



# EAT THE INVADERS

FIGHTING INVASIVE SPECIES, ONE BITE AT A TIME

**Wild First Aid, Medicinals & Food in Your Backyard and Beyond!** *Rebecca Wood 2016 OSU Extension "A Day in The Woods"*

**Likely Candidates in the WILD; What 10 would you choose? My top 10 are in Bold, UpS to watch, at risk list in *italic* and underlined are Use Caution, look-alikes or minimal dosage.**

## *Reclaim Your Herbal Heritage!*

Forest, fields, gardens and waysides are all wonderful places to look for effective and available green first aid allies and healthy edible foods. The medicinal or wild first-aid plants discussed can be used 'green' or prepared into poultices, washes, powders, salves, teas, tinctures, and the edibles can be eaten as fresh greens in salads, cooked as 'potherbs' or roasted and stewed (roots) for lovely tasty coffee drinks or starchy potato substitutes. Get to know and share these Wild or Wayward ones in taking care of yourself, your family and your community. We will look for these plants in their special habitats, but many wander about and I encourage you to wander too! Get to know the time of season to access the most effective part of the plant and look into analogue plants for your region if one of your favorites is on the United Plant Saver or regional 'at risk', 'to watch' or 'endangered list'. Better yet, ID those Invasive ones and see how good medicine, good food and first aid can be a tool in managing these plants out of place! As one bound to wander, I am thrilled to find that many of our common N. American Green Allies are Pan-American and found throughout the Americas, so no matter where you are familiar resources are nearby. However I encourage you to always learn more, ask questions, explore and respect customs, cultures, food and uses of plants anywhere you find yourself.

## **First Aid Plants A to almost Z**

**Agrimony Herb - *Agrimonia eupatoria*** Agrimony (also known as Liverwort) is an "Old English Herbal" valued for its astringent properties. Can't find this one, try it's cousin Cinque-foil or fingers. It is also know to ward off evil spirits and to bring open communication. Both of these herbs have also been used early in the season as a green or pot herb but it takes a lot of picking so I would go with violet and dandelion leaves for food.

**Angelica Root - *Angelica archangelica*** Angelica Root has a penetrating, spicy aroma and a spicy, then bitter flavor. It is often an ingredient in bitters as well as flavoring in a variety of before- and after-dinner beverages.

**Black Walnut Hulls - *Juglans nigra*** Black Walnut Hulls are the powdered outside covering of the nut of the North American black walnut tree. They can be used to produce a brown dye for clothing, rugs and baskets. Now don't forget the tasty meat inside, it's worth the work. Natural Omega 3's, oil for the skin and body. It is also a high protein, rich nutty food. Use it as a powder or tincture for fungus and internally as a Vermifuge.

**Burdock – *Articum spp.*** The name Burdock conjures up the images of matted burs in sweaters, hair and pets. Even the genus *Articum* comes from the work *Arctos* meaning bear. There are several species but the two most common here are *Articum lappa* Great Burdock and *Articum minus* Common Burdock. Burdock is a naturalized plant from Europe. But it originates in the Far East. It is a prized Japanese vegetable and furnishes 2-4 different foods. Known as Gobo, the root is roasted or cooked in stews or fermented into Kim Qi. The very young leaves are mixed as a salad green, but... the leaf stem in early May can be peeled, used as a pot herb or parboiled and battered as a fritter as can the upper stem and unfurling bloom stalk. It is also a first rate medicinal. The root helps strengthen and clear the liver. It is tremendous for skin ailments and the seeds tinctured or cooked help in healing skin issues and in treating cough conditions.

**Calamus Root - *Acorus calamus*** Calamus is a perennial wetland plant found growing in marshes and muddy stream banks throughout most of Europe, Asia, the Middle East and North America. It served as the basis for the original Calamine lotion and is used primarily to ease skin irritations of all kinds. It is also useful in stomach issues and chewing on just a small bit of the root, stomach ailments can dissipate nicely. Look alike cautions.... But smell that lovely aroma

**Chickweed Herb - *Stellaria media*** Chickweed is a low growing annual native to Europe that is common fare for chickens, hence the name. It is often prepared as a soothing ointment or skin cream. The is one of the best cooling, soothing emollient herbs, great eye wash. Try it for irritated skin, heat rash. While an amazing first aid, cosmetic and medicinal plant it is excellent green superfood use it in salads, soup or fritters.

