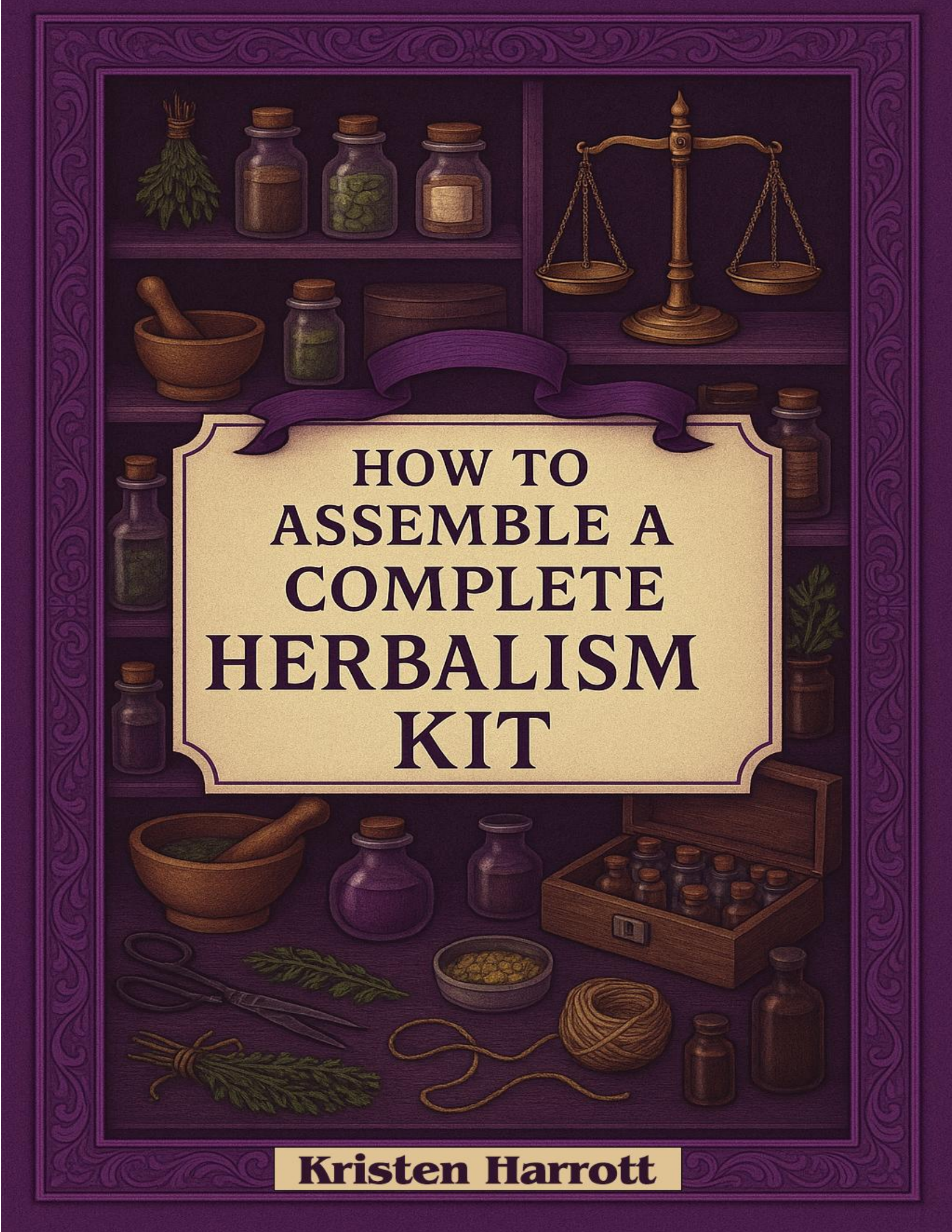
HOW TO ASSEMBLE A COMPLETE HERBALISM KIT
Kristen Harrott

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Introduction

Modern medicine has been around for roughly 2,500 years since the days of Hippocrates, who has been referenced as the father of modern medicine. Derived from ancient herbal medicine, modern medicine has since formed into the Pharmaceutical Industry we know today. With the number of people affected by side effects, drug interactions, and long-term dependency on synthetic Pharmaceutical Industry drugs, the rediscovering of medicinal herbs has caused an influx of studying herbalists safely healing themselves and those around them with what they keep in their herbalism kit.

An herbalism kit is a satchel that contains everything an herbalist needs to make any herbal remedy for any ailment, at any given time. The kit itself can be carried with you everywhere, though, there are a few larger items of cookware in your kit that are to be used and stored in your workspace. Your herbalism kit will contain herbs, tools, properly made and stored recipes, and resources to take with you. By the end of this book, you will have a complete herbalist kit with the knowledge of how to use and customize it. You will be equipped with tried and true herbal recipes to get you practicing, and you can experiment confidently with the provided base recipes.

Divided into two parts, this book has been broken down to optimize the absorption of the information within. The first part is the knowledge you need about building your herbalism kit, from identifying and gathering your herbs, choosing and collecting the proper tools, to storing and organizing your herbalism kit. After part one, you'll be primed for part two, which will teach you exactly how to use your kit and everything contained inside, from plant actions to experiment with to plant recipes for healing common ailments. Start making a list of family members you want to heal because you're about to become an herbalist!

Part 1: Building an Herbalism Kit

Chapter 1: Gathering the Essentials

Key Plants Every Herbalism Kit Needs

There are thousands of medicinal herbs and each of them has its special ability to heal specific human ailments. In North America the list of human ailments is high but there are a few of those ailments that are common amongst the majority of people that an herbalist will accompany. In your herbalism kit, the key plants are based on the common ailments you will come across in the people you will be helping.

The key plants are chosen based on their medicinal actions. Each medicinal plant has an 'action', such as anti-inflammatory or diuretic, that combat an array of ailments. For this reason, there will always be a staple list of medicinal plants for herbalists to keep in their kit. The number of plant species in a kit is dependent on the herbalist, though it's always recommended to keep a well-rounded plant action inventory.

