration.

Potential Drug Interactions
Phenol

Comments
Camphor oil is frequently used for earaches.

Perceived Use by Patient
Colds, inflammation, gout, rheumatic joints. Taken internally to calm hysteria, abate convulsions and epileptic attacks; also as a carminative and respiratory and cardiac stimulant.

Where Obtained
Mexican pharmacy, herb store

Chaparral

Spanish Name: Unknown

Scientific Name:Larrea tridentata

Form
Tea

Constituents
Nordihydroguaiaretic acid (NDGA)

Therapeutic Effects
None known

Safety/Toxicity
This product has caused lesions in the mesenteric lymph nodes in rat studies.

Adverse Effects
None known

Potential Drug Interactions
None known

Comments
None

Perceived Use by Patient
Unknown

Where Obtained
Unknown

Cinnamon

Spanish Name: Canela

Scientific Name: Cinnamonum verum

Form
Tea

Constituents
60-75% cinnamic aldehyde, 4-10% phenols, hydrocarbons, ketones, alcohols, esters

Therapeutic Effects
Carminative, astringent, local stimulant

Safety/Toxicity
Doses of the oil greater than 0.5 mg/kg may cause renal damage or coma. There have been a number of reports of sensitivity to cinnamon. Acceptable daily intake is 700 mg/kg body weight.

Adverse Effects
Ingestion of the oil may cause nausea and vomiting. Contact with skin or eyes may cause redness or burning.

Potential Drug Interactions
Diuretics, digoxin, alkaloids, salts of heavy metals, albumin, oxidizing substances (permanganates, chlorates)

Comments
Commonly used as a flavoring agent. Cinnamon oil has exhibited antifungal, antiviral, bactericidal, and larvicidal activities.

Perceived Use by Patient
Cramps, colic, chronic diarrhea, colds, kidney troubles, hypertension, to stimulate appetite.

Where Obtained
Grocery store, herb store

Coffee

Spanish Name: Café

Scientific Name: Coffee arabica

Form
Ground, roasted beans

Constituents
1-2% caffeine, 10-13% fatty oil, 25% trigonelline, 3-5% tannin, 15% glucose and dextrin, 10-13% proteins

Therapeutic Effects
Caffeine is a powerful stimulant of the central nervous system, respiration, and skeletal muscles; other activities include cardiac stimulation, coronary dilation, smooth muscle relaxation, and diuresis.

Safety/Toxicity
Caffeine is teratogenic and should be avoided or limited during pregnancy. It may be linked to esophageal cancer. It has been definitely determined that coffee is capable of producing allergic repsonse. Various symptoms have been reported, including severe migraine, gastroenteritis, headache, and widespread hives.

Adverse Effects
Nervousness, arrythmias, increased blood glucose, increased, cholesterol levels, excess stomach acid, heartburn, insomnia

Potential Drug Interactions
Theophylline, iron

Comments
Caffeine should be used in moderation. Non-pregnant adults should limit their consumption to 250 mg per day. Range of caffeine contact: 40-80 mg per 5-8 oz. brewed; 30-120 mg per 5-8 oz. instant. Coffee is reported to stimulate gastric reaction and should be taken only with proper precautions by individuals with peptic ulcer.

Perceived Use by Patient
Laxative

Where Obtained
Grocery store

Coriander

Spanish Name: Cilantro

Scientific Name: Coriandrum sativum

Form
Tea, infusion

Constituents
1% volatile oils (including borneol coriandrol, d-pinene, b-pinene, terpinen, geraniol, and decylaldehyde)

Therapeutic Effects
Stimulant, carminative

Safety/Toxicity
Coriander oil is reported to have weak cytotoxic activity.

Adverse Effects
Excess amounts can cause narcotic-like effects, nausea, vomiting, mental confusion, dizziness, convulsions

Potential Drug Interactions
None known

Comments
Occasionally used in medications as a flavoring agent. Coriander has been reported to have strong lipolytic activity. Coriander possesses hypoglycemic qualities in experimental animals.

