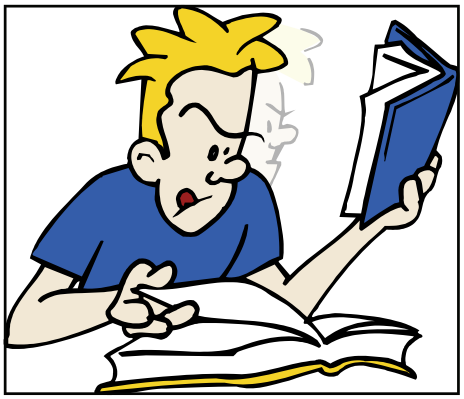
Lesson Two



Herbology:

The Action of Herbs …

Practical Herbology

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Practical Herbology

What ARE herbs? This is a question you'll be called upon to answer many times in your life as an Herbalist. How do herbs work? This is another question you'll be asked. How do you know which herb to use when? This is probably a question you've asked yourself many times! Lesson two will give you a lot of these answers.

Herbs are food. I call them "Interesting Vegetables" but whatever you call them, they are food, nutrients. Herbs—like the food carrots—are full of good things: Vitamins, Minerals, Enzymes, Co-enzymes, all kinds of good things that our bodies need to function. We use what are referred to as "Medicinal Herbs" in small amounts for limited amounts of time.

The science and art of using plants for healing is known as HERBOLOGY. There have been many herbalist that have devised their own "systems" of herbology. Samuel Thompson focused on aiding the eliminative function of the body and re-generation of tissue. Most of us know this as CLEANSING and TONING.

Dr. Edward Shook felt that the basic cause of disease was this:

"...that disease, excluding trauma, is the result of violation, intentional or other-wise, of the laws of nature…"

People like to think of herbs as natural medicines and they are right. The medical definition of medicine is this:

"<u>Medicine is anything which enters the body and alters its structure or function.</u>"

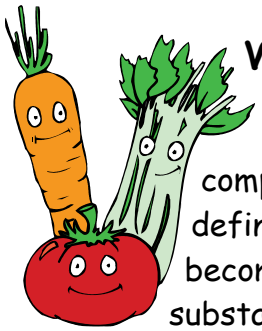
According to that definition, even WATER could be considered medicine! All nat-ural food have things in them which affect the structure or function of the body, but they have very tiny amounts of these active ingredients. But, all natural food have SOME medicinal action. The so-called foods that don't have nay of these in-gredients are foods like white flour and sugar.

Even spices get into the act. Spices have always been used—and still are—to balance the food medicinally and to help prevent illness.

Herbalists are not the only ones that value herbs. Probably about one of every four prescriptions used in the United States was derived from an herbs and counting over-the-counter medications, about 50% of our drugs were derived from our contained an herb! While "medicine" has one legal definition, the legal definition of a drug has to do with what you say about it. An herb does not legally become a "drug" unless it is sold for curing, prevention or the treatment of disease.

Nutrition is getting into more conventional areas of medicine. There is a whole new branch of medicine known as orthomolecular medicine, this branch treats diseases with the use of nutrients.

What Are Herbs?©



WHAT HERBS ARE . . .

There's no easy answer to the question. In fact, it becomes very complicated the more you look into it. The American College Dictionary defines herbs as "A flowering plant whose stem, above the ground, does not become woody." Spices are defined as "Any of a class of pungent or aromatic substances of vegetable origin as pepper, cinnamon, cloves and such that are used as seasoning, preservatives, etc."

Officially, the United States government classifies herbs as food.

Most people think of herbs as something that are used to season food and that's true, or something that their grandmothers brewed up to stop a cough or headache, also true. However, the word botanical may be a better term to describe what we're talking about in this course. The word botanical, by definition, simply means "pertaining to plants." As this course goes you'll hear about many different natural substances including water, roots, and oils.

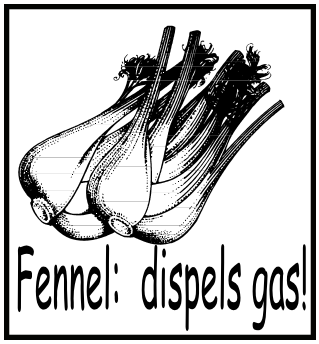
Since we are all familiar with the term "herbs," we'll continue to use that term, but keep in mind that we're referring to all kinds of natural substances, most coming from plant life such as leaves, roots, berries, flowers, stems, bark, and fungus.

HERBS ARE NOT . . .

Sometimes it's easier to describe things in terms of what they are NOT. Herbs are NOT drugs. Although many drugs have been made from herbs, the herbs themselves are not drugs. The legal description of a drug is a very complicated collection of legal specifications too long and messy to go into here.