Here are 16 key plants for your herbalism kit, with their common name, Latin name, primary medicinal action, followed by secondary medicinal actions:

- **Broadleaf Plantain** *(Plantago major)* - Vulnerary, expectorant, anti-inflammatory, anti-microbial, demulcent, astringent, diuretic *(Figure 1)*
- **Chamomile** *(Matricaria chamomilla)* - Antispasmodic, nervine, anti-inflammatory, carminative, analgesic, antiseptic, vulnerary, bitter, emmenagogue, hypnotic, aromatic *(Figure 2)*
- **Comfrey** *(Symphytum officinale)* - Vulnerary, demulcent, astringent, relaxing expectorant, anti-inflammatory *(Figure 3)*

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

- **Dandelion** *(Taraxacum officinale)* - Diuretic, hepatic, cholagogue, tonic, anti-rheumatic, laxative, bitter *(Figure 4)*
- **Echinacea** *(Echinacea angustifolia)* - Immunomodulator, anti-microbial, alterative, anti-inflammatory, anti-catarrhal, vulnerary, aromatic *(Figure 5)*
- **Garlic** *(Allium sativum)* - Antimicrobial, cardioactive, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, diaphoretic, diuretic, anti-septic, stimulant, anticatarrhal, carminative, amphoteric expectorant, anthelmintic *(Figure 6)*

Figure 4

Figure 5

Figure 6

- **Ginger** *(Zingiber officinale)* - Anti-emetic, carminative, antirheumatic, tonic, anti-inflammatory, anti-oxidant, stimulant, anti-spasmodic, diaphoretic, rubefacient, aromatic, emmenagogue, hypotensive *(Figure 7)*
- **Goldenseal** *(Hydrastis canadensis)* - Bitter, hepatic, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, anti-bilious, anti-catarrhal, tonic, astringent, laxative, muscular stimulant, oxytocic, alterative, emmenagogue, cholagogue, relaxing expectorant *(Figure 8)*
- **Lavender** *(Lavandula angustifolia/officinalis)* - Relaxing nervine, anti-anxiety, aromatic, antispasmodic, anti-depressant, hypotensive, rubefacient, emmenagogue, carminative *(Figure 9)*

Figure 7

Figure 8

Figure 9

- **Licorice** *(Glycyrrhiza glabra)* - Adaptogen, demulcent, anti-inflammatory, anti-catarrhal, antispasmodic, relaxing expectorant *(Figure 10)*
- **Rosemary** *(Rosmarinus officinalis)* - Cardioactive, anti-depressant, antispasmodic, carminative, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, anti-microbial, rubefacient, emmenagogue, aromatic, antirheumatic, astringent, cholagogue, stimulant *(Figure 11)*
- **Slippery Elm** *(Ulmus fulva)* - Demulcent, emollient, anti-inflammatory, nutrient, astringent *(Figure 12)*

Figure 10

Figure 11

Figure 12

- **Stinging Nettle** *(Urtica dioica)* - Astringent, diuretic, anti-inflammatory, hypotensive, tonic, antirheumatic *(Figure 13)*
- **Tea Tree** *(Melaleuca alternifolia)* - Anti-microbial, Anti-inflammatory, antioxidant (*Figure 14)*
- **Turmeric** *(Curcuma longa)* - Anti-Inflammatory, carminative, hepatoprotective, anti-microbial, antioxidant *(Figure 15)*

Figure 13

Figure 14

Figure 15

- **Thyme** *(Thymus vulgaris)* - Anti-microbial, anticatarrhal, antispasmodic, carminative, relaxing expectorant, astringent, anthelmintic, aromatic *(Figure 16)*
- **Valerian** *(Valeriana officinalis)* - Sedative, hypnotic, antispasmodic, anti-anxiety, hypotensive, carminative, emmenagogue, relaxing nervine *(Figure 17)*

Figure 16

Figure 17

Essential Tools for Your Kit

There are certain ways to prepare the medicinal plants you will be using that allow the body to absorb the benefits easily in the specific areas the benefits are needed. For example, you wouldn't make a lotion for the stomach if someone is experiencing food poisoning, you would make a tea to drink or a tincture to ingest, depending on the severity of the illness.

Each method of preparation requires multiple tools. Some of these tools will be kept in your kit to be used out in the field, while others will be kept in your workspace to help you with the processing, preparing, cooking, and storing of the various remedies you will be creating.

Tools carried in your herbalism kit:

Mini Shovel

Use this shovel to dig a plant up when you require its roots. When you dig up the whole plant, it’s best to have use for the entire plant.

Tweezers

Tweezers are used for harvesting the finer details of a plant such as the leaves, seeds, flowers, or petals without damaging them. You can also dissect these finer details using tweezers or remove impurities and debris. They can also be used to apply topicals or bandages to skin ailments or as a tool for practicing acupressure.

Clippers

A pair of clippers that fit in the palm of your hand should be durable enough to harvest the key plants in your kit. Use them to cut stalks, stems, leaves, and flowers

Leather gloves

Leather gloves protect your hands from cuts while harvesting, keeping your plants clean from contaminants and minor damage. The leather material keeps the current of natural energy flowing.

Twine

Twine is used to group and tie herbs together to help you organize your plants appropriately. You can also use twine to tie multiple herb groups together to create a recipe bundle.

Herb Pouches

Herb pouches are flat or shaped containers of all different sizes, typically made of leather, for you to hold and transport your harvested plants in.

Miniature Glass Vials

Miniature glass vials hold samples, seeds, and small flowers of harvested plants. These vials are also great for holding pre-measured ingredients, dried or liquid, to be mixed in the field for on-the-spot remedies.

Pen & Notepad

Basic but vital. A pen and notepad are used to label herbs with a name and date, write health information down, note remedies and recipes as you work, and leave notes for others when the situation calls for it.

Resources

These resources should include plant identification, foundations of herbalism, emergency phone numbers, and most importantly a guide to your herbalism kit, written by you, to be used in the case of an emergency when someone else needs to use your kit and you're unable to assist.

Tools used and stored in your workspace:

Herb Baskets

Herb baskets are a helpful tool when you are processing your medicinal plants. They are used to hold your whole plants while you process them down into pieces for various recipes.

Glass Containers

Glass containers are to organize, store, and label the plant parts that have been processed and prepared for recipes.

Measuring Spoons and Cups

Measuring utensils are used to portion out your ingredients by volume.

Cheesecloth

Cheesecloth is used to remove plant matter from liquids. By securing the cheesecloth over the opening of a container you can slowly pour the liquid with plant matter over the cheesecloth, the medicinal liquid will run through the cheesecloth into the container leaving behind the plant matter on the cheesecloth. Cheesecloth can also be used for press-extracting oils.

