

On-The-Go

HERBAL FIRST-AID KIT

BY MARLENE ADELMANN

Does anyone ever use first-aid kits? You may notice the familiar white metal box with the white cross in a red circle hanging inconspicuously in kitchens or flanking the walls of public restrooms. But I dare say that the only item that ever really makes its way out of the box is the occasional run-of-the-mill bandage. First-aid kits certainly have their place (and bandages are a must-have), but what if we considered making ones that were filled with useful, powerful natural herbal preparations? These herbal first-aid kits could help with many injuries or illnesses, both at home and on-the-go.





5 HERBS FOR YOUR HERBAL FIRST-AID KIT

Herbal first-aid kits should be compact! When space is limited, you need to make smart decisions about what to include. Whether you are looking to stock your medicine cabinet or prepare a kit for your next hike, beach outing, or camping trip, here are five herbs that can make an ordinary first-aid kit a real rescue resource.

CALENDULA (*CALENDULA OFFICINALIS*)

- ☞ helps the body resist pathogens
- ☞ helps soothe hot, swollen tissues
- ☞ eases indigestion by stimulating gastric juices and bile production, and eases smooth muscle cramping
- ☞ use as tea, poultice, infused oil, salve, or tincture

GINGER ROOT (*ZINGIBER OFFICINALE*)

- ☞ thins the blood, relaxes muscle tension, and promotes perspiration when the body is too hot
- ☞ used for intestinal cramping, indigestion, and gas as a digestive aid and carminative
- ☞ combats an oncoming cold and eases nausea and motion sickness
- ☞ best used in dried form in an herbal first-aid kit

LAVENDER (*LAVANDULA SPP.*)

- ☞ soothes wounds, itchy rashes, bug bites, and painful sunburns
- ☞ releases tension in the body, relaxing strained muscles and easing headaches
- ☞ aids falling asleep or anxiety

PEPPERMINT (*MENTHA × PIPERITA*)

- ☞ eases stomach aches and intestinal cramping associated with gas and diarrhea
- ☞ hot tea stimulates circulation, warming the body and encouraging perspiration to cool the body
- ☞ eases the tension and pain of headaches
- ☞ brings a cooling sensation to the skin useful for sunburns, bug bites, rashes, and sore throats

YARROW (*ACHILLEA MILLEFOLIUM*)

- ☞ helps staunch bleeding internally and externally, and soothes the itch of bug bites and weepy rashes
- ☞ hot tea is helpful in lowering hot body temperatures by stimulating perspiration
- ☞ eases cuts, scrapes, and sore throats
- ☞ often used as a digestive herb to ease upset stomach, cramping, gas, and indigestion ☞



PRE-PACKAGED SIMPLES TEA

One of the easiest ways to reap the benefits of the herbs in your kit is through pre-packaged simples tea. (A “simple” is an herbal preparation made with just one herb.) Each herb can be purchased in pre-packaged tea bags and stored in your kit until needed. Whether it’s ginger tea to warm you on a cold night, chamomile for headaches or restlessness, or peppermint to ease an upset stomach, preparing simples tea bags is always a good idea. Plus, it’s so easy — just add hot water!

You Will Need

- ◆ Disposable tea bag (herb of choice: ginger, lavender, peppermint, etc.)
- ◆ Glass mug
- ◆ 8 oz. boiled water
- ◆ Sweetener (optional)

To Make

Place a pre-packaged simples tea bag in a glass mug. Cover with boiled water and allow to steep for five to 10 minutes. Remove the tea bag. Sweeten as desired and drink.

SIMPLE CALENDULA SALVE

This recipe is excerpted from the Herbal Academy's Introductory Herbal Course. It's easy to make and a staple for many herbalists, which is why we recommend it to our beginning students as a component of an herbal first-aid kit. Use it for cuts, scrapes, dry hands or lips, poison ivy rashes, burns and sunburns, and even insect bites.