Perceived Use by Patient
Stomach cramps, stomach tonic, laxative and purgative, to expel gas from the bowels

Where Obtained
Mexican pharmacy, herb store, home garden

Corn Silk

Spanish Name: Cabellos de elote, pelos de elote

Scientific Name: Zea mays

Form
Tea

Constituents
Starch, gluten

Therapeutic Effects
Diuretic, hypoglycemic, anti-hypertensive, demulcent

Safety/Toxicity
Generally recognized as safe

Adverse Effects
None known

Potential Drug Interactions
None known

Comments
Corn oil is used as a solvent for injections as well as for irradiated ergosteral.

Perceived Use by Patient
Kidneys, urinary infection, enuresis, and calculus

Where Obtained
Grocery store

Perceived Use by Patient
Coughs, headaches, earaches, and sinusitis. Also used as a mouthwash and gargle for inflammations of the mouth and throat.

Where Obtained
Unknown

Flax Seed

Spanish Name: Lino

Scientific Name: Linum usitatissimum

Form
Tea

Constituents
30-40% fixed oils, mucilage, wax, tannins, gum, nitrates, linamarin (a cyanogenic glycoside)

Therapeutic Effects
Expectorant, emmollient, demulcent, laxative

Safety/Toxicity
Flax leaves and seed chaff contain the cyanogenic glycoside linamarine from which the enzyme linamarase is capable of releasing cyanide.

Adverse Effects
Symptoms of overdose include increased respiratory rate, excitement, gasping, staggering, weakness, paralysis, and convulsions.

Potential Drug Interactions
Alkaloids, salts of heavy metals, albumin, oxidizing substances (permanganates, chlorates)

Perceived Use by Patient
Stomach irritation

Where Obtained
Unknown

Garlic

Spanish Name: Ajo

Scientific Name: Allium sativum

Form
Garlic water

Constituents
Allium (s-allyl-l-cysteine sulfoxide) converted to allicin (diallyldisulfide-s-oxide) converted to ajoene

Therapeutic Effects
Potent antibacterial, antithrombotic, antifungal, decreases plasma fibrinogen, decreases serum triglycerides, decreases beta lipoproteins, decreases phospholipids, decreases blood pressure, decreasees serum glucose, expectorant, diaphoretic, diuretic

Safety/Toxicity
Unknown

Adverse Effects
Allergic contact dermatitis due to garlic has been reported.

Potential Drug Interactions
None known

Comments
Garlic has considerable potential; however, more studies are needed before the therapeutic value can be determined with certainty.

Perceived Use by Patient
Blood pressure, worms, weight loss, tuberculosis, emphysema, asthma

Where Obtained
Grocery store, home garden

Horsetail (Shave Grass)

Spanish Name: Cola de Caballo

Scientific Name: Equisetum arvense

Form
Tea, infusion

Constituents
Flavone glycosides, saponins

Therapeutic Effects
Weak diuretic, astringent

Safety/Toxicity
Unknown

Adverse Effects
None known

Potential Drug Interactions
None known

Comments
Horsetail has been a traditional herbal treatment for mending broken bones. It is also used as an infusion to help build kidney strength. In Europe, horsetail tea was also used to stop bleeding both internally and externally.

Perceived Use by Patient
Diarrhea in children, polyps, abdominal and oral cancer

Where Obtained
Unknown

Lemon

Spanish Name: Limón

Scientific Name: Citrus limonum

Form
Tea

Constituents
Peel: oil, bitter principle, glucoside hesperidin
Juice: 6.7-8.6% citric acid, sugar, gum
Oil: 7-8% citral, pinene, citronellal

Therapeutic Effects
Oil internally: carminative, stimulant
Oil topically: rubefacient
Juice: antiscurvy, astringent

Safety/Toxicity
Lemon oil has been reported to promote tumor formation on the skin of mice by the primary carcinogen 9,10-dimenthyl-1,2-benzathracene. Acceptable daily intake is up to 500 mg/kg of body weight.