Scale

A scale is used to portion out your ingredients by weight, which is more accurate than volume since there is little room for error.

Amber Glass Droppers

Amber glass droppers store a final tincture or oil recipe that requires drop doses. Amber is the recommended color for glass storage containers as it eliminates sun damage and degradation to the recipe inside.

Amber Glass Jars

Amber glass jars come in all shapes and sizes and are used to store any final product or recipe that doesn't require a dropper bottle, for example, teas and poultices.

Funnels

Funnels are used just as they are in baking, they help you guide liquid into another container, likely with a narrow opening.

Mortar and Pestle

A mortar and pestle is a reliable toolset for mixing your processed herbs and recipes, it's the ancient version of a food processor.

Double Boiler

Quite simply this is a pot with a heatproof bowl inside. The pot is used to boil a small amount of water while the bowl of ingredients sits inside gently warming by the steam produced. This method is used to slowly and gently steep the plant material in oil or to melt and soften waxes.

Drying Racks

Drying racks are used to help you dry your plants. A screen tray allows you to lay your plants out on a table while receiving maximum air flow all around. Use a hanging rack to hang your plants upside down to dry in your workspace or cellar.

To complete a recipe, some plants require you to use an additional ingredient to help extract the medicinal chemicals from the plant and carry them easily through the body. These ingredients include beeswax, medium-chain triglyceride oils, vinegars, or carrier oils and certain alcohols. Here are common carrier oils, wax, and alcohols you can use when you are required to:

- **Beeswax** is used in recipes for salves, balms, lotions, and waxes. It's mainly used for the texture and waxy appeal, but it also works wonders on our skin. It's an anti-

inflammatory, antimicrobial, and antioxidant that moisturizes skin and leaves a protective coating.

- **Olive Oil** is used in edible oils for its liquid consistency, healing properties, and culinary background. It's often used for salves, balms, and massage oils due to its ability to absorb into the skin quickly. Being rich in antioxidants and emollient properties, it's ideal for dry or mature skin.
- **Coconut Oil** contains similarities to olive oil and is used in salves, balms, and hair care for its soft yet solid texture. However, it leaves an oily layer that olive oil does not.
- **80-proof Vodka** is used to make tinctures by extracting the medicinal properties from plants with high water content. The plant material is mixed and steeped in vodka for weeks to months to extract all medical properties from the plant, creating a potent medicine.
- **180-proof Ethyl** or **Grain Alcohol** works to extract the "harder to reach" medical properties from plants with low water content. The extraction process creates a more potent concentration than a vodka tincture.

Sourcing the Plants and Tools That You Need

Finding the key medicinal plants yourself requires knowledge, confidence, rational behavior, and the right location. These are the skills an herbalist has when they harvest their wild medicinal plants. Luckily the key plants in your herbalism kit can be easily found in the wilderness across North America or at a reliably sourced local herb supplier.

The tools in your herbalism kit will be easily found at a Home and Kitchen retail store. Amber bottle droppers can be found online or at a local essential oil supplier.

Chapter 2: Herb Identification and Preparation

Identifying Common Medicinal Plants

You have to know how to identify plants to be a safe and successful herbalist. Identifying plants is a broad expertise and requires years of practice. A common practice in herbalism is to choose a plant to study for one month, a different plant each month. This not only strengthens your knowledge but creates a bonding familiarity between you and plant family appearances. Use these basics to help you identify a plant you are looking for in the wild:

Location - knowing the type of environment the medicinal plant grows in is the first thing you should be aware of. Knowing this will help you find plants in unfamiliar areas and prevent you from wasting your energy. You wouldn't find a cactus next to the river, or strawberries in the desert. Keep notes in your records of the type of soil each plant grows in, if it grows in direct sunlight, high or low altitude, in a forest or open field, what plants grow near, and if water is in the area.

Branches & Leaves - every plant has a different leaf shape and a different arrangement of leaves on the branches. Simple leaves are oval, rounded, lobed, elliptical, heart-shaped, and lance-shaped. Compound leaves are leaflets of multiple leaves on one stem *(Figure 18)*. There are also scale leaves and needle leaves. Leaf arrangements are either alternate, opposite, or whorled. Rosette leaves grow circular around the base and only at the base. Basal leaves are leaves that grow at the base of the plant. This knowledge can help you ID a plant with just a glance.

Figure 18

Shape - plants grow in different shapes and sizes and it's fairly easy to tell the difference between one plant and another by this, near or far. Some plants, like yarrow, grow erect in a single stalk, while others, like roses, grow in bushes. Other growth habits are ascending, climbing, creeping, and sprawling.

Flowers grow in thousands of sizes and every color you can think of. The name of their shapes describes their appearances very well; bell-shaped, circular, cluster *(Figure 17)*, conical, cup-shaped, flathead, saucer-shaped, spike-shaped, star-shaped, and tubular. The petal arrangement on a flower can either be imbricate (overlapping), twisted (twisting around each other), valvate (adjacent and not overlapping), or vexillary (a specific pattern). Noticing the shape and number of flower petals is helpful since many wildflowers look similar.

Proper Harvesting and Drying Techniques

Be aware of the plant species threat status. The species listed in the key plants for your herbalism kit include these species that may be endangered and should either be cultivated in your garden, purchased from a nursery, or substituted with another plant: Echinacea and Goldenseal.

Some plant species differ from the common harvesting and drying techniques below. If you start with these methods, keep notes to keep track of each plant's drying and healing progress, and you'll find ways to customize these techniques to suit your conditions.

Flowers are commonly harvested after their seeding period. Harvest in the morning after the dew has dissipated when they are fully open and in good health. Use clippers to remove the desired flowers. If you are hang-drying, cut four inches below the flower, tie bundles together, and hang upside down in a dry and well-ventilated space out of direct sunlight for 2 to 4 weeks. If you only need the flower heads, cut just below the flower cutting off little to no stem. To dry flower heads, lay them on a screen tray in a well-ventilated area that's dry and out of direct sunlight for 2 to 4 weeks.

Leaves - Leaves are harvested during the plant's peak growing season when they are fully mature just before the plant flowers. Harvest leaves that are in good health in the morning when the dew has gone. Cut the leaves from the plant or cut off a branch at the base of the plant. To dry leaves, lay them on a screen tray or hang bunches in a dry and well-ventilated area out of direct sunlight for 1-4 weeks depending on the thickness, bringing the tray inside for the night.