**Cleavers Herb - *Galium aparine*** Cleavers is so named because it has tiny hooked bristles that cleave to other plants, animals and people. Cleavers is a gentle purifying herb that is often used as a tonic. It has been used as an early spring pot herb, once cooked the little hooked spikes dissipate but it not one of my favorites.

**Collinsonia Root - *Collinsonia Canadensis*** *Collinsonia*, also known as Stone Root, is a perennial herb in the mint family with recognizable knotty, rough, very hard roots. The root is often steeped into a soothing, cleansing tea but is first and foremost a bruise herb! Pound it or tincture it.

**Coltsfoot Leaf - *Tussilago farfara*** Coltsfoot, also known as coughwort, is a perennial herbaceous plant native to Europe and Asia, though common throughout North and South America, where it was introduced by early settlers as a medicinal plant. Use in small amounts or for short periods as it has some contra indications.

**Elder Flowers** - *Sambucus nigra* Elder flowers come from the same plant as elder berries and, like the all deep blue and red berries, contain bioflavonoids. These berries are also an amazing anti-viral and tasty but best mixed with other berries in my opinion. If not eaten in pies I like to tincture the berries or make syrup for cold and flu season. Elder flowers are used in teas, skin care salves, lotions and washes, cosmetics, and to make a soothing gargle.

**Elderberries** - *Sambucus nigra or canadensis* Elderberries are dark purple fruits with a sweet-tart, fruity flavor. They make tasty, warming winter cordials, teas, syrups and wines. Elderberries contain bioflavonoids and vitamin C.

**Goldenrod** - *Solidago spp.* Take as a tea for colds, flu, and stomach. lung ailments. It is also useful in UT infections. It is a lovely beverage tea and has calming effects.

**Goldenseal** - *Hydrastis Canadensis* Goldenseal is a perennial North American native plant known for its ability to "enhance seasonal resistance."\* Due to its popularity and the loss of habitat, goldenseal is listed in various states as threatened or endangered. We sell only certified organic cultivated goldenseal.

**Lobelia** – *Lobelia inflata* is a weed found in open and forested areas has been used as an emetic herb but I like it as a superior anti-spasmodic. Make a tea or tincture for internal or external use. But use caution, this is a strong herb and a drop or two may be all you need.

**Mullein Leaf** - *Verbascum Thapsus* The large, velvety leaves of the mullein plant make a soothing herbal tea that is specific to the lungs. As an ingredient in salves and poultices, they have the same soothing effect on the skin. Mullein Flower – the happy yellow flowers are also a favorite to pick, lightly dry and infuse into an oil that is then used as a base for salves or ear oil. This tiny little flower has a powerful pain killing or anodyne quality.

**Nettle** - *Urtica dioica* Stinging nettle is a perennial herb originating in Eurasia, but now naturalized over much of the world. Its many documented uses, from as far back as the Bronze Age, led to its seed being carried to numerous regions by settlers, where the plant soon escaped cultivation. The whole stinging nettle plant is valuable; leaves seeds and roots. Its' uses include food, traditional remedies, a fiber source, a dye plant and a rejuvenating spring tonic. As a skinwash it can relieve the sting of nettle or hive like reaction to make irritants.

**Peppermint Leaf** - *Mentha x piperita* Peppermint is a hybrid of watermint and spearmint. Indigenous to Europe, it is now widely cultivated throughout the world. Sometimes referred to as "the world's oldest medicine" it has been used for centuries to settle tummy upset and freshen breath or cool the body temperature on a hot summer day. Use it as a tea, salad green, pesto, hydrosol or essential oil. Most of the mints have a cooling, stimulating and carminative effect. See what it does for you! Beware though, some mints like Dittany and bergamot have a hotter, spicier taste and in preparation you only need to pour boiling water over it or steep just a few minutes.