Adverse Effects
Volatile oils may cause photosensitization.

Potential Drug Interactions
None known

Comments
None

Perceived Use by Patient
Inflammation or infection of the mouth, throat, etc; refreshment; to suppress menstruation

Where Obtained
Mexican pharmacy, grocery store

Linden Tree (Lime Tree)

Spanish Name: Tilo

Scientific Name: Tilia cordata (Tilia platyphyllos)

Form
Tea, infusion

Constituents
Flavonoid compounds (especially derivatives of quercitin and kaemferol), p-coumaric acid

Therapeutic Effects
Weak diaphoretic, diuretic

Safety/Toxicity
Using old flowers may induce narcotic intoxication.

Adverse Effects
Using this tea too often could lead to heart damage.

Potential Drug Interactions
None known

Comments
This product should not be used by anyone with any cardiac condition. Recommended for nervousness, insomnia, cramps, and indigestion which arises from an inability to relax while eating. Used as an infusion at the onset of cold symptoms.

Perceived Use by Patient
To promote sleep, treat nervousness, for burns and colds

Where Obtained
Mexican pharmacy

Marijuana

Spanish Name: Marijuana

Scientific Name: Cannabis sativa

Form
Inhalant

Constituents
Cannabinone (a resin), tetrahydrocannabinol

Therapeutic Effects
Cerebral sedative, analgesic, antispasmodic, antiemetic in patients receiving cancer chemotherapy

Safety/Toxicity
Unknown

Adverse Effects
Possible change in blood pressure, impotence, increased heart rate

Potential Drug Interactions
Theophylline, tricyclic antidepressants, anticholinergics, ethanol, antipyrine, pentobarbital, disulfiram

Comments
Possession is illegal. Marijuana affects the hepatic metabolism of some drugs. THC enhances the CNS depressant action of ethanol and reduces the metabolism of antipyrine, pentobarbital, and ethanol.

Perceived Use by Patient
Antiemetic, asthma, insomnia, alcoholism

Where Obtained
Individual dealer, home garden

Mormon Tea

Spanish Name: Canntillo

Scientific Name: Ephedra nevadensis

Form
Tea, infusion

Constituents
Tannins, resins, volatile oils

Therapeutic Effects
Very mild diuretic, astringent

Safety/Toxicity
Unknown

Adverse Effects
Mild constipation; frequent use may result in nervousness and restlessness.

Potential Drug Interactions
Alkaloids, salts of heavy metals, albumin, oxidizing substances (permanganates, chlorates)

Comments
No significant therapeutic effect. It should only be used on the advice of a physician, particularly if patient suffers from high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, or thyroid trouble.

Perceived Use by Patient
Colds, gonorrhea, headache, nephritis, syphillis

Where Obtained
Unknown

Olive Oil

Spanish Name: Olivo (aceite de olivo)

Scientific Name: Olea europea

Form
Oil

Constituents
Fatty acids: 2% myristic, 9.5% palmitic, 1.4% stearic, 0.2% arachidic, 81.6% oleic, 7.0% lineoleic

Therapeutic Effects
Internally: laxative, demulcent; externally: lubricant. Vehicle for topical preparations; vehicle for injections

Safety/Toxicity
Unknown

Adverse Effects
None known

Potential Drug Interactions
None known

Comments
Used to soften the skin and crusts in eczema and psoriasis and as a lubricant for massage. Also used to soften car wax.