Roots - Roots are generally harvested in the fall when the above-ground plant prepares for winter dormancy. The above-ground plant has sent its nutrients back down to the roots for storage, and they are ripe with medicinal benefits. Use a shovel to dig up part or all of the plant without damaging the roots. Clean the roots of dirt and strands, and do not submerge the roots in water. If the roots are large, cut, slice, or grate them into small pieces before laying them out to sun-dry in direct sunlight on a mesh-enclosed screen tray. Bring the tray inside at night.

Herbs - Herb harvesting happens in the morning after the dew has dried, usually in the late summer and early fall season, just before the plant has flowered. Cut a branch off at the base. Hang dry your herbs by tying the branches together in bundles and hanging them upside down in a dry and well-ventilated area for 1-4 weeks, depending on the thickness.

Tree Bark - The harvesting period of tree bark depends on the species, though there is a general guideline. Coniferous tree bark is harvested in the fall when the medicinal content is more resinous and concentrated in the tree bark during this time. Deciduous trees are harvested in early spring. Tree species like slippery elm or black walnut are harvested during the winter. To dry, lay out on a screen tray in a well-ventilated area.

Fruit - Fruit is harvested when fully ripe and ready to fall off. Harvesting happens on a dry morning, between spring and late fall, depending on the species. Pick fruit one by one or lay a blanket on the ground around the plant and shake the branches gently, ripe fruits will fall and collect in the blanket. Sun-dry fruit in a mesh enclosed screen tray in direct sunlight for 1-4 days, bringing them indoors for the night.

Seeds - Harvesting seeds happens when a plant's flowers are roughly 4-8 weeks old, nearing the end of its vibrancy, and when seeds have fully matured. The seeds will be fully mature when they are dried and ready to fall from the flower. Cut the flower head from the plant and remove the seeds one by one or by shaking the flower head into a bag. Lay the seeds out to air dry on a screen tray in a dark, dry, well-ventilated area for about 1 to 2 weeks.

Processing Plants for Various Applications

When you have chosen a plant to have in your herbalism kit it's because you have an intention of use in mind, you're going to use the plant to heal but you also know what you're going to turn it into. Each plant or plant part is processed a certain way based on your intended application, before storing it to be used in a recipe later.

Application	Process	Key Plant
Poultice	Grind freshly harvested plant material in mortar and pestle, use immediately. For an emergency backup, dry plant material accordingly and store finely chopped.	Broadleaf Plantain, Chamomile, Comfrey, Echinacea, Garlic, Ginger, Slippery Elm, Stinging Nettle
Infusion	Dry leaves, flower heads, stem pieces, roots, fruits, bark, and herbs. Create a dry blend and store for later use.	Broadleaf Plantain, Chamomile, Comfrey, Dandelion, Ginger, Lavender, Rosemary, Stinging Nettle, Thyme, Valerian
Decoction	Dry leaves, flower heads, stem pieces, roots, fruits, bark, and herbs. Create a dry blend and store.	Comfrey, Dandelion, Echinacea, Garlic, Ginger, Goldenseal, Licorice, Slippery Elm, Stinging Nettle, Valerian
Tincture	Break or cut fresh plant parts and use in a tincture recipe immediately. Dry plant parts accordingly and store mixed for a recipe or individually.	Broadleaf Plantain, Chamomile, Comfrey, Dandelion, Echinacea, Ginger, Goldenseal, Licorice, Slippery Elm, Stinging Nettle, Valerian
Oil	Break or cut fresh plant parts and use in an oil recipe immediately. Dry plant parts accordingly and store mixed for a recipe or individually.	Broadleaf Plantain, Chamomile, Comfrey, Garlic, Ginger, Lavender, Rosemary, Singing Nettle, Tea Tree, Thyme
Ointments	Break or cut fresh plant parts and use in an ointment recipe immediately. Dry plant parts accordingly and store mixed for a recipe or individually.	Broadleaf Plantain, Chamomile, Comfrey, Lavender, Rosemary, Slippery Elm, Tea Tree, Thyme

Chapter 3: Creating Your Herbalism Kit

Developing Blends and Formulations

Knowing and understanding the active properties of a plant and what they can do for the body is the prime knowledge needed to develop formulas for blends and recipes. Learning traditional uses will help you understand which application would be best for each plant action and health ailment.

When developing a formula, the first thing to consider is what type of ailment you aim to improve. The next consideration is the application method, which depends on whether the ailment is internal or external. If the ailment is internal, your formula will be for an ingested application. If the ailment is external, it will generally be a topical application. When you decide your application, you can develop the formula and ratios for your ingredient blends. Herbalists often start with basic formulas and refine them through trial and error, increasing and decreasing the ratios of individual ingredients while observing the effects.

The guideline for ingredient ratio is to focus on the active ingredient while blending ingredients with complimentary actions, a balancing synergy, and an enticing aroma. When choosing ingredients, herbalists are always mindful of herb-herb, herb-drug, and herb-condition interactions, ensuring the formula and ingredients are safe and appropriate for use.

Labeling and Storing Your Herb Collection

After drying the plants, store them in sanitized, air-tight glass or porcelain containers and keep them in a cool, dark, and dry storage area. The shelf life of dried whole plants that have not been broken, chopped, or ground is anywhere from 1 to 3 years. Ground or chopped dried plants have a shelf life of only six months to a year. Be sure to harvest and store enough to last you the entire year.

When a dry plant is processed and prepared for a recipe for an infusion or decoction, store it in single portions in appropriately sized porcelain, tin, or bag containers. Store prepared oils and tinctures in small one to two-oz amber glass containers and droppers. Put ointments in ½ oz to 4 oz tin or glass containers.

Every medicinal product in your kit (and your workspace) must be permanently and visibly labeled appropriately with the plant and product name, warnings and safety tips, date of

harvest and expiration, the intended use, and the medicinal action. If the bottle is too small to show all this information, keep it in your Herbalism Kit Guide.

Organizing Your Herbalism Kit

There is a common way herbalists organize their kit that helps optimize their performance. A structured bag or a leveled wooden box is a top choice to hold the contents of your kit. Your kit should have sections for applications/medicine, plants, dry recipes, tools, reference material/resources, and inventory management. Organize applications, plants, and dry recipes by actions, intended use, and frequently used. The same practice is in the workspace.