**Pine (Spruce or Hemlock)- *Pinus, Abies, Tusuga* Ahhh, what a way to relax those achy muscles or ward off a pesky cold or sinus. Sip a cup of nourishing, high Vit. C tea or boil and inhale the steam.**

**Psyllium - *Plantago ovata, lanceolata or major*** Psyllium, also known as blonde psyllium, white man's foot, ribwort and poor man's fiddle head. It is a low growing herb native to Iran, Pakistan and India. It is the main ingredient in the commercial dietary supplements "Metamucil" and "Citrucel". Don't forget to drink plenty of water. The leaves of plantain are used as a salad or cooked green (only sooo tasty). It loaded with vitamins especially iron. Best eaten very young or the shoots can be pan roasted in olive oil until brown, then pull shoot through your teeth as the inner stem is too fibrous but the nutty taste of the stem, young seeds is quite nice. Medicinally it is a first class vulnerary herb in salves, poultices and emergency first aid. The juice can be used internally to help heal gastric issues. It has cooling, antiseptic, anti-microbial actions. It also has allantoin, a cell proliferate in it.

**Raspberry, Red Leaf - *Rubus idaeus Local Rubus spp.* Also work well** Red raspberry leaf is used to make a tasty tea and is often combined with other tea herbs to give the beverages a more robust flavor. Raspberry contains tannins that give it an astringent flavor and make it a wonderful toning herb. Don't negate it's cousin often growing right alongside of it, if you have need for a serious internal astringent, particularly diarrhea, or a soothing external astringent for weeping sores. The berries of all Rubus are nutritious, filled with anthocyanins and proanthocyanins, flavonoids that boost the immune response, inhibit inflammation and act as antioxidants. Eat them fresh, freeze them, make leather or healthy cordials and fermented drinks.

**Selfheal – *Prunella vulgaris L.* This wayside mint dances around gardens, forests and edges. It is considered a panacea herb and I believe it is very underused. According to Susan Weed it is a high Ca herb, and good in vinegars or salads. Look how deep green it is! I use it in place of or with Plantain as an astringent first aid poultice for bee stings, bites and splinters. It is second to none! It is also used as a gargle for sore throats and thrush or as a wash for sore eyes.**

**Sheep Sorrel Herb - *Rumex acetosella*** Sheep sorrel, which grows wild, is much smaller than either French or garden sorrel, and is often tinged a deep red hue. Also called sour-grass, because of its sharp taste. It is a cooling herb and one of its main uses is in the herbal tea and as one of the constituents in the anti-cancer formula Essiac. Externally it is used as a poultice herb or plaster to reduce swelling and pain.

**Shepherd's Purse Herb - *Capsella bursa-pastoris*** Shepherd's purse gets its name from the shape of the herb's fruit, which resembles purses Europeans once hung from their belts. Shepherd's purse can be found almost anywhere in the world. It has a long history as a styptic and powerful astringent, useful internally and externally.

**Slippery Elm Bark - *Ulmus rubra*** Slippery Elm is a small tree native to North America. The bark is harvested from the tree in the early spring and the outer bark is scraped off, leaving the mucilage-rich inner bark. The soothing mucilage is used in ointments, poultices, throat lozenges and skin care products. If you haven't tried elm seeds you don't know what you are missing!

Sweet, mucilaginous, nutritious. American or Red Elm seeds (winged like samaras) are an early spring treat. The inner bark can be dried, pounded into a powder and used as gruel, more nutritious than oatmeal, just ask George Washington, he reportedly feed a platoon of his soldiers on this when caught in a winter storm.

**Wild Yam Root - *Dioscorea villosa*** Wild yam, also known as rheumatism root, colic root and yuma, is a low creeping perennial that grows wild in the eastern half of North America. It is not related to sweet potatoes or yams.

**Willow Bark - *Salix species*** Several species of willow are used to produce willow bark herb, *Salix alba*, *S. Fragilis*, *S. daphnoides* and *S. purpurea*. All contain adequate levels of the important constituent, salicin, to allow their use as the herb. Salicin was isolated and synthesized into acetylsalicylic acid in the 1850's and eventually marketed as aspirin in the late 1890's by Frederick Bayer & Co. Other plants to assist as an analgesic are meadow sweet, (Queen of the Prairie), or many other cousins in the Salicacea Family, what's in your neck of the woods?

