Yarrow, often associated with divination and magic, gripped my interest when reading about its use by Hildegard of Bingen to prevent metastases of malignancies. Contemporary researchers of what is popularly known as “Hildegard Medicine” suggest using the yarrow wines of their 12th century mentor as well as homeopathic Millefolium before and after both surgery or radiation treatment. The anticancer properties are generally attributed to the sesquiterpene lactones.
The botanical name *Achillea millefolium* suggests a connection to the Greek hero of Troy, who purportedly used the dried leaves to staunch bleeding, something he learned from Chiron. The Anglo-Saxons used yarrow powder for similar purposes as well as burns and venomous bites. Fresh leaves can be chewed to relieve toothache. Placed against the eyes, yarrow is said to give second sight.

Interesting as these details from recorded history are, use of yarrow dates back even further. It was found on the body of a Neanderthal believed to be 40-60 thousand years old; and it is also reportedly growing on the grave of Confucius.

According to the doctrine of signatures, the appearance of an herb is suggestive of its uses. For instance, walnuts look a bit like the brain and are actually useful brain remedies. Yarrow leaves look like they have been scratched so they are applied to cuts and scratches. Yarrow can also be used for ulcers and sores. More importantly, the extract has demonstrated bactericidal effects against *Staphylococcus aureus*. Since this bacteria is frequently found on the skin and is a cause of wound infection, the fact that people from diverse cultures and apparently all eras used yarrow for wound treatment and healing is a cogent reminder of the wisdom we have inherited from our predecessors.

Though modern herbalists still employ yarrow for the same purposes, many are using yarrow for more psychological conditions, for instance, to dispel melancholy, or for psychospiritual alignment.

Yarrow leaves are edible and sometimes used in salads or soups; they are prepared in the same manner as spinach. Though the young leaves are a bit sweeter, the taste is mostly bitter but a little pungent and, of course, astringent as one would expect of a vulnerary. In Sweden, yarrow is sometimes used in place of hops for making beer.
Hildegard of Bingen was the abbess of a Benedictine convent on the Rhine. She was one of the best educated persons of the 12th century and her medicine, music, and mystical teachings continue to be appreciated by people around the world.

With respect to Hildegard’s use of yarrow to prevent metastasis of malignancies, we rely heavily on the medical doctors of our times to interpret her understanding, one that included the concept of miniature organism visible only to those with spiritual vision as the causative factor in tumors. The danger of metastasis was thought to increase with any intervention so to avert crises, the patient was urged to drink yarrow powder in fennel tea for three days prior to the procedure. Then, the powder could be added to warm wine for eight more days. This was understood to be protection, not treatment for the original tumor.

Yarrow promotes fast healing and freedom from wound-site infection:

*Whoever is wounded in the inside of the body, whether it came from a knife or inner injury, should powder yarrow and drink it in warm water. When better, the person should keep on drinking the powder in warm wine until healed.*

In the case of breast cancer, Hildegard had a salve made with violet petals that was rubbed into the swollen as well as ulcerated areas. She encouraged patients to allow the poisons to exit and use the ointment and yarrow to resolve residuals and heal properly.

*For it is the soul’s joy to become effective in the body. She strives forever to perfect the work of the body that was created by God.*

_Hildegard of Bingen, De Operatione Dei IV. 19_
Anti-neoplastic Properties

In vivo studies indicate antileukemic activity with the alcohol infusion of flowers. No similar effect was found with water extractions. The reverse was found with AIDS. The aqueous extraction showed a minimum 50% inhibition of infected cells whereas the alcohol extraction was less effective.

Yarrow Tincture

Yarrow is sometimes called “Englishman’s quinine” because achilleine was substituted for the famed antimalarial drug, this in an empire where the mosquito-borne parasite had a “mission aborting potential” that was often regarded as more dangerous than the bayonet.

Yarrow has been used to treat chills and fever. It reduces fever by inducing sweating. This diaphoretic property was highly regarded by the late Dr. John Christopher who believed that successful treatment following exposure to fast spreading germs, such as influenza, depends on the ability to raise the body temperature and promote elimination through the pores of the skin. Cayenne, ginger, or peppermint can be used to augment the yarrow effects. If using this method, care should be taken to assure efficient elimination. Properly administered, significant relief can be expected within 24 hours.

Note: by increasing blood circulation to the skin and reducing of lipids in the blood, some lowering of blood pressure is to be expected when taking yarrow. In a massage oil, yarrow has the same effect on cellulite as internal use has on lipids in the blood.

With “eruptive” disorders such as measles and chickenpox, use of yarrow reduces the recovery time. Where there is mucus accumulation, adding some hot spices to the yarrow helps clear up the conditions.

Yarrow can also be used whenever there is bleeding, such as heavy menstrual flow as well as for the other purposes discussed herein, especially nosebleeds.

Yarrow is a diuretic and promotes more efficient elimination of waste. This is the mechanism used to quell fevers. It has some pain relieving properties, especially where the pain may be associated with congestion, such as some headaches and menstrual cramps.