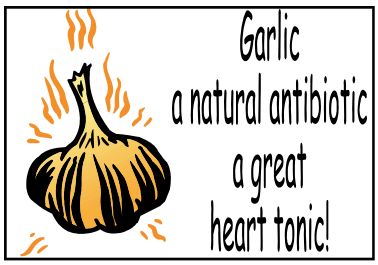
Herbs are NOT vitamins. Vitamins are considered micronutrients because the body needs them in relatively small amounts. They contribute to good health by regulating the metabolism and assisting the biochemical processes that release energy from digested food. Herbs have many vitamins IN them, but they are not vitamins.

The Action of Herbs



Herbs are not magic. I know they sometimes work like magic, but herbs work on our bodies because they have definite actions. If we're going to use herbs to help our bodies regain balance, then we need to be aware of the specific action that each herb is capable of having on the body. There are three basic things we need to know about the herbs we are using:

1. Where in the body this action will take place.
2. What kind of action the herb will cause.
3. How strong or weak is that action.



All foods, and herbs ARE food, affect the structure and the function of our bodies. An ancient physician, Avicenna, categorized foods according to their ability to speed up or slow down the metabolic process.

Avicenna used terms like "Heating" and "Cooling" to describe actions. A HOT food would stimulate or speed up the metabolic process while a COOL food would slow down the metabolic process. He then divided the heating and cooling abilities of the food into degrees, giving some unit of measure as to HOW hot or HOW cool a particular food was. These degrees are:

FIRST DEGREE – These herbs have no discernable effect on the body and are totally overwhelmed by the natural forces of the body.

SECOND DEGREE – These herbs have some effect on the body, but are eventually overwhelmed by the natural forces of the body.

THIRD DEGREE – These herbs overwhelms the natural forces of the body.

FOURTH DEGREE – These herbs are poisons and may alter the metabolism so far as to cause death.

SAY WHAT?

No·men·cla·ture: the system of names used in a science, etc. This is according to **Webster's New World Dictionary**. Its an easy—and fancy—way of saying that every business has it's own language. There's "Medical talk" and "Computer talk" and so on. It can be very confusing. Just like somebody trying to communicate with you in some foreign language!

Have you ever been desperately searching through an herb book trying to find something that will help what-ever-it-is you've got? Only to read that this herb is a wonderful "Diaphoretic?" That's great, and you may need it, if you could only figure out what Diaphoretic IS!

Don't feel alone. I've sometimes wondered if these books are really written in English or if they've been "coded" into some alien tongue that's been contrived to drive me (personally) crazy!

Some of these publications have glossaries but most don't. Actually learning and using these terms does save a lot of space and time.

For instance:

DIAPHORETIC: an herb which produces sweating.

This one word , diaphoretic, takes the place of 5 words. There are other words that can take the place of 15 to 20 or more words! Plus, they make you sound so smart! Do keep in mind however, that your customers don't know this particular "nomenclature" and won't understand a word you've said. So save the "technical talk" for "technical folks." Here's a list of the most commonly used terms.

ANALGESICS: Herbs that relieve pain.

ANTIEMETIC: Prevents or alleviates nausea and vomiting.

ANTISPASMODICS: Herbs used for the relief of nervous irritability and minor spasms.

APHRODISIACS: Substances used to increase sexual power or excitement.

AROMATICS: Herbs characterized by a fragrant or spicy taste and odor, and stimulant to the gastrointestinal mucous membrane.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT WHEN I TAKE HERBS?

The first thing you can expect is that you will most likely feel worse. I know that's not what you expected to hear from someone selling "Health Products," but that's the truth. To understand what will happen as you bring health and strength to your body, you must understand how your body works. The vast majority of us understand how our automobile works and how to take care of it much, much better than we understand how this body we live in works.

First of all, let me assure you that without a doubt, the leg bone IS connected to the hip bone! In other words, there is nothing—not one single thing that you can do to or for your body that doesn't effect EVERY-THING else in your body. If you do something GOOD for your body, it helps the entire body, conversely if you do something bad to your body, it hurts the entire body.

The next thing that I would like you to understand is that our bodies are "**PRO-health.**" They are created to strive toward health rather than sickness. It's the natural bent to be healthy and given just a little help, your body will do everything within it's power to achieve health. THIS is why when you get on a nutritional health program you might feel worse before you get better. Hang in here with me, I

promise that it will make sense to you when you understand what is actually happening in your body as it gets well.

SYMPTOMS

What IS a symptom? This may surprise you, but a symptom is a natural function of the body. What we call symptoms are usually the body's attempts to heal itself. Sound crazy?

Not at all, have a look at this:
when some foreign thing invades the respiratory system, the body creates lots of mucous to flow it out and get rid of it. If the respiratory system is invaded by a bacteria or germ, the body knows that this "life-form" MUST have a certain temperature