**Witch-hazel Bark - *Hamamelis virginiana*** This smooth grey bark comes from a shrub with several crooked branching trunks from one root, 4 to 6 inches in diameter, 10 to 12 feet in height. Extracts from its bark and leaves are used in aftershave lotions and skin lotions.

**Yarrow Flowers - *Achillea millefolium*** Yarrow flowers (*Achillea millefolium*) bloom from June to September. There are many lovely garden varieties in hues of pink, purple and cream, but the flowers of the traditional herb are white. A strongly astringent, anti-microbial and anti-inflammatory herb, it's also called milfoil, soldier's woundwort, nosebleed, and thousand leaf. It also has diaphoretic properties when used as a hot tea and is found in many Appalachian cold and flu remedies.

**Yellowdock Root - *Rumex crispus*** Yellowdock is a Eurasian herb, brought to the United States as an important medicinal plant by early colonists. It now grows wild over most of the country. Yellowdock is known for its gentle cleansing and tonic properties and used to enhance iron uptake in the body. It is also a common vulnerary herb and the root is used in healing salves and a fomentation from the leaves is very helpful with PI or itchy skin. Also good in a roasted root stew or veggie dish. Best mixed with other starchy roots to mellow its' taste. This root can help in fat metabolism and in the uptake of iron just like the tincture might.

**Yucca Root - *Yucca species*** Yucca, also known as soap root contains saponins which have a foaming, cleansing action in the presence of water. Yucca was used by Native Americans in the desert southwest in shampoos, soaps and laundry detergent. Yucca has also been used as a natural foaming agent in root beer and other beverages. Look locally along waysides and roads for Bouncing Bet or Soap wart for another 'saponins' filled herb to help you cleanse any wounds or just to stay clean on long journeys in the field.

*\* Disclaimer: These statements have not been evaluated by the FDA. These suggestions are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.*

Where does it ever end...Just from the garden or *Things* not to forget in your herbal first aid kit, could also be topics to cover. Rosemary, sage, oregano, thyme and each and all of their respective EO's but alas, it time for you to do your research and let me know your favorite.

**Categories to Consider For First Aid:**

Burns	Cuts and scrapes	Bug bites
Contact rashes	Upset stomach	Diarrhea
Muscle aches	Bleeding and Bruises	Poison Ivy and Poison Oak
Sore throat, colds, upper respiratory problems		(So far, no snake bites)
Stress and FEAR		

1. Antimicrobial healing salve. A comfrey based salve, including herbs such as plantain, St. John's wort, *calendula* and *echinacea*, will soothe, accelerate healing, and disinfect. Essential oils such as lavender and rosemary strengthen the effects. Use for any breaks in the skin and for burns. (Do not use initially on puncture wounds, use an antiseptic such as *echinacea* tincture instead)
2. Insect repellent. Essential oils (*lavender, citronella, eucalyptus, cedarwood, lemon grass, pennyroyal*) suspended in a base of water and alcohol, are pleasant smelling to humans and noxious to bugs. The combinations work better than the single oils. Make your own or use the all-natural commercial preparations. Note that eating sugar and sweets increases your attractiveness to many insects! (Caution: Although pennyroyal essential oil is widely used for insect repellents, I recommend against this use. It can be toxic even in moderate doses and is specifically contraindicated for so many people - especially pregnant women. It is powerful and can effect people and pets in the vicinity of the user.)
3. Muscle aches and pains liniment for external use: *Arnica, witch hazel* and *St. John's Wort* tinctures in combination and essential oils of camphor, eucalyptus, rosemary and clove bud are all excellent. Note that some people are sensitive to *arnica*: STOP if adverse symptoms result. Do not use *arnica* on broken skin.
4. Poison Ivy and Poison Oak liniment for external use. *Jewelweed* (*impatiens*) specifically neutralizes the *Rhus* toxin and works well. Use fresh or tinctured, but *jewelweed* can be hard to find. Other remedies include *grindelia*, combined with *echinacea, calendula* and *white oak bark*.
5. *Echinacea* tincture. Don't leave home without it. Internal and external antibiotic, provides temporary boost to the immune system. Good in case a cold threatens. Antidotes poison.
6. *Ginger* capsules. Great remedy for tummy upsets, including motion sickness, morning sickness and gas. Helpful for menstrual cramps. Alternatives: *fennel* and *peppermint*.
7. *Bentonite clay* or *charcoal tablets*, for diarrhea. These are to assist with detoxification, in case of poisoning. (Of charcoal, take 4 every hour, of bentonite clay, take 1 teaspoon in water, 3-4 times per day). Drink a lot of water. Helpful herbs include *blackberry root or leaf* (root is preferred for its greater astringency: simmer root for 20-40 minutes or steep leaf for tea for 10-30 minutes). Similarly, use wild strawberry root or leaf. *Raspberry leaf*

