

~ Ask Granny Earth ~

www.grannyearth.com



Sage

Ask Granny Earth

I purchased a few Sage plants from you on Sunday, and although I love the plant and use sage for cooking (mainly in stuffing), I would like to know more about its medicinal uses. Also, how big does the plant get and does it need any special care? What part of it does one use for medicinal purposes?

Sage is one of the easiest plants for me to grow, needing no special care or soil, and not being bothered by any particular pests. I love it not only for its physical beauty, but also because it is an excellent healing herb when drunk as a tea.

It is a perennial, which gets a little bigger as it comes back each spring, growing into a small bush (about 1-2 ft. tall). The leaves are the part generally used medicinally. The plant flowers in June, with beautiful blue/purple spikes. I like to pick my sage for drying when the flower is in full bloom. I cut long stems, tie them together, and hang them upside down in a dry room, out of the sun. When dry, I store them in brown paper bags for later use in tea or tinctures.

SAGE: (*Salvia officinalis*): Sage is native to the Mediterranean region, and has been used medicinally since early Roman and Greek times. *Salvia* comes from the Latin word '*salvate*', which means to rescue, save, or heal, and '*salvus*' meaning safe. The word *officinalis* signifies that Sage was among the medicinal herbs listed in the official Herbal Medicinal Guide, which was established in the 17th century.

The healing properties of Sage are as follows: astringent (causes contraction of tissues), antiseptic (inhibits growth of microorganisms), antispasmodic, anti-diarrhea, anti-diaphoretic (inhibits perspiration), carminative (prevents gas and expels it), tonic (restores and strengthens the entire system), wound healing, estrogenic (has or enhances the body's estrogen), and immune stimulating. Due to the presence of *labiatic acid* and *carnosic acid* in Sage, it is a powerful antioxidant, which inhibits the enzyme that breaks down acetylcholine, thus preserving the compound (acetylcholine) that seems to help prevent and treat the dreaded Alzheimer's disease.

Sage is a good digestive remedy, because it encourages the flow of digestive enzymes and bile as it settles the stomach, and relieves gas, indigestion and diarrhea. It also assists the system in being able to expel parasites, as it eliminates mucus congestion in the respiratory passages and the stomach. It also contains estrogenic properties, and is an excellent remedy for menopausal problems (reducing hot flashes, and helping the body to adapt to hormonal changes involved in the whole menopausal transition), and irregular, or light menstruation (encouraging a better flow of blood). Thank you for your question- in answering, I was reminded once again that I need to start drinking Sage tea for calmness, energy, and for prevention of Alzheimer's- if it's not already too late!

Traditionally, Sage has been used to treat all types of sore throats, laryngitis, tonsillitis, bleeding gums and canker sores. This is due to its antiseptic (inhibits the growth of microorganisms), and astringent actions.

For sore throats, one would make an infusion, or strong tea, and gargle with it as often as needed. You could also use this tea for brushing your teeth, or you could mash up the leaves (in a pestle and mortar, or even in a blender) with a little water or glycerin for taste. I've even used it combined with a little peroxide once in a while (as for peroxide, we'll get into that in a later article). Now granted, it's not going to taste super good and yummy like the commercial toothpastes you buy in the store, but for sure it will be without chemicals and fluoride!

Because Sage contains *rosmarinic acid* (a phenol, which is also in the herb Rosemary), it has the reputation of being strongly anti-inflammatory, therefore being used to relieve painful muscle spasms. Perhaps this (*rosmarinic acid*) is also why Sage, like Rosemary is being used to treat mild to moderate depression. In Chinese medicine Sage is a '*yin tonic*' with a well-deserved reputation as being a 'tonic for the nerves' - helping both to calm,

and to stimulate the nervous system. There is also some recent research, which demonstrates that Sage can reduce blood sugar levels in diabetics if drunk (as a tea) on an empty stomach.

To recap on some of the conditions Sage used for:

To ease pain of **inflammatory conditions**, for mild to moderate **depression**, for **calmness** and **energy**, for **sore throats** and gum disease, for **menopause symptoms**, irregular menstrual periods, **digestive problems**, gas, diarrhea, **Alzheimer's** disease and high **blood sugar**.

Sage is not recommended for pregnant or lactating women.