

# Wellspring & Wild's

## Beginner Herbal Guide



[www.wellspringandwild.com](http://www.wellspringandwild.com)

## Disclaimer

This guide is for informational and educational purposes only. It is not intended to diagnose, treat, or cure any disease, and should not be taken as medical advice.

Always consult a qualified healthcare professional before using herbal remedies, especially if you are pregnant, nursing, taking medications, or have existing health conditions.

Use your own judgment and do your own research. The content here reflects personal experience and traditional use.

Welcome, Friend!

If you're curious about gentle, natural ways to support your family's health, this little guide is for you.

Here you'll find a few of the most beloved herbs on our homestead—each one simple to grow, gather, and use. Whether you're just beginning or brushing up on the basics,

I hope this gives you the confidence to bring herbs into your home with grace and intention.

# Lemon Balm

(*Melissa officinalis*)

Lemon Balm is a bright, lemon-scented perennial herb in the mint family, known for its gentle and uplifting effects. It grows easily in most temperate gardens, spreading generously if left unchecked. The plant features serrated, heart-shaped leaves and tiny pale flowers that bees adore.

## Traditional Uses:

- Calms anxiety and nervous tension
- Supports restful sleep and reduces restlessness
- Eases digestive discomfort and bloating
- Known for antiviral properties (especially against herpes simplex virus)

## Preparation & Use:

- Tea – Steep fresh or dried leaves in hot water for a calming tea
- Tincture – Preserve fresh leaves in alcohol or glycerin for concentrated support
- Salve – Infuse in oil and combine with beeswax for a skin-soothing balm
- Honey – Infuse lemon balm into raw honey for a sweet herbal treat

Lemon balm is considered very safe, even for children. However, those with thyroid conditions should consult a practitioner before long-term use.

**Tip:** Lemon balm's cheerful scent can lift the spirits—try brushing against it in the garden when you're having a rough day.

# Elderberry

(*Sambucus nigra*)

Elderberries grow on tall, woody shrubs or small trees with lacy, white flower clusters in late spring, followed by dark purple-black berries in late summer. This beloved herbal ally has a long tradition of use for immune support and seasonal wellness.

You can grow elderberry in zones 3-9. It prefers moist, rich soil and can spread quickly if happy. The berries must be cooked before eating—raw ones can cause stomach upset.

## Traditional Uses:

- Supports the immune system during cold and flu season
- May reduce severity and duration of viral infections
- Soothes inflamed sinuses and sore throats
- Antioxidant-rich and supportive to overall health

## Preparation & Use:

Syrup – Simmer dried or fresh berries with water, spices, and honey to make elderberry syrup

Tincture – Alcohol extraction for long shelf life and quick use

Tea – Dried berries (and flowers) steeped for immune and respiratory support

Infused vinegar or oxymel – Combine with apple cider vinegar and honey for daily wellness

The flowers are also used medicinally—for fever, inflammation, and skin care.

Elderberry is considered safe when properly prepared, but never eat the raw berries, stems, or leaves. Always cook the berries thoroughly.

Tip: Elderberries freeze well and make an excellent winter pantry staple. Consider planting more than one variety for best pollination and berry yield.

# Yarrow

(Achillea millefolium)

Yarrow is a feathery, fern-leaved perennial with clusters of tiny flowers—usually white, though sometimes pink or yellow. It's incredibly resilient and often found growing wild in meadows, fields, and even driveways.

Known for its wide range of uses, yarrow has been a trusted ally for centuries in both first-aid and everyday herbal care. It thrives in zones 3–9, prefers full sun, and tolerates poor soil well.

## Traditional Uses:

- Stops bleeding (external wounds, nosebleeds, etc.)
- Promotes sweating to reduce fevers
- Tones and supports the circulatory system
- Eases menstrual discomfort and heavy bleeding
- Helpful for hemorrhoids and varicose veins

## Preparation & Use:

- Poultice – Crushed fresh leaves applied directly to wounds
- Tincture – Internal use for fever, circulation, or menstrual balance
- Tea – Dried leaves and flowers steeped for colds, cramps, or digestion
- Salve or oil – Infused into oil for wound care or hemorrhoid relief

Yarrow is considered safe for most, but avoid internal use during pregnancy unless under guidance. Some people may develop a skin sensitivity.

Tip: Yarrow is a great plant to forage in the wild, but be sure to positively ID it—don't confuse it with poison hemlock or Queen Anne's lace. On the homestead, it's also a wonderful companion plant and pollinator magnet.

# Echinacea

(Echinacea purpurea or Echinacea angustifolia)

Echinacea, also known as purple coneflower, is a hardy perennial with striking pink-purple petals and a spiky central cone. Native to North America and beloved by pollinators, it's both ornamental and medicinal.

Traditionally used by indigenous peoples and herbalists for immune support, echinacea has become one of the most well-known herbs for fighting off illness. It prefers full sun and well-drained soil and is easy to grow in zones 3–9.