- provides a very mild remedy for diarrhea. Slippery elm tea also provides a fine remedy (but is still an endangered plant!). *Blackberry* and strawberry root and leaf also will reduce internal hemorrhaging. Cooked white rice works wonders at reducing diarrhea.
8. *Meadowsweet* tincture or aspirin. Fast acting, anti-inflammatory, pain-killers. *Willow bark* tea works well.
  9. *Thyme essential oil*. A "must bring" for camping. Two drops in 4 ounces of water for mouthwash for toothache or sore throat. Same recipe used externally for crabs, lice, and all external parasites. Two drops placed in recently boiled water, inhale the steam for cold, flu, or bronchitis.
  10. *Rescue Remedy or Five Flower Formula*. Outstanding emotional support for all trauma. Very safe. Don't leave home without it.
  11. *Cayenne* capsules. Proven styptic. Open and apply externally to stop bleeding. (Yes, it does burn, but it works). It will also warm cold feet, sprinkled inside your boots. Alternative styptics: *comfrey and yarrow*. *Comfrey* is perhaps the finest internal anti-hemorrhage we have and is great externally as well, but it recently has come under FDA criticism (read some good herbal texts and decide for yourself. Me, I think it's a great herb).
  12. Bug bite and itch relief. *Witch hazel, plantain, grindelia, comfrey and St. John's Wort* all provide relief from insect bites and general itching. Tinctured combinations of these seem to work best and are applied directly to the skin. Juice from the plantain is mildly effective and it grows throughout this region (just crumple the leaves and rub onto the skin). *Lavender essential oil* may be applied directly to the skin and works well. It enhances any tincture combination.
  13. Relief from bruises. I think of these as wounds where the skin is unbroken, often accompanied by discoloration. Useful herbs, typically applied topically in tincture form, include *Tienchi ginseng, hyssop, myrrh gum, prickly ash bark, cayenne, calendula, comfrey and arnica*. Make your own, use the all-natural commercial preparations, or obtain a "dit dat jao" from a Chinese herbalist. *Helichrysum italicum* essential oil, applied neat, works very well and is non-irritating. Application of the tincture combination, jao, or essential oil immediately following the bruise may prevent the bruise from forming. Do not use these remedies on the eyes or mucous membranes and wash thoroughly after use.
  14. The hardware: Band Aids, Bandages, 1/2 inch surgical tape, small scissors, single edged razor blade, tweezers, cold pack (cools on impact), ace bandage, bandana. Eye cup (or shot glass). Carry case (soft sided, waterproof) for the kit.

So go ahead, assemble a kit for yourself, your friends, or your family. They make great gifts. Remember, these are suggestions only and are based upon the assumption that any first aid kit will have space and weight limitations. There are other choices for all of the categories given. If you are sensitive to any of the suggested remedies, don't use them. Read, listen to your body, use common sense and seek assistance when necessary.

The above list is from Susan Kraner, she is a graduate of the Living With Herbs Institute in Atlanta and is continuing her herbal studies with Michael and Leslie Tierra in California. She holds a Ph.D from Duke University and is a retired lawyer. She is the President of EarthWays Herbal Products, which manufactures a premium line of topical herbal and essential oil blends. Contact information at 404-248-1684 or at healall@aol.comcate yourself.



Chickweed



Dandelion



Mallow



Stinging Nettle



Purslane



Wood Sorrel



Lamb's Quarter



Epazote



Amaranth



Violet

# EDIBLE WEEDS



**More References:**

**Herbs for First Aid:  
Trauma & Wound Care**

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