

Greenwood Herbals

February 2008

I am procrastinating. I did not want to write the newsletter this month. My topic is on Raspberry leaf. I've been to angry to look at it with an open mind. I am once again taking up the defense of a plant that has been used for thousands of years by our ancestors with great results. Suddenly people are talking about a study that was done and the plant gets a bad name.



What the media tends to do, as well as the medical community is take a sentence or two out of the study and focus on that one thing. I admit these studies can be quite lengthy and it requires time to sift through all the findings. Does anyone other than a few who really care read these studies? Or maybe they don't understand how herbs work? I am beginning to think it may be the latter because if you read the study you will see that Raspberry Leaf was used improperly.

The issue seems to be that conventional medicine believes that raspberry leaf can actually cause miscarriage or premature labor based on a 1970 study that was done where an injection of raspberry leaf extract caused contractions between 10 to 16 weeks of pregnancy. Taking raspberry extract is not a proper use of raspberry leaf. What were they thinking? And they injected it! I used Raspberry leaf through both of my pregnancies, and so did my daughter, who's third pregnancy turned out to be "at-risk" due to carrying twins. Raspberry Leaf as a tea is known to sustain and tone the tissues of the womb, support contractions and check hemorrhage during labor. It is also very rich in iron, calcium and other minerals and vitamins. There are no contraindications. So I guess even though there is no supported documentation, some herbalists and midwives will use caution due to this study and not use it in early pregnancy or in the case of a history of miscarriage. Again this has not been proven to be true or untrue. And the only case of miscarriage ever reported was due to the above mentioned use of an extract. Also, some may be confused by the tonic actions of this plant which do seem to contrast each other, unless you understand how a tonic works. I have tried to explain that below under Medicinal Uses.

Raspberry Leaf— *Rubus idaeus*

This plant is not frost tender and is hardy to zone 3. It is in leaf from April to November, in flower from June to August and the seeds ripen from July to September. It can be found in most waste neglected places. It prefers a good deep well-drained loamy soil. With a pH balance of 6 and 6.5. Tolerates shade, but does well in sunny locations. The leaves are harvested in the summer and dried for later use.



Edible Uses: The fruit can be eaten straight from the plant or used pies and preserves. A tea made for the dried leaves and combined with blackberry leave, supposedly makes a good coffee substitute. Even the roots and young shoots can be peeled and cooked like asparagus.

Medicinal Uses: The leaves and roots are anti-inflammatory, astringent, decongestant and a stimulant. Raspberry is very effective in the treatment of diarrhea, we combine it with Blackberry Leaf, and Meadowsweet to relieve diarrhea caused by too much acid in the stomach. It is an excellent refrigerant and can be taken to lower a fever. It has shown a beneficial effect on the heart when made into a syrup. It is also considered a tonic for the uterus by strengthen the uterus of pregnant women and is also used as a stimulant to aid in childbirth. Here we have it—it sounds like a contradiction, but you must remember that plants considered tonic restore balance to the body system that is under stress. Tonics differ from most medicinal substances in being bi-directional in action.

They correct illness-promoting imbalances, independent of the particular nature of the cause. So though they may have opposing actions in a particular body system, these actions are only brought into play when and where they are needed, actually responding to the changing state of the organism. In this case the uterus.

Other Uses: A purple to dull blue dye is obtained from the fruit. Paper can be made from a fiber obtained from the stems.

Featured Product:

We are really excited to announce the addition of **Unique Spiritual Jewelry by David Weitzman**. It has been added to our on-line store at www.greenwoodherbals.com/Genesa%20Crystal%20Pic.html This jewelry is beautiful and the craftsmanship is exquisite. I am happy to be an owner of the Genesa Crystal pendant.

Dot's Country Soaps—Dot has added beautiful valentine soaps to her inventory of glycerin and non-acid soaps. All come in beautiful decorative designs for valentines day. Made with shea butter, goats milk and aloe-olive oil. These are available in the store in Limerick.

Featured Links:

Tom Weber Photography of Bend Oregon, you can view Tom portfolio by visiting www.tomweberphoto.com

April O'keefe, herbalist and owner of **AOK Herbals** in Kittery, Maine who is a very dear friend has launched her web site. Visit her web-site at www.aokherbals.com

<p>Better than Margarine</p> <p>INGREDIENTS:</p> <p>1 1/4 cups organic coconut 3/4 cup cold pressed extra virgin Olive Oil 2 T liquid lecithin 3 T flax oil 1 cup water 1 tsp sea salt (or substitute garlic powder or herb seasoning)</p> <p>DIRECTIONS:</p> <p>Blend all oils together for 2-3 minutes in a blender Mix salt and water. Drizzle in slowly while blender is running. Continue blending until will mixed and thickened.</p> <p>The margarine will thicken more when it is refrigerated. This gives you some healthy oils that are not refined or hydrogenated. It is high in oils, so remember your 2 T a day oil limit.</p> <p><i>This was taken from the "Lose to Gain" workshop conducted by Jane Kuntz, nutritionist/health educator/herbalist, on January 13, 2008</i></p>	<p>Announcements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">We are now accepting applications for the 2008 apprenticeship program. See our web-site www.greenwoodherbals.com for more details and the application form. <p>Classes and Workshops:</p> <p>February 11, 6:00 pm to 8.30 pm, - Exploration of Medicinal Herbs—I will be presenting at Old Orchard beach Adult Learning. Explore which herbs these are and how they can be used medicinally for mild illness and alternative treatments. Using them internally and externally may improve health and well-being. Learn about alternative plants to use in place of Maine's vulnerable native plants.</p> <p>Call OOB Adult Ed to reserve your place—207-934-7922</p> <p>March 5, 6:30—8:30 pm— Exploration of Medicinal Herbs—I will be presenting at Massabesic Center for Adult Learning— Explore which herbs these are and how they can be used medicinally for mild illness and alternative treatments. Using them internally and externally may improve health and well-being. Learn about alternative plants to use in place of Maine's vulnerable native plants.</p> <p>Call Massabesic Center for Adult Learning to reserve your place—207-247-2022</p>
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