Chapter 4: Safety Considerations

Understanding Herb-Drug Interactions

Because of the medicinal actions of plants, it's important to be aware that they can interact with other medications and cause complications.

Additive effects will arise when an herbal remedy has a similar medicinal action to their pharmaceutical prescription, increasing the dose.

Antagonistic effects are caused when herbal remedies have opposing medicinal actions to that of the pharmaceutical drugs, reducing the effectiveness of both.

Some herbs can alter the body's absorption rate, increasing or decreasing the duration and efficiency of medicinal actions. Medicinal actions and prescriptions that have a higher possibility of herb-drug interactions include liver and blood aids. Always research the potential interactions, side effects, and toxicity of every plant you use.

Recognizing Potential Allergies and Sensitivities

When introducing a new medicinal ingredient and application it's always best to monitor the effects for some time after use. Watch for any initial signs of allergies such as itching, hives, or rash when using any application. When you use an application that is ingested, watch for signs of swelling in the lips, tongue, throat, and face, as well as difficulty breathing. In rare cases, there could be dizziness, nausea, and vomiting, while severe cases can include anaphylaxis.

Using a new topical application might provide different signs of allergies including redness and irritation at the site of the application, and swelling, burning, and stinging. Other signs that might not be accompanied by the previous include dry, sensitive, peeling skin or blisters.

If you notice any of the signs above, stop use immediately and continue to monitor. If symptoms progress and worsen, seek emergency care.

The following plants in your kit should not be used during pregnancy: comfrey, ginger, goldenseal, licorice, and rosemary.

Dosage Guidelines and Monitoring Side-Effects

These dosage guidelines are in many herbalist and scientific journals, listed in the resources provided in part 2. Remember to monitor for side effects after the initial three uses and every time there is a change in medication, diet, or lifestyle. Monitor for a minimum of 30 minutes to an hour, keeping a record of any changes or side effects that may occur.

This chart is an overview of application doses and how much of the application is the main active ingredient:

Application	Dosage
Poultice	Cover the size of the affected area with only the medicinal plant, with a thickness of roughly half an inch. Replace poultice 2-5 times daily.
Infusion and Decoction	25mg of dried plant or 50mg of fresh plant for every 500ml of water. Drink 90ml 1-3 times daily.
Tincture	1 ounce of plant material to 500ml of liquid. 30-40 drops daily.
Oil	Pack-fill the container with fresh and/or dried plants and add oil to the top. Use as necessary.
Ointments	1 cup of plant material to 5 cups wax/oil/butter. Reapply 1-2 times daily.

Implementing Proper Handling and Storage Protocols

It's crucial for an herbalist to follow proper handling and storage protocols to ensure the quality of the medicine created is safe and meets the highest standards of application. Every herbalist has customized protocols and procedures which include steps for proper handling during harvesting and processing, and steps for storing your ingredients properly. When creating your protocols you need to consider the safety and sanitation of the tools you use for harvesting and processing, the medicinal potential of the plants you harvest, the cleanliness of your workstation, and the quality of medicine and final product.

Keeping notes of your harvesting locations, as well as having a protocol for record keeping and inventory is a helpful practice by keeping track of your experiences and keeping a reliable kit. Here are some guidelines you can customize to create step-by-step protocols for your herbalism kit:

Handling Protocol	Storage Protocol
✓ Sharpen, clean and sanitize all tools. ✓ Use clean gloves when harvesting. ✓ Harvest only healthy, dry, and clean plants. ✓ Cut and store in a sanitized container immediately, do not rest harvested plants on the ground. ✓ Remove the harvested plant from the container within 5 hours. ✓ Use a clean and sanitized workstation to process or dry the plant directly after removal from the container.	✓ Clean and sanitize all tools, storage containers, tables, and shelves. ✓ Use clean and sanitized gloves when handling plants. ✓ Use the proper storing container. ✓ Label all storage containers appropriately. ✓ Never store in direct sunlight. ✓ Clean and monitor stored inventory weekly.

The Ethics of Harvesting

As an herbalist, there is a code of ethics that is practiced. The code of ethics exists for the betterment of the herbalists' main resource and to remain in good standing with the neighborhood by maintaining respectable practices. The code of ethics is personal and customizable to individual herbalists, though the agreement is the same; be smart and respectful. Here are some ethics for you to adopt into your code:

- Do not harvest species that are endangered or threatened. Help spread the seeds of these species to increase the population and the likelihood of being able to harvest again. The species listed in the key plants for your herbalism kit include these species that may be endangered and should either be cultivated in your garden, from a nursery, or substituted: Echinacea and Goldenseal
- Harvest dry plants in the morning, only ⅓ of the crop at the appropriate time of year to avoid damaging the reproduction of next year's growth.
- Always make your cuts at a 45-degree angle.

- Don’t ever disturb wildlife or destroy a home.
- Avoid areas that are sprayed with pesticides.
- Inspect the plant before and after harvesting for signs of poor health, insects (especially burrowing insects), etc., and continue to monitor throughout the drying process.
- Always thank the plants and the land you are harvesting from. Most herbalists provide an offering as a thank you in exchange.
- Be sure to harvest enough to last the year. Never harvest more than you need.
- If you are interested in harvesting a plant on private property, be it a national park or a person’s residence, ask permission from the owner because you might find them more than happy and willing to share.

Part 2: Mastering Your Herbalism Kit

Chapter 5: Foundational Herbal Knowledge

Herbal Properties and Actions

Herbal properties and actions refer to the specific effects that plants and their chemical compounds can have on the human body. Typically, a plant is either poison, bad for us, or medicinal, good for us. These effects are based on scientific research and ancient traditional use. Researchers have found the active chemical compounds in medicinal herbs, such as alkaloids, polyphenols, and terpenes, and noticed they interact with the body's natural processes to produce various physiological changes. These physiological changes influence the body's inflammation, oxidative stress, microbial growth, and hormonal regulation.

A plant uses these chemical compounds as its protection method. Plants create slightly different chemicals from one another for their various types of prey. As we use these plants for medicinal benefits, the plants release these chemical compounds as our bodies break the ingredients down and reap the rewards of those plant actions.