You Will Need

- ◆ ½ cup dried calendula flowers*
- ◆ Jar w/ lid
- ◆ 1¼ cup olive oil
- ◆ Cheesecloth/Thin cloth
- ◆ Bowl/Funnel
- ◆ Pan
- ◆ 1 oz. beeswax pastilles*
- ◆ Containers

To Make

To make the calendula-infused oil, place calendula flowers in a clean, very dry jar. Cover the calendula with olive oil, making sure to cover all of the plant material. Place a lid on top of the jar. Let calendula infuse in the oil for four to six weeks in a dark, warm, dry place, shaking gently every few days. Check to make sure the herbs remain submerged below the oil. ❧



Once the oil is infused, strain out the herbs by layering a couple of pieces of cheesecloth or another thin cloth over a bowl or in a funnel. Pour the oil and calendula into the cloth and let drain. After the oil has drained, gather the cloth and using clean, dry hands, squeeze any remaining oil out of the calendula. You should have a little bit more than 1 cup of calendula-infused olive oil. The general proportion for getting a good consistency when making salve is 1 cup of oil to 1 ounce (by weight) of beeswax. It is helpful to have a little extra oil and beeswax on hand if you need to adjust the consistency.

Measure 1 cup of oil into a pan and add 1 ounce of beeswax pastilles. On low heat, gently melt the beeswax into the oil. Once the beeswax is melted, test the salve for consistency by placing a bit of the salve on a spoon and putting the spoon in the freezer. Wait a few minutes for the salve to set and then see if you like the consistency. If it is too hard, add a little more oil to the pot; if it is too soft, add a little more beeswax and then repeat the spoon test. Once satisfied, pour the salve into clean, dry containers, such as little canning jars or tins. Label the salve and use as needed!

FIRST-AID KIT YARROW TINCTURE

While yarrow is often found in fields and roadsides, it's always wise to come prepared with a small bottle of yarrow tincture in case you can't find it growing fresh where you are. A yarrow tincture can help cleanse wounds, stop bleeding, soothe rashes and intestinal distress, lower fevers, and more. To use your yarrow tincture, squirt a small amount in warm water to cleanse wounds and slow bleeding, or to apply to rashes. Add 10–20 drops to a cup of hot water for digestion and fevers.

You Will Need

- ◆ Jars
- ◆ 1 oz. dried yarrow, by weight
- ◆ 5 oz. vodka/brandy, by volume, 80 proof/higher
- ◆ Cheesecloth
- ◆ Amber bottle w/ dropper cap

To Make

Add dried yarrow to a clean, dry jar that will hold at least 8 ounces of liquid. Pour vodka or brandy over the herbs until they are completely covered. Dry herbs may absorb the liquid, so check back and add more alcohol if needed. Set in a dark place to steep for four to six weeks, shaking every few days. Strain the tincture through several layers of cheesecloth into a clean jar, pressing on the herb material to release every last drop of tincture. Compost the yarrow. Transfer the tincture to a clean amber bottle with a dropper cap, and label. ❧





BUG REPELLENT OIL & SPRITZER

Making your own bug repellent using essential oils helps avoid synthetic ingredients found in store-bought versions, while effectively keeping bugs away. Store these products in small containers so you can take them with you in your kit. Use the spritzer on your clothes and hair, and rub the oil into your skin as needed, covering you from head to toe with a scent that's sure to keep the bugs away. This is not suitable for children 10 years old and younger.

You Will Need

BUG REPELLENT BLEND

- ◆ 10 drops sage essential oil
- ◆ 10 drops rosemary essential oil
- ◆ 10 drops thyme essential oil
- ◆ 10 drops lavender essential oil*
- ◆ 10 drops peppermint essential oil*

BUG REPELLENT OIL

- ◆ 1 oz. sweet almond oil
- ◆ 12 drops Bug Repellent Blend
- ◆ Glass bottle*

BUG REPELLENT SPRITZER

- ◆ 5-6 drops Bug Repellent Blend
- ◆ 1 TB. distilled water
- ◆ 1 TB. vodka
- ◆ 1-oz. bottle



To Make

BUG REPELLENT BLEND

Combine all essential oils.

