

Herbs & Medicinal Plants

Information Sheet

Animals have been treated with herbs and medicinal plants since the emergence of mankind. Animals in the wild have always self-medicated but any animal should self-select if the right plant is available at the right time.

Herbs can be used to maintain health, boost immunity and treat various conditions, either fed fresh or dried, administered as tincture or infusion; or for external use as ointment, balm, or spray-on, eg insect repellent. There is a long, documented history of plant medicine in many cultures particularly in Traditional Chinese Medicine, Ayurvedic medicine, European and North American folk medicine and more recently Western herbal medicine.

Safety

Many herbs can be used in combination with one another and/or alongside conventional medicine and often have a synergistic effect. It is however important to remember that some herbs can have adverse interactions with some medications AND that some herbs may be toxic to some species, in the wrong dose, or even act as abortifacients in pregnancy. IF IN DOUBT seek expert advice.

If you are producing meat, milk or eggs, some herbs, such as garlic, may have a withdrawal period. If in doubt, please check.

Useful Books for Farmers

Here is a selection you may find helpful:

The Complete Herbal Handbook for Farm and Stable - Juliette de Bairacli Levy

Natural Parasite Control for Livestock: Pasture Management, Chemical-Free Deworming, Growing Antiparasitics - Wendy Lombardi

Hedgerow Medicine – Matthew seal & Julie Bruton Seal – an excellent introduction to the medicinal uses of native British plants

Most of the aromatic group of herbs, such as marjoram, sage, etc., increase milk yield. So also does milkwort and speedwell

Juliette de Bairacli Levy

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There are many uses for essential oils and some of the most useful ones are not too expensive. The following three oils offer a range of therapeutic uses:

Lavender - *Lavendula officinalis* or *L. angustifolia*

Of all the oils, Lavender has to be the most versatile with properties ranging from pain relieving, calming, antiseptic, anti-inflammatory, antiviral, bactericidal, insect repellent, sedative and anthelmintic.

Tea Tree - *Melaleuca alternifolia*

This oil is active against all three categories of infectious organisms: bacteria, fungi and viruses. It is also a very powerful immuno-stimulant increasing the body's ability to respond to infection.

Eucalyptus Radiata or *E. Globulus*

Eucalyptus is best known as a decongestant but its most important qualities are that of a very powerful bactericidal and anti-viral. Jean Valnet gave precise data on the bactericidal properties of Eucalyptus. He noted that a spray containing 2% essential oil of Eucalyptus will kill 70% of staphylococci in the air.

Uses

All three of these oils can be used in water on wounds to avoid infection, in sprays to repel insects, in salves or balms to soothe mastitis or infected feet or skin.

Safety

It is important to ensure that if used as a spray, the essential oils must not go near the eyes as this will sting and burn. Treat your essential oils like conventional medicines - out of reach of children in the cool and the dark. If you keep them in an airtight box (to stop your milk tasting of Tea Tree) in the fridge, it will double their shelf-life to one year and thus their cost effectiveness.

The usual dilution is 2% for a spray and 3.5% to 5% in



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