

~ Ask Granny Earth ~

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Hyssop

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I have a beautiful Hyssop plant in my herb garden, but am not sure how to use it medicinally. What is Hyssop good for?

Hyssop (*Hyssopus officinalis*): Hyssop's name comes from the Greek word hussopos and the Hebrew word esob, both meaning "holy herb". The word "officinalis" requires a little more explanation, so here goes: Carolus Linnaeus was a Swedish physician who lived in the 1700's. His passion was botany, the study of plants. He developed certain rules for defining plant species and the system of plant classification upon which modern methods are still based. He included in his classifications the plants found in ancient Roman pharmacopoeias (early medicinal plant encyclopedias) and to those plants Linnaeus gave the name 'officinalis'. Of course Hyssop was one of these plants. Interesting: information in these pharma-copoeias was still being widely used by doctors until as recently as World War 11.

Reference to this wonderfully healing herb is also made in Psalms 51:7 in the Old Testament of the Bible, "Purge me with Hyssop and I shall be clean." Other Biblical references to Hyssop are: Exodus 12:21-22, Kings 4:29-33 and

John 19:28-30 (It has been said that Hyssop tea was the last thing that Jesus tasted before he died).

Hyssop likes full sun and needs no special care. It is perennial and so you'll see it starting to grow very early in the spring, sending up its little spikes while there's still snow on the ground. It starts blooming in early summer and continues until fall with purple/blue spiked flowers. Hyssop has the growth habit of a small semi-evergreen shrub, forming an attractive, well-rounded 2 - 3 foot high mound. It will make an attractive addition to any herb garden, attracting butterflies and deterring the cabbage moth.

Modern research has demonstrated that Hyssop does contain certain phytochemicals that support its Biblical use for cleansing and purifying. It contains thymol and carvacrol, which have antiseptic, antibacterial and antifungal properties. Thymol is also known to be a good antioxidant.

Hyssop is both a stimulant and a tonic. It increases secretions and removes any obstruction in the body. It has been used successfully to treat influenza, colds and bronchitis. Its anti-viral properties are especially good for treating the herpes simplex virus. Along with being useful to treat stomach disorders, Hyssop is also good for killing intestinal parasites.

And, as if that isn't enough, it has a long history of being used as a "cleansing herb": strengthening the immune system and building resistance to infectious diseases while at the same time regulating cardiovascular activity by increasing circulation and stabilizing blood pressure.

Hyssop is an excellent all around **Tonic**, which means that it restores, nourishes and supports the entire body with gentle strengthening effects. It is also:

Anti-inflammatory: counteracts and diminishes inflammation and its effects.

Anti-spasmodic: prevents and relieves spasms.

Anti-viral: opposes the action of viruses.

Carminative: relieves intestinal gas pain and distension while promoting peristalsis.

Diaphoretic: increases perspiration and elimination through the skin.

Cathartic: a laxative.

Expectorant: encourages the loosening of phlegm from the respiratory tract.

Hepatic: supports and stimulates the liver, gall bladder and spleen.

Nervine: strengthens functional activity of nervous system.

Parasiticide: kills parasites and worms.

Pectoral: healing to the bronchial/pulmonary area.

Sedative: exerts a quieting, soothing, tranquilizing effect.

Stimulant: increases internal heat and strengthens metabolism and circulation.

Stomachic: Strengthens stomach function.

Vulnerary: assists in wound healing- protecting against infection, stimulates cell growth.

What you have in your garden is one of Nature's best all around healing herbs. Not long ago I made a decision to have a little lump removed from my bottom lip. It had started out as what looked like a blood blister and then became hard and gray in color. I had it on my bottom lip for about one year. It didn't hurt and caused me no discomfort, but my dentist recommended I have it removed- "We don't know what it is."

About the same time, I began making myself Hyssop/Sage tea, as I had an abundance of these two herbs in my garden. I did not do it specifically to get rid of the lump, but while I was searching for an oral surgeon that was covered by my insurance plan, I drank the tea several times a day. Much to my amazement, in a few days the lump was completely gone! It has never returned. I also noticed the numbness that I had begun to develop in my feet was subsiding: an added bonus!

It is my belief that the plants growing abundantly in our gardens, or in the wild nearby, hold a special lesson for us. It is usually these plants that turn out to be exactly what we need for our particular healing.