BUG REPELLENT OIL

Combine almond oil with essential oil in a small glass bottle. Mix well, and store in a cool place.

BUG REPELLENT SPRITZER

Combine essential oil, distilled water, and vodka in a 1-ounce bottle. Shake well before each use. Not for dermal use.

IMMEDIATE BURN CARE REMEDY

Sunburns are common occurrences when exploring the outdoors, as are other burns, so it's helpful to have something on hand for these situations. This Immediate Burn Care Remedy can help to soothe hot, inflamed skin, not only making it feel cool but also encouraging it to repair itself more quickly. Note that lavender essential oil should be diluted in a carrier oil before topical application.

You Will Need

- 1 TB. thick aloe gel
- 1–3 drops lavender essential oil*

To Make

For a first-degree burn or sunburn, mix aloe gel and essential oil thoroughly, and apply directly to area. Use as needed.

Note

- All of the herbs mentioned here can be grown in your own garden, ordered from an herb supplier, or found in your local supermarket or health food store. The recipes are easy to follow, and you can be creative with your packaging and kit assembly. You may use smaller containers for a travel kit and perhaps larger, attractive ones for your home cupboard.

Marlene Adelman is the herbalist and founder of the Herbal Academy, an international school of herbal arts and sciences. To learn more, visit theherbalacademy.com.

15 Summer Fruits, Herbs & Vegetables

FOR YOUR BEAUTY ROUTINE

Not only are seasonal fruits, herbs, and vegetables good to eat, they can also be utilized in your DIY beauty routine. Fruits, such as blueberries and apricots, are packed full of antioxidants that help slow the signs of aging as well as vitamin C that promotes healthy skin; while herbs, like lavender and chamomile, make soothing, restorative bath soaks, facial steams, and more. Even vegetables have a part to play! Next time you're at the local farmers market, make sure to grab your favorites to nibble on while exploring new beauty recipes.

Fruits

PINEAPPLE:
strengthens
gums and fights
gingivitis

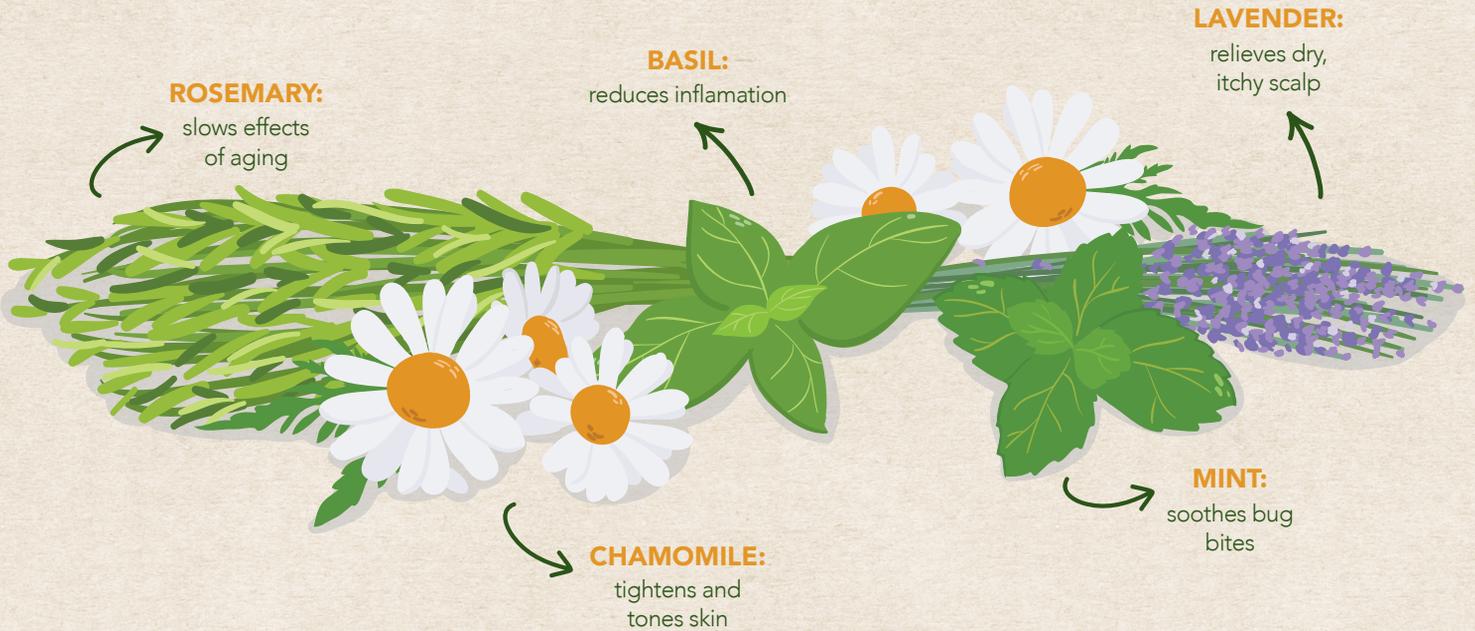
TOMATO:
reduces acne and
soothes sunburns