Every plant action has a specific health condition that it will aid and can combine with other plant actions for complex health conditions. These are the primary medicinal plant actions found in the key plants of your kit, what to use them for, and when not to use them. For a complete list, please see resources.

Plant Action	Use	Do NOT Use
Vulnerary	Helps heal wounds and inflammation.	In cases of a compromised immune system or pregnancy and breastfeeding. Medications such as anticoagulants, antibiotics, vascular disease, circulation, or diabetes.
Antispasmodic	Prevents spasms and cramps in muscles. Relieves tension physically and psychologically.	In cases of pregnancy, GI conditions, low blood pressure, or neurological conditions. With antidepressants, antihypertensives, or sedatives.

Plant Action	Use	Do NOT Use
Diuretic	Increases the amount of urine produced.	In cases of kidney or liver disease, elderly, pregnant or breastfeeding, heart disease or low blood pressure, or diabetes. Medications such as cardiovascular, lithium, corticosteroids, NSAIDS, antidepressants, or antibiotics.
Immunomodulator	Stimulates the natural immune system which enhances its response to infectious diseases and illnesses.	In cases of autoimmunity, pregnancy, organ transplant, heart disease, or high blood pressure. Interferes with medications such as immunosuppressants, anticoagulants, antidepressants, cardiovascular, chemotherapy, diabetes, and hormone.
Antimicrobial	Kills and prevents the growth of pathogens such as bacteria, fungi, infections, protozoan, and viruses.	In cases of kidney or liver disease, pregnancy, or GI conditions. Interferes with immunosuppressants, antibiotics, antifungals, or cardiovascular.
Antiemetic	Reduces or eliminates the feeling of nausea and prevents or reduces vomiting.	In cases of breastfeeding or pregnancy, liver or kidney disease, bleeding disorders, GI disorder, or heart disease. Interferes with medications for nausea, diabetes, depression, GI, blood, immune system, cardio, or chemo.
Bitter	Explains the taste. Stimulates an appetite, improves gut and digestive health, improves circulation, relaxes stress and improves overall health.	In cases of pregnancy, dysmenorrhea, gallbladder disease, gastritis, GRD, hiatus hernia, kidney stones, or peptic ulcers. Interferes with medications such as blood thinners, diabetes prescription, statins, antacids, immunosuppressants, antidepressants, or thyroid medication.
Relaxing nervine	Relaxes the nerves, calms stress.	In cases of pregnancy, liver or kidney disease, or substance abuse. Interferes with medications such as sedatives and hypnotics, antidepressants, and for mood disorders.

Plant Action	Use	Do NOT Use
Adaptogen	Helps the body adapt to stressors, regulating the body's stress response, cortisol levels, adrenal gland function, and supports health overall. Enhances effects of other medicinal plant actions.	In cases of autoimmune disorder, pregnancy, hormone-sensitivity, heart disease, high blood pressure, or diabetes. Medications such as antidepressants or blood thinners.
Demulcent	Soothes irritation and moisturizes internally. Helps prevent diarrhea, strengthens the digestive tract, reduces and relaxes spasms in digestive and urinary muscles, and eases coughing. Works as an emollient externally.	In cases of pregnancy or breastfeeding, diabetes, or GI conditions. Interferes with medications such as antacids, diabetes, diuretics, anticoagulants, cardiac, and psychiatric.
Cardioactive	Improves the performance of the heart and activates blood flow, increasing heart rate, body warmth, and perspiration.	In cases of breastfeeding or pregnancy, heart conditions, arrhythmias. Medications such as cardiac glycosides, blood thinners, antiarrhythmic prescription, hypertension prescription, antidepressants, or immunosuppressants.
Astringent	Tightens skin, reduces irritation and inflammation internally and externally, controls oil and mucous production both internal and external. Creates a barrier against infections.	In cases of kidney or liver disease. Interferes with medications such as antidepressants, blood thinners, diabetes, or chemotherapy.
Anti-inflammatory	Helps the body combat inflammatory triggers present in the body, aiding in the relief of inflammation.	In cases of pregnancy, bleeding disorders, liver or kidney disease. Interferes with medications for cardiovascular, autoimmunity, corticosteroids, or antidepressants.

Chapter 6: Preparing Herbal Remedies

Preparing Your Workspace

The most appropriate and effective way to prepare your workspace is to start with a clear space and organize the working ingredients on your left. Have your tools in front of you, with the product containers and labels on the right. Only work on one remedy/recipe at once to avoid contamination that could alter doses and ingredients.

Poultices and Compresses

Using dried herbs, fresh plants, or both, grind the desired amount in a mortar and pestle, adding little bits of hot water to make a paste. Make enough to cover the affected area in a thickness of roughly half an inch. Apply while warm. Use gauze or cheesecloth to compress and wrap the poultice securely, if necessary. Discard the used poultice and reapply a warm poultice every few hours or as needed.

Tinctures and Syrups

A simple tincture can be made by adding chopped dried or fresh plants into an air-tight sealable container, covering the ingredients with alcohol, and closing the container tightly. Store this container in a warm, dark room for 2-4 weeks, shaking twice daily. Strain the liquid into an amber glass dropper bottle, and it's ready to use when needed. Mix 1 part tincture and three parts liquid sugar (honey, maple syrup, melted sugar) for a tasty syrup.

Infusions and Decoctions

To make an infusion, add the dried ingredients to boiled water, stir, and let steep for 10-15 minutes. Drink while it's hot.

To make a decoction, add dried or fresh plant to a pot of water. Bring to a boil and simmer for the required amount of time, 10-15 minutes if not stated. Put a lid on if the ingredients contain volatile oils. Strain and drink while it's still hot.

Oils and Ointments (Salves, Balms, Waxes)

Herbal-infused oil is made by packing a canning jar full of fresh plant ingredients, covering the ingredients in oil, and putting the lid on. Next, leave it in a warm, dark room for 2-4 weeks OR double boil the jar for 2-6 hours. After that time, strain the oil into an amber glass container for use.

Making a salve requires the oil prepared above using the double boiling method. Strain the hot oil into the container for salve, filling it halfway. While the oil is still hot, slowly stir in beeswax, filling the rest of the container. Set aside to cool.

Capsules and Tablets

To fill capsules, use finely ground or powdered dried plant ingredients. Place ingredients in a bowl and fill each half of the capsule by scooping up the ingredients with the capsule halves and close together once filled.

