

~ Ask Granny Earth ~

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Yarrow

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**The Yarrow in the meadow is starting to bloom. It's so abundant around here and I know that that's a sign it must be a good medicinal herb. What do you know about it?**

Yes, Yarrow's a wonderful and abundant medicinal herb in these parts. We are lucky to have it so readily available! It transplants well from those meadows to your garden and can also be easily grown from seed in the spring. It's one of those herbs that's becoming so popular that, you can find it on most seed racks. Although usually planted for its beauty, rather than its healing properties, Yarrow is just as precious medicinally as it is aesthetically

**Yarrow** (*Achillea millefolium*): The Latin name Achilles comes from the Greek warrior Achilles, who is said to have used it to treat his wounds. In Ancient times it was called *Herba millitaris*, because it was used to staunch the bleeding of war injuries. Because of its wound healing properties, Yarrow has been used for centuries in herbal salves. The use of this herb dates back to before historical records were kept, with Yarrow drawings having been found on cave walls in certain parts of the world. Native Americans also respected this plant and reportedly had over 200 medicinal uses for it.

While Yarrow will stop bleeding, both externally (as a poultice) and internally, it also has many other medicinal uses. It's a shame that yarrow isn't more popular as a home remedy. Perhaps that's because until recently it had not been studied and researched as much as the more popular herbs. But, things are changing. Recent research has documented the following effective constituents in Yarrow:

azulene, achilleic acid, Alpha-pinene, Alpha-terpinene, Apigenin, asparagines, Betaine, Betonicine, Borneol, Camphor, Chamazulene, Coumarins, Cuminaldehyde, Dulcitol, Eugenol, folacin, Formic-acid, Glucose, Inositol, Inulin, Isorhamnetin, Limonene, Luteolin, Menthol, Myrcene, Niacin, Oleic-acid, P-cymene, Quercetin, Rutin, Salicylic-acid, Stachydrine, Stigmasterol, Terpeneol, Thiamin, Thujone, Trigonelline, and Zinc.

Granted, you may not recognize most of these ingredients, but some of them you will. They are all names for the "phytochemicals" contained in this plant. These phytochemicals are responsible for giving Yarrow its healing properties, which are: antispasmodic, astringent, bitter tonic (for the liver), carminative, stimulant, vasodilator and hypotensive (dilates peripheral blood vessels), emmenagogue (harmonizes estrogenic balance), mild diuretic, anti-inflammatory, antibiotic, lowers blood pressure, reduces fever, stops bleeding, promotes menstruation, relieves cold and flu symptoms.

In addition to the above, it has been proven effective when used for cramps, kidney disorders, toothaches, skin irritations and hemorrhages. It is used to regulate menses, stimulate the flow of bile, and to build and purify the blood. It also makes a good steam inhalant for sinus infections, congestion, coughs, asthma, and headaches.

It would appear that Yarrow is helpful for many conditions including: arthritis (and other inflammatory conditions), digestive problems, hay fever (and other allergic problems), high blood pressure, circulation and varicose veins. You would always want to have it on hand in case of colds or flu and fever.

For all of these conditions, make an infusion or tea using the dried herb (a few pinches or more- listen to your body) and steeping it in hot water for 5 – 10 minutes. Add honey to taste and drink several cups throughout the day and especially at night before going to sleep. I'm a great believer in taking your medicinal tea at bedtime because your body can use it better for healing - as you sleep.

Yarrow has many medicinal qualities, as Mother Nature always provides us with an abundance of wild flowers for healing. All we need to do is go look for them, gather them, hang till dry and store them for later use. If you're lucky enough to have your own garden, Yarrow is an excellent choice, both for beauty and for healing.