## Traditional Uses:

Supports immune system function

May reduce symptoms of colds and upper respiratory infections

Promotes lymphatic drainage and detoxification

Helps fight inflammation and infection

## Preparation & Use:

Tincture – Best way to preserve root or fresh aerial parts for immune support

Tea – Flowers, leaves, or roots steeped (use during the onset of illness)

Infused oil – Used externally for minor wounds, bites, or inflammation

Capsules – Dried root ground and encapsulated for daily use

For acute use, echinacea works best taken frequently (every 2–3 hours at onset of illness) and short-term. Long-term daily use is generally not recommended.

Tip: The root is the most potent part, but flowers and leaves are useful too. Harvest roots in the fall of the plant's second or third year for best strength.

# Red Clover

(*Trifolium pratense*)

Red Clover is a common wildflower with pinkish-purple blossoms and three-part leaves.

Often overlooked as a weed, it's actually a powerhouse herb—especially valued for women's health and lymphatic support.

It grows abundantly in pastures, lawns, and fields. Red clover prefers full sun and well-drained soil and is perennial in zones 3–9. Bees and butterflies love it, and so do homesteaders with a teacup.

## Traditional Uses:

Supports hormone balance (especially during menopause)

Gently cleanses the lymphatic system

Promotes healthy skin and reduces inflammation

Traditionally used to support fertility and menstrual health

## Preparation & Use:

Tea – Dried blossoms steeped for gentle daily support

Tincture – For hormonal balance and lymphatic drainage

Infused oil – Used externally for eczema, rashes, or breast massage

Poultice – Crushed fresh blossoms applied to soothe skin issues

Red clover is generally very safe. It contains natural phytoestrogens, so those with hormone-sensitive conditions should consult a practitioner before internal use.

Tip: Harvest the flowers on a dry day when they're fully open and vibrant. Avoid any that have browned or begun to go to seed. Red clover dries quickly and stores well for year-round tea blends.

# Calendula

(Calendula officinalis)

Calendula—often called “pot marigold”—is a bright, cheerful flower known for its powerful skin-healing and anti-inflammatory properties. It’s easy to grow, wildly beneficial, and a true staple for any herbal home.

Calendula blooms throughout the summer and thrives in full sun with well-drained soil.

Deadheading encourages continuous flowering, and the blossoms are edible and medicinal.

## Traditional Uses:

Soothes skin irritations, rashes, and wounds

Promotes tissue repair and reduces inflammation

Antifungal, antimicrobial, and lymph-moving

Gentle enough for baby care and sensitive skin

## Preparation & Use:

Infused oil – Base for salves, balms, and lotions

Salve – Combined with beeswax for wound and diaper care

Tea – Internally for ulcers, sore throat, or lymphatic support

Tincture – For internal cleansing or as a wound wash

Only the bright orange or yellow ray florets (petals) are used medicinally—not the green base. Calendula is incredibly safe and widely used even for infants and postpartum mamas.

Tip: Pick flowers every few days to keep the plant blooming. Dry petals on a screen out of direct sun and store in a jar to have sunshine on hand all year long.

# Plantain

(*Plantago major* or *Plantago lanceolata*)

Not to be confused with the banana relative, this humble “weed” is one of the best herbal first-aid plants around. You’ve probably got it growing in your yard, driveway, or sidewalk cracks right now.

There are two common types: broadleaf (*Plantago major*) and narrowleaf (*Plantago lanceolata*). Both are equally medicinal and easy to identify once you know what to look for—prominent leaf veins and a low-growing rosette.

## Traditional Uses:

Draws out splinters, stingers, and toxins from bites or stings

Soothes irritated skin, burns, and minor wounds

Eases itchy bug bites and poison ivy

Helpful for coughs and respiratory irritation

## Preparation & Use:

Poultice – Chew or crush fresh leaves and apply directly to skin

Infused oil – Base for salves and creams

Salve – Handy for bites, cuts, and dry skin

Tea or tincture – Used internally for urinary or digestive inflammation

Plantain is incredibly safe and can even be eaten as a wild green when young. Its cooling, moistening properties make it a go-to for hot, itchy, or inflamed conditions.

Tip: If you’re outside and someone gets stung, find a plantain leaf, chew it (or mash it), and slap it on the sting. It works fast—and you’ll feel like an herbal hero.

## Final Thoughts

Learning herbs isn't about memorizing facts—it's about relationship. As you grow, gather, and use these plants, you'll start to recognize them as old friends. The more you lean in, the more they'll teach you.

Start small. Pick one or two herbs to get to know this season. Sip their tea. Tend them in the garden. Watch how they grow. Use them in little ways and take note of how your body responds.

This journey isn't about perfection or having all the answers—it's about reconnection. With nature. With your health. With the simple wisdom that's been passed down through generations.

May this guide be just the beginning.  
From my homestead to yours—blessings on your herbal path.

— Amanda | Wellspring & Wild