Perceived Use by Patient
Burns, constipation, fever

Where Obtained
Grocery store

Onion

Spanish Name: Cebolla

Scientific Name: Allium cepa

Form
As food; topically (mashed)

Constituents
Organic sulfur compounds, phenollic acids, flavonoids, sterols, saponins, sugars, vitamins

Therapeutic Effects
Antifungal, antithrombotic, decreases plasma fibrinogen, decreases serum triglycerides, decreases beta lipoproteins, decreases phospholipids

Safety/Toxicity
Unknown

Adverse Effects
Onions stimulate digestion and clean the intestines but they should not be eaten by those with sensitive stomachs.

Potential Drug Interactions
None known

Comments
Onion has considerable potential; however, more studies are needed before the therapeutic value can be determined with certainty.

Perceived Use by Patient
To make hair grow, asthma, burns, emphysema, to soothe coughs, to induce urination

Where Obtained
Grocery store, home garden

Orange (Sweet)

Spanish Name: Naranjo

Scientific Name: Citrus auranium

Form
Tea

Constituents
Oil of the peel: at least 90% d-limonene, 10% citral and citronellal

Therapeutic Effects
Antibacterial, antifungal, antiinflammatory, antihypercholesterolemic, carminative

Safety/Toxicity
Bitter orange oil is reported to have distinct phototoxic activity.

Adverse Effects
Ingestion of large amounts of orange peel by children has been reported to cause intestinal colic, convulsions, and even death.

Potential Drug Interactions
None known

Comments
The essential oil is commonly used as a flavoring agent.

Perceived Use by Patient
For sleep, nerves, shock, dyspepsia, diarrhea, blood in feces, and elevated blood pressure

Where Obtained
Grocery store

Peppermint

Spanish Name: Hierba buena

Scientific Name: Mentha piperita

Form
Tea, infusion

Constituents
56% free menthol, α and β pinene, limonene, cineole, ethyl amylcarbinol, menthone, carvacrol, thymol

Therapeutic Effects
Antiseptic, carminative, spasmolytic, GIT and menstrual cramping, decreases tone of esophageal sphincter to facilitate belching

Safety/Toxicity
This product should be avoided in infants and small children because the menthol may cause a choking sensation.

Adverse Effects
Peppermint oil can be an irritant and may cause allergic reactions. Heartburn has been reported.

Potential Drug Interactions
None known

Comments
A strong infusion of the herb will produce copious perspiration, so it has been used in breaking fevers.

Perceived Use by Patient
Stomach ache, dysmennorhea, colic, baby diarrhea, colic in babies, cramps, backaches, heartburn, sore throat, wash wounds, colds, fever, hysteria

Where Obtained
Mexican pharmacy, home garden, grows wild in some areas

Potato

Spanish Name: Papa

Scientific Name: Solanum tuberosum

Form
Food; topically (mashed)

Constituents
78-80% water, 14-18% starch, 2% protein, 1% minerals, 0.1% fat, sugar, organic acids

Therapeutic Effects
Cardiotonic activity, hypotensive, myotripic, spasmolytic, soothing effect on GI musculature, antimicrobial activity (against gram- and gram+ bacteria)

Safety/Toxicity
The green shoots, leaves, and fruits contain toxic steroidal glycoalkaloids (solanine, emissine, and others). These can lead to dulling of the senses and death.

Adverse Effects
If ingested, solanine can cause symptoms such as headaches, vomiting, diarrhea, fever, apathy, restlessness, confusion, and hallucinations.

Potential Drug Interactions
None known

Comments
None

Perceived Use by Patient
Burns, headache, coughs, spasm, tumors and warts

Where Obtained
Mexican pharmacy, grocery store

Rose

Spanish Name: Rosa de Castillo

Scientific Name: Rosaceae (family)

Form
Tea (from hips)

Constituents
Ascorbic acid, 11% pectin, 3% malic and citric acid

Therapeutic Effects
Laxative, diuretic, antiscurvy

Safety/Toxicity
Unknown

Adverse Effects
Large amounts may cause diarrhea.

