



COLLEGE OF
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Herbal Medicine Approach to Integumentary (Skin) Dysfunction

(Part V in a series on Herbal Medicine) - (Adapted from The College of Integrative Medicine Module 30 – Clinical Botanical Medicine)

Dr. Wayne Sodano DC, DABCI, DACBN, CFMP, CICP, BCTN



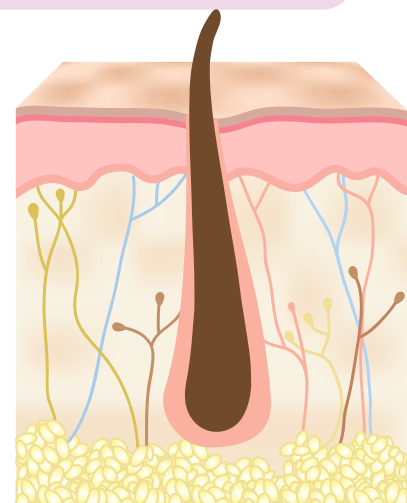
Herbal medicine for conditions of the skin is generally categorized in the following areas: astringents (usually tannin containing), which contract mucous membranes and exposed skin; depurative (aka, alternative or blood purifiers), which improve the elimination of toxins and metabolic waste; emollients, which soothes the skin surface; and vulneraries, which promote healing of wounds.

✔ **Astringents** (topically in a cream or salve): minor skin abrasions, lacerations, and wounds

- Achillea millefolium (yarrow)
- Cnicus benedictus (blessed thistle)
- Commiphora molmol (myrrh)
- Filipendula ulmaria (meadowsweet)
- Hamamelis virginiana (witch hazel)
- Hydrastis Canadensis (goldenseal)

✔ **Emollients** (topically as a cream): minor burns, scalds and abrasions

- Althaea officinalis (marshmallow)
- Stellaria media (chickweed)



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Depuratives



Rumex crispus
(Yellow dock)



Berberis aquifolium
(Oregon grape)



Smilax spp.
(Sarsaparilla)



Indications

Systemic chronic skin conditions
(e.g. eczema, psoriasis).



Contraindications

Specific to herb



Application

Best taken before or with meals;
medium to long-term.

Primary Herbal Medicine(s)

- o Arctium lappa (burdock)
- o Berberis aquifolium (Oregon grape)
- o Hemidesmus (hemidesmus)
- o Iris versicolor (blue flag)
- o Rumex crispus (yellow dock)
- o Schisandra chinensis (schisandra)
- o Silybum marianum (St. Mary's thistle)
- o Smilax spp. (sarsaparilla)
- o Tarazacum officinalis radix (dandelion root)

Adult Dosage Consideration

- o Blue flag > 20 to 40 mL/week (1:2 liquid)
- o Burdock > . 10 to 25 mL/week (1:2 liquid) or 0.9 to 1.2 g/day (tablet)
- o Dandelion root > 20 to 40 mL/week (1:2 liquid) or 1.5 to 2.0 g/day (tablet)
- o Sarsaparilla > 20 to 40 mL/week (1:2 liquid) or 1.2 to 2.4 g/day (tablet)
- o Schisandra > 25 to 60 mL/week (1:2 liquid) or 3.0 to 5.0 g/day (tablet)
- o St Mary's thistle > 30 to 60 ml/week (1:1 liquid) or 30 to 60 g/day (tablet containing 280 to 560 mg flavanolignans)
- o Yellow dock > 15 to 30 mL/week (1:2 liquid) or 0.8 to 2.0 g/day (tablet)

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Vulneraries (Topical)



Indications

Minor burns, scalds and abrasions, inflammatory skin conditions, dry skin



Contraindications

Specific to herb



Application

Use on unbroken skin; short to medium term



Topical vulneraries

- o Calendula officinalis (calendula)
- o Commiphora molmol (myrrh)
- o Echinacea spp. (Echinacea)
- o Hydrastis Canadensis (goldenseal)
- o Hypericum perforatum (St John's wort)
- o Ulmus fulva (slippery elm)
- o Urtica dioica folia (nettle leaf)
- o Melissa officinalis (lemon balm)
- o Propolis, Symphytum spp. (comfrey)
- o Thymus vulgaris (thyme)
- o Ulmus fulva (slippery elm)
- o Urtica dioica folia (nettle leaf)

References

1. Mills S, Bone K. *Principles and Practice of Phytotherapy; Modern Herbal Medicine*. Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone
2. Heinrich M, Barnes J, Gibbons S, Williamson EM. *Fundamentals of Pharmacognosy and Phytotherapy*. 2nd Ed. Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone
3. Bone K. *The Ultimate Herbal Compendium: A Desktop Guide for Herbal Prescribers*. 1st Ed. Queensland: Creed & Lang; 2007.



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