AVOCADO:
moisturizes skin

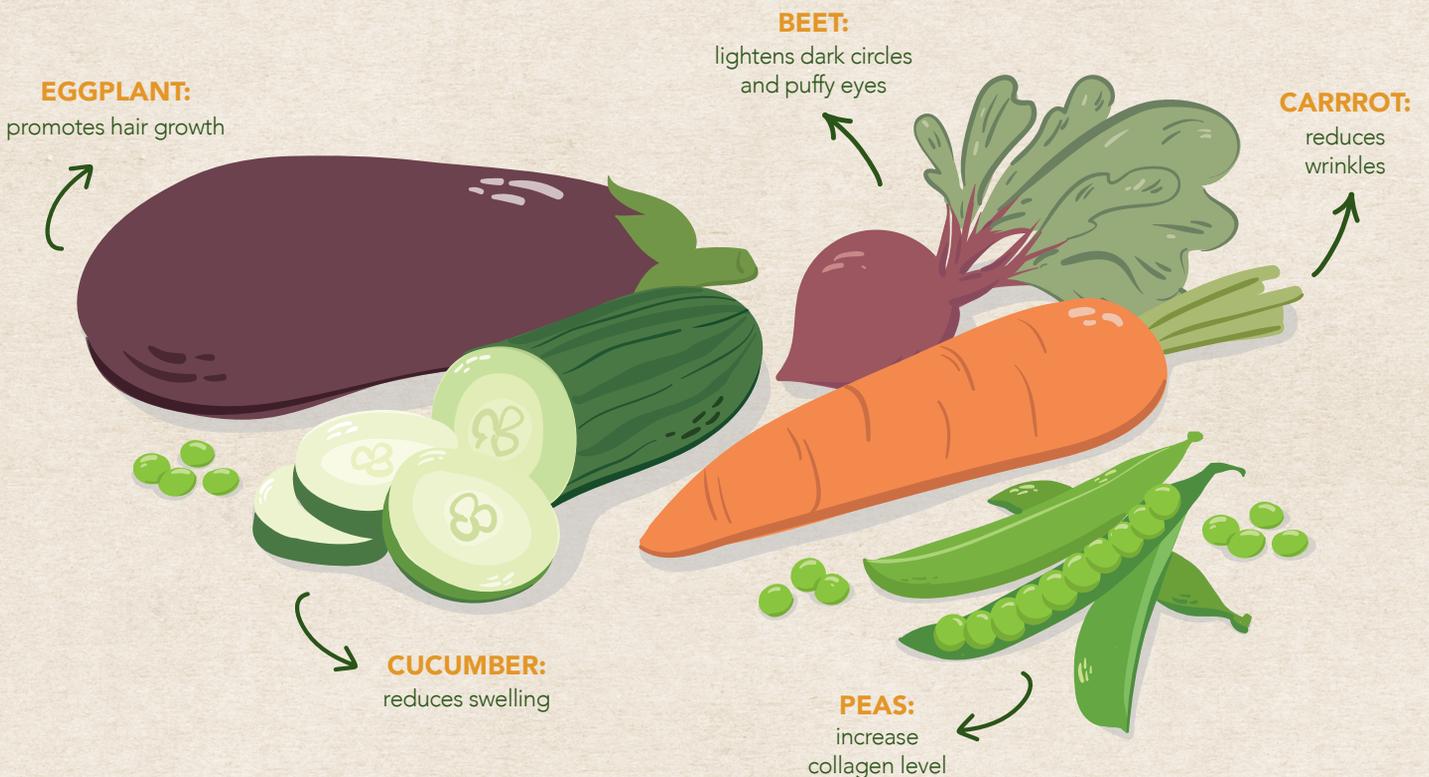
BERRIES:
hydrate the skin and
increase collagen/
elastin levels