To make tablets, place finely ground or powdered dried plant ingredients mixed with a binding agent into a tablet press to form a single dose tablet. If you don't have a tablet press, you can attempt to compress the single-dose ingredients tightly using your fingers or other pressing utensils.

Chapter 7: Recipes for Addressing Common Health Concerns

Here is a list of recipes for common ailments that you can make using the key plants in your herbalism kit. These recipes come from world-renowned herbalists and can be found in the books provided in the resources in chapter 8, along with hundreds of medicinal plant recipes for you to use.

Skin Conditions

Remedy	Ingredients	Instructions
Herb Infused Oil	1 cup olive oil 1 ounce dried broadleaf plantain leaves OR 4 ounce fresh broadleaf plantain leaves	1. Pack broadleaf plantain leaves into a 500ml canning jar 2. Fill jar with olive oil, covering the plant completely 3. Double boil the canning jar with the lid on for 2-6 hours to desired potency 4. Strain the oil into its final container for use
Salve	3 tablespoons of Herb Infused Oil 3 tablespoons of melted beeswax ⅛ teaspoon of coconut oil	1. Add the above herb infused oil while still hot to a 100ml container for final use 2. Stir in the melted beeswax and coconut oil to the hot herb infused oil, enough to fill the container just under the brim 3. Put the lid on, set aside to cool. Use once cooled

Digestion and Indigestion

Remedy	Ingredients	Instructions
Infusion for Heartburn	1 tbsp of Slippery Elm root powder 1 cup of water Cream/Milk to taste Sweetener to taste	1. Boil water and add to a mug 2. Stir in the slippery elm root powder until it's completely dissolved 3. Let rest for 3-5 minutes 4. Add cream/milk/sweetener to taste. Stir and enjoy
Tincture for Diarrhea	1g of coarsely ground dried Goldenseal root and/or leaf 500ml of concentrated 60% ABV/120 proof vodka	1. Mix together the goldenseal and alcohol in an amber glass, air-tight, sealable container 2. Stir thoroughly and put a lid on 3. Store on a dark shelf, shaking daily for 14 days 4. Strain and press into a final container for use
Infusion for Constipation	1 tbsp of Dandelion or Slippery Elm Root powder 1 cup of water Cream/Milk to taste Sweetener to taste	1. Boil water and add to a mug 2. Stir in the dandelion or slippery elm root powder until it's completely dissolved 3. Let rest for 3-5 minutes 4. Add cream/milk/sweetener to taste. Stir and enjoy

Pain and Inflammation

Remedy	Ingredients	Instructions
Joint Pain Tablet	500mg of Turmeric powder 50mg of corn starch 50mg of black pepper powder 5-10mg of coconut oil	1. Mix together all ingredients thoroughly 2. Press using a tablet press, pressing utensils, or fingers for a single dose tablet
Muscle Pain Massage Oil	1 cup of olive or coconut oil ½ cup of dried Chamomile flowers 2 tbsp of dried Lavender flowers	1. Pack chamomile and lavender into a 500ml canning jar 2. Fill jar with olive oil or melted coconut oil to 1 inch under the brim, covering the plant completely 3. Double boil the canning jar with the lid on for 1 hour 4. Strain the oil into its final container for use 5. Best used warm
Headache or Migraine Oil Compress	2 drops of Lavender infused oil 1 cup of warm water	1. Add lavender infused oil to the water and stir 2. Wet a cloth in the mixture, wring, and place on forehead until cool, repeat

Cold and Flu Symptoms

Remedy	Ingredients	Instructions
Infusion	½ tsp of dried Thyme 1 cup of water	1. Boil water and add to a mug 2. Stir in the thyme 3. Let rest for 10 minutes 4. Drink ⅓ cup 2-3 times a day

Hair and Scalp

Remedy	Ingredients	Instructions
Wash for Hair	30g dried Broadleaf Plantain 30g of dried Lavender flowers 5 cups of boiled water	1. Add broadleaf plantain and lavender to boiled water and steep for 5 minutes 2. Strain the water into a large bowl/bucket, squeezing the water from the plants 3. Using a washcloth, while the solution is still warm massage your hair and scalp, or soak your head completely, no need to rinse with water after
Herb Infused Oil for Scalp	1 cup olive oil 1 ounce dried chamomile flowers 4 ounce fresh chamomile flowers	1. Pack broadleaf plantain leaves into a 500ml canning jar 2. Fill jar with olive oil, covering the plant completely 3. Double boil the canning jar with the lid on for 2-6 hours to desired potency 4. Strain the oil into its final container for use

Chapter 8: Expanding Your Herbal Practice

Growing a Medicinal Herb Garden

There are herb gardens and there are herb lawns. A garden is a proper environment for delicate herbs and plants of tall stature and bushing flowers such as evening primrose or goldenrod. An herb lawn is optimal for low-growers and crawlers that can handle foot traffic such as creeping thyme or pennyroyal.

Growing a medicinal herb garden or lawn requires a lot of thought, planning, and hard work. When planning, it's important to consider the relationships between the plants and their surrounding environment. The placement and arrangement of herbs can have a significant impact on their success in life; for example, certain herbs function as companion plants, providing benefits to their neighbors through pest deterrence, soil enrichment, and symbiotic root systems. Planting herbs in polycultures or guilds can promote biodiversity and create a self-sustaining ecosystem.

The shape, location, and orientation of garden beds can also influence the amount of sun, air circulation, and water drainage. Raised beds or mounded rows may be preferable for some plants that thrive in well-draining soil. Remember to consider the mature size and the growth habits of each herb to ensure proper spacing and prevent overcrowding in the garden's future.

Cultivating medicinal plants in your herbal garden is the most effective method to avoid harming endangered species. Responsible home cultivation can even increase the wild populations of certain at-risk plant species by helping conserve and spread their seeds along with reducing pressures on vulnerable habitats. This is also the most reliable source for clean, uncontaminated ingredients to maintain a reputable practice.

Be mindful and methodical with the amount of herbs you grow. You need to have enough herbs to replenish your yearly stock and have enough left over to produce next year's crop, over and above any lost crops. Below are some tips for cultivating the key plants in your herbalism kit, provided by The Herbalism Handbook.