Potential Drug Interactions
Warfarin, dicumarol, erythromycin (parenteral), ethinyl estradiol, iron, sulfonamides, basic drugs (amphetamines, tricyclic antidepressants)

Comments
Vitamin C (ascorbic acid) is equally efficacious regardless of whether it is from rose hips or from synthetic sources. Vitamin C from rose hips costs about 25 times as much as from synthetic sources.

Perceived Use by Patient
Gastritis, stomach ache

Where Obtained
Health food store, home garden

Rue

Spanish Name: Ruda

Scientific Name: Ruta graveolaus

Form
Tea

Constituents
Mixture of quinoline alkaloids, coumarin derivatives, volatile oils (including methylmonylketone, ketones, esters, and phenols), bitter principle, glycoside rutin, tannins

Therapeutic Effects
Antispasmodic, antihistaminic, anti-inflammatory, emmenagogues

Safety/Toxicity
Avoid during pregnancy due to abortifacient properties; photosensitization (may cause skin to blister after exposure to sunlight). There is much doubt about the safety and medical value of rue.

Adverse Effects
Kidney irritation and degeneration of the liver have been reported. Large doses may cause violent gastric pain, vomiting, and prostration.

Potential Drug Interactions
Aspirin, warfarin (coumadin)—same as those for warfarin, alkaloids, salts of heavy metals, albumin, oxidizing substances (permanganates, chlorates)

Comments
Rue oil has been reported to have anthelmintic properties.

Perceived Use by Patient
Menstrual cramps, headache, earache, aborting during first and second months, nervousness, hysteria, convulsions, insanity

Where Obtained
Mexican pharmacy

Sage

Spanish Name: Salvia

Scientific Name: Salvia officialis

Form
Tea, infusion

Constituents
α and β thujines (volatile oils), lineole, borneol, 2-methyl-3-methylene-5-heptene, sesquiterpenes

Therapeutic Effects
Antiseptic mouthwash used to treat toothaches, sore throats, inflammations of the mouth and throat. Stimulates blood flow through local irritant effect. Hypoglycemic in diabetes, especially on an empty stomach. Anhidrotic (anti-perspirant), carminative.

Safety/Toxicity
Not recommended for use due to its high thujone content. Can cause convulsions and loss of consciousness.

Adverse Effects
Mothers breast-feeding their babies should not use sage, as it will dry up their milk.

Potential Drug Interactions
Alkaloids, salts of heavy metals, albumin, oxidizing substances (permanganates, chlorates)

Comments
Regarded as a tonic that keeps the stomach, intestines, kidneys, liver, spleen, and sexual organs healthy. Hot tea has been used to help lessen excessively heavy menstrual flow. The infusion is used to wash wounds.

Perceived Use by Patient
Gastric distress, kidneys, nerves, sore throat, worms, bleeding, fever, headache, colds

Where Obtained
Herb store, home garden

Sarsaparilla

Spanish Name: Cocolmeca

Scientific Name: Several of the species Smilax

Form
Tea

Constituents
Saponins derived from sarsapogenin and smilagenin, sitosterol, stigmasterol, pollinastanal

Therapeutic Effects
Astringent, strong diuretic, diaphoretic, expectorant, laxative, tonic

Safety/Toxicity
Unknown

Adverse Effects
None known

Potential Drug Interactions
Sarsaparilla facilitates the absorption by the body of other drugs.

Comments
Commonly used as a flavoring agent. It does not cure syphilis as was once thought. Used to increase flow of urine, as an eyewash, and to promote perspiration.

Perceived Use by Patient
Burns, cramps, dyspepsia, rheumatism, athlete's foot, gonorrhea, indigestion, syphilis, fever

Where Obtained
Herb store

Sassafras

Spanish Name:

Scientific Name: Sassafras albidum

Form
Tea

Constituents
Up to 9% volatile oil (contains 80% safrole), .02% alnaloids, resin, two ligans, starch, sitosterol, tannins

Therapeutic Effects
Sassafras oil has rubefacient properties and was formerly used as a pediculocide.