APRICOT:
heals damaged
skin

Herbs



Vegetables





BUG

BITE

PASTE



DIY Bug Bite Paste

BY KAETLYN ANNE KENNEDY

Although summer is one of the best times of the year, itchy mosquito bites are less than fun. Occasionally, I will have a bite that becomes abnormally swollen, and my body needs extra help detoxifying from it. Instead of using an anti-itch cream from the store that is most likely filled with all kinds of iffy ingredients, I opt for something homemade and all natural. This bug bite paste is a simple recipe that my mom has used ever since I was little. She would make a paste out of baking soda and water to put on my bug bites that were swollen. The paste sucks the poison out of the bites, which helps with the itch and ultimately helps them heal faster.

I've added the option of incorporating essential oils into the paste. Lavender, peppermint, melaleuca, and frankincense are all very soothing and have great antibacterial properties. If you don't have essential oils, no worries! Baking soda and water works wonders alone. This can be used for mosquito bites, bee stings, or any other unpleasant bite you may encounter this summer. 🌿



You Will Need

- 1 TB. baking soda
- 1 tsp. filtered water
- 1–2 drops soothing essential oil: lavender/peppermint/melaleuca/frankincense (optional)
- Bowl
- Coconut oil

To Make

Mix the baking soda, water, and essential oils together in a bowl, and apply generously to the bug bite. Let sit for 10–15 minutes. The paste will harden and will easily flake off. Rinse the bug bite and apply coconut oil to soothe. Apply another drop of essential oil if extra relief is needed.

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HOW ESSENTIAL OILS REACT WITH *the Sun*

Because of the sun's UV light, it's crucial to understand the proper topical use of essential oils while enjoying the warm weather. Certain types, most commonly citrus oils, can cause photosensitivity due to compounds called furanocoumarins: a naturally occurring chemical produced by some plants as a defense mechanism. Phototoxicity occurs when certain chemical constituents bind to DNA in the skin and react with UV light, thus killing skin cells and damaging tissue. These types of burns can appear up to 24 hours after sun or UV exposure. If a reaction occurs, immediately step away from UV exposure and rinse the area with cool, lightly soapy water to help remove the oil. Seek medical advice if skin is painful or reaction covers a large portion of skin.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

- × Severe redness
- × Darkening
- × Swelling
- × Blisters

COMMON ESSENTIAL OILS TO AVOID WEARING IN THE SUN

- × Bergamot
- × Bitter orange (cold pressed)
- × Lemon (cold pressed)
- × Lime (cold pressed)
- × Cumin
- × Mandarin leaf
- × Rue
- × Fig Leaf Absolute

HELPFUL TIPS

- ☞ Always check the label before applying to determine the photosensitivity and to see what cautions are associated with the oil. Some steam-distilled and cold-pressed oils are OK to use.
- ☞ Follow the label instructions. Allow at least 12–48 hours before sun exposure for most undiluted photosensitive oils.
- ☞ If topical use is necessary, dilute the essential oils to a safe level and cover all effected skin from sun or UV exposure for up to 24 hours after application.