- **Lavender**

L. angustifolia (formerly *Lavendula officinalis*) grows best and produces the finest fragrance when grown on well-drained but moisture-retaining soil in a sunny place. To keep lavender bushes

compact and shapely they must be clipped over with shears to the base of the flowering stems as soon as the flowers have been gathered or have faded. If this is not done in late autumn it can be done just as the new growth starts in spring.

Lavender is a short-lived plant and needs to be replaced after five to seven years. It is readily propagated by tearing small slips of ripened shoots from a healthy plant and inserting these in sandy soil in the open ground in late summer. One year later they can be planted finally.

- **Rosemary**

This shrub, *Rosmarinus officinalis*, requiring sun and good drainage, is best grown in the shelter of a wall. When grown in the open garden it may be damaged by the winter gale. Young and vigorous plants will withstand severe winter conditions better than woody bushes, and once the plants have become straggling, they should be replaced. This is usually necessary after five to six years.

Careful pruning will help to keep the growth compact, but branches should never be cut back into bare wood. Propagation is simple as short woody shoots removed from the parent plant in summer will root easily in sandy soil in the open.

- **Thyme**

Thymus vulgaris, this is the thyme most commonly grown in gardens. An ideal position for it is a sloping bank of well-drained soil in full sun, but if this is not available a bed of stony soil should be prepared. As the leafy shoots fade the bushes should be clipped over with shears; this will encourage a new growth of shoots for the remainder of the summer. After this second crop has been gathered in early September the plants should again be trimmed with shears.

After four to five years the plants become increasingly woody and less productive of young shoots for kitchen use and will need to be replaced by newly propagated stock. Young plants can be obtained from the original stock by filling the plant with well-drained soil up to the base of the young wood. New roots will form on this wood and the plant can be lifted the following spring and the rooted growths separated and transplanted. After reviewing this small selection of plants let us now consider how all plant material may be harvested, dried, stored and prepared for use.

Herbal Education, Community, and Resources

Engaging with online communities dedicated to plant identification and herbalism further enhances this learning experience by connecting you with like-minded individuals, sharing knowledge, and contributing to the preservation of traditional wisdom. These communities provide valuable information, from educational articles to interactive projects, all aimed at fostering a deeper understanding of the natural world. Here are a few resources you can use:

Resources and Archives

Google Scholar - Reputable journals from medical studies completed by scientists, professors, universities, hospitals, professional researchers, and more.

ResearchGate - Researchers online database for posting journals, sharing knowledge, and sharing answers to questions in a community.

Mobile apps for identifying plants, animals, and anything in nature. Some apps are connected to a web database. When you scan an item, the apps will tell you what species it is, along with any information about the species, a global map of sightings and locations, and a community with photos and comments. You can even use some of these apps without the internet or data.

Base Recipes for Experimenting

There are a few basic formulas or ratios herbalists use as a guideline when practicing a new recipe or when creating a new recipe. With the proper knowledge you can adjust the formulas to suit your needs. If you need a potent recipe, you could increase the amount of active ingredients used. People can have allergies to a particular plant and that is when a substitute should be used. Here's a helpful tip: **1 part dried herb = 4 parts fresh herb**.

Infusion/Tea	3 herb blend: 50% active herb, 30% supportive herb, 20% catalyst herb 1 dose: 25mg dried or 50mg fresh in 1 cup of water
Oil	4oz of dried active plant or 16oz fresh active plant 1000ml of oil
Tincture	1g of dried active plant or 4g of fresh active plant 500ml of alcohol

What You Can Take from This Book

As a modern herbalist, you understand the power and potential of plant-based remedies. This comprehensive guide equips you with the essential knowledge and tools to cultivate and prepare a wide range of medicinal herbs and the guidance of which plant actions remedy specific ailments. Throughout this book, we have only explored the surface of herbalism, medicinal plants, and their actions. Let's recap the key takeaways:

Plants and Tools

For a comprehensive herbalism kit keep it stocked with a diverse variety of medicinal plants chosen for their specific actions and healing properties. While there are thousands of medicinal plants, focus on including a core set of elemental plants known to remedy the most common ailments. These core plants are selected based on their unique actions such as anti-inflammatory or diuretic effects - that can combat a wide range of health issues. Beyond the plants, an herbalist's kit must also contain the proper tools, like leather gloves and herb pouches, and application methods, whether teas, tinctures, lotions, or other applications.

Developing Formulas

Being sensible of plant actions and traditional uses, you can determine the best applications for specific health ailments. When formulating a blend, the first consideration is the ailment type (internal or external) since this tells you which method of application to use, either ingestion or topical. Refine these formulas through trial and error, adjusting ingredient ratios while observing effects, focusing on active ingredients, complementary actions, balanced synergies, and pleasant aromas. The ingredients must also account for potential herb-herb, herb-drug, and herb-condition interactions to ensure safety and suitability. Proper storage in air-tight containers in cool, dark, and dry areas and comprehensive labeling of all medicinal products are also essential.

Remedies and Applications

There are multiple remedies in various application methods, and each addresses specific health concerns. A poultice made from soothing herbs like chamomile can work topically for skin conditions, while an herbal-infused oil can create a nourishing salve or ointment.

Digestive issues and indigestion could respond to an herbal tincture or decoction using carminative herbs. For cold and flu, an immune-boosting herbal infusion or syrup made from ingredients like echinacea can provide relief. Target pain and inflammation with a warming herbal compress or capsules containing anti-inflammatory plants. An herbal rinse or oil treatment formulated with soothing herbs is effective on hair and scalp.

Harvesting Ethics

There is a personal code of ethics to be practiced for the betterment of the herbalist's resource and to maintain respectful relationships. This code of ethics includes spending time with plants to sense their energy before harvesting, only taking a third of the crop at the appropriate time to avoid damaging future growth, avoiding endangered species, inspecting plants for health issues, and always expressing gratitude. You should also obtain permission before harvesting on private property, support local communities, and only harvest what you need for the year. By adopting these ethical practices, herbalists can responsibly utilize their natural resources while maintaining a healthy environment.

Growing Your Own Medicine

A medicinal herb garden or lawn requires careful planning and consideration of the relationships between plants and their environment. Consider factors including companion planting, polycultures, garden bed design, and mature plant size to create a thriving, self-sustaining ecosystem. Cultivating medicinal herbs at home is the most effective way to avoid harming endangered wild populations while ensuring a reliable, uncontaminated source of ingredients. Growers must be mindful to produce enough to meet their yearly needs while preserving stock for future seasons.