Safety/Toxicity
Safrole and other constituents have proven carcinogenic and hepatotoxic in rats and mice.

Adverse Effects
None known

Potential Drug Interactions
None known

Comments
Sassafras has a pleasant taste and aroma which may affect its reputation. This product should not be recommended because of its potential carcinogenic effects and its lack of therapeutic efficacy.

Perceived Use by Patient
High blood pressure, bronchitis, burns, colds, dyspepsia, chicken pox, diarrhea, fever, and rheumatism

Where Obtained
Herb store

Tea

Spanish Name: Té negro

Scientific Name: Camellia sinensis

Form
Tea

Constituents
1-4% cafeine, catechin tannins, 15% gallotanic acid

Therapeutic Effects
CNS stimulant

Safety/Toxicity
Caffeine is teratogenic and should be avoided or limited during pregnancy. The condensed tannins are linked to esophageal cancer in areas where large amounts are consumed.

Adverse Effects
Arrythmias, nervousness, insomnia, increased blood glucose, increased cholesterol levels, excess stomach acid, heartburn

Potential Drug Interactions
Theophylline, alkaloids, salts of heavy metals, ablumin, oxidizing substances (permanganates, chlorates)

Comments
Caffeine should be used in moderation. Non-
pregnant adults should limit their consumption to 250 mg per day or less. Range of caffeine content: 20-110 mg per 5-8 oz. brewed; 25-50 mg per 5-8 oz. instant

Perceived Use by Patient
High cholesterol, headache, dysentery, excess phlegm, stomach ache

Where Obtained
Herb store, grocery store, health food store

Witch Hazel

Spanish Name: Unknown

Scientific Name: Hamamelis virginiana

Form
Tea, topical lotion

Constituents
Tannins, gallic acid, hamamelose, saponins, choline, resins, flavonoids

Therapeutic Effects
Tea: very slight constriction of varicose veins
Topically: astringent, used to treat hemorrhoids

Safety/Toxicity
Unknown

Adverse Effects
None known

Potential Drug Interactions
Alkaloids, salts of heavy metals, albumin, oxidizing substances (permanganates, chlorates)

Comments
It is applied externally by rubbing or fomentation to relieve congestions, bruises, hemorrhoids, and other skin irritations.

Perceived Use by Patient
To stop excessive menstruation; hemorrhages from the lungs, stomach, uterus, and bowels; to treat nosebleeds, hemorrhoids, and diarrhea

Where Obtained
Grocery store, pharmacy

Worm Seed

Spanish Name: Epazote

Scientific Name: Chenopodium ambrosioides

Form
Tea

Constituents
Santonin, cineole, thujone, camphene, tenusin

Therapeutic Effects
Anthelminic, diaphoretic, diuretic, fungicide, stomachic

Safety/Toxicity
This oil is quite poisonous, causing fatalities in overdoses preceded by cardiac disturbance, convulsions, respiratory disturbances, sleepiness, vomiting, and weakness.

Adverse Effects
None known

Potential Drug Interactions
None known

Comments
Epazote is used as a carminative, but no scientific studies have proven this effect. It has been discontinued because of toxicity in effective doses.

Perceived Use by Patients
Analgesic, nervine, antispasmodic, to treat asthma

Where Obtained
Unknown

Wormwood

Spanish Name: Estafiate

Scientific Name: Artemesia absinthium

Form
Tea

Constituents
Absinthin, anabsinthin, 0.25-1.32% volatile oils (containing thujone)

Therapeutic Effects
None proven

Safety/Toxicity
Thujone is a toxin and can cause effects similar to THC.

Adverse Effects
Habitual use or large doses cause absinthism, which is characterized by restlessness, vomiting, vertigo, tremors, and convulsions.

Potential Drug Interactions
THC

Comments
Commonly used as a flavoring agent and a fragrance.

Perceived Use by Patient
To sleep

Where Obtained
Unknown

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