Serious uses include nephritis, Bright’s disease, and pneumonia.

Constituents: Like most herbs, yarrow contains many chemical constituents, including essential oils, resin and gum, tannin, flavonoids, bitters, salicylic acid, sterols, coumarins, and vitamins A, C, E, F, and K, to name a few. The bitters stimulate the flow of gastric juices and bile and act as a tonic to the digestive and eliminatory systems. Yarrow has antispasmodic properties that relieve cramping. It is also relaxing to peripheral blood vessels. However, its main use is as a hemostatic. It is used to stop hemorrhaging, especially in the lungs and bowels. For this purpose, the properties of the leaves are more suitable than those of the flowers which are more aromatic and less astringent. The flowers are more diaphoretic and are therefore used at the onset of fevers, colds, and infections.

Dosage

For general use, the tincture is most suitable. The dosage is 2-4 ml, three times per day, meaning a two ounce bottle should last 5-10 days. For the conditions discussed by practitioners of Hildegard medicine—preparation for surgery or other cancer treatment—as well as traditional uses, such as onset of fevers, congestion and catarrh, amenorrhea and dysmenorrhea, urinary tract disorders, including cystitis, and general detoxification following exposure to toxins, this dosage is usually sufficient. Those who wish to make their own remedies can add some dried flowers to white wine or sake.
**Contraindications**

Yarrow should not be used during the first trimester of pregnancy, some sources say it should also not be used by nursing women, probably because of the astringency. Long term use can result in photosensitivity for some users. As with most herbs, some people will be allergic and should avoid both internal use and contact with the skin.

**Diabetes**

Rodent studies in Russia suggest a hypoglycemic effect.

**Extraction Method**

Yarrow leaves are more astringent than the flowers which are more aromatic. The astringent properties, tannins, are what stop loss of fluids. This is why yarrow is used to staunch bleeding as well as control incontinence and diarrhea. The unique bitter principle, achillein, is more soluble in water than alcohol and not at all in ether. These facts makes the method of extraction important since the same pharmacological actions will not be consistent either from one plant part to another much less one extraction method to another.

**Homeopathic Millefolium**

Consistent with herbal uses, homeopathic Millefolium is used for nosebleeds, bleeding hemorrhoids or ulcers, and hemorrhaging when the blood is bright red. It is also used for chicken pox, following surgery for gall stones, and after falls from heights or ill effects from lifting something too heavy. The affinity for the female reproductive system is again seen by virtue of the fact that this is often the remedy chosen for bleeding following miscarriage or child birth.

**Ayurveda: Biranjasipha, Gandana**

In Ayurveda, yarrow is used in a similar manner as elsewhere in the world: pitta reducing herb, especially for those with fevers. Yarrow is an ingredient in the famous Liv 52 formula that is often used for liver regeneration following major exposure to toxicity or illness.

**Veterinary Medicine**

Yarrow leaves are given to horses to relieve intestinal parasites. An ointment is used for scab on sheep and collar sores on horses. The flowers are administered internally to reduce inflammation. They have a calming effect on the animals with whom they are used.

_Yarrow has been under experimental research as an antidote for radiation exposure, as an anticancer as well as antitumor agent, as an aid to detoxification from drugs and alcohol. It is useful in severe skin rashes and for wounds that will not heal._

*Jeanne Rose*
Yarrow Flower Essence

Following the guidance of Dr. Aubrey Westlake, the British pioneer of medical dowsing, since 1978, the Flower Essence Society (FES) has produced a special formula of yarrow for use in cases of radiation poisoning, this whether from x-rays, fallout, or natural causes. It is now known as YES for Yarrow Environmental Solution. In Japan, it is used to reduce the stresses of urban living as well as prolonged work at the computer. Others use this or similar formulas to reduce the risk of radiation exposure while flying, especially at high altitudes.

Westlake was guided to his ideas by Patricia Kaminski who suggested that animals are particularly sensitive to emotional overload and that yarrow may be even more important to them than the Bach flower rescue remedy. Westlake experimented with flower essences and salt water to relieve complications of radiation exposure and his theories were put to the test after the Chernobyl disaster in 1986. The Animazonia Wildlife Foundation uses this yarrow formula for its exotic animals to help with side effects of the strange Santa Ana winds.

Dr. Kyra Mesich, clinical psychologist and author of a book on psychic sensitivity and empathic persons, suggests that just as the herb form of yarrow helps to knit together broken skin, the more subtle flower essence form helps to repair the aura so that people are less vulnerable to disturbances in the energy fields around them. For the record, this does not shut down the sensitivity or cause a loss of psychic sensitivity, rather it balances so that there is more strength and flexibility and therefore easier interaction, more volitional interaction.

As with the FES, she discusses a combination of yarrows: pink for the root chakra, yellow for the solar plexus, and white for everyone and “the times” because white contains all colors. Yarrow, especially the yellow one, is also used with people who engage in intentional or subintentional blocking, those who tune out others so as to shield themselves from uncomfortable influences. It is particularly useful for people in professions where they are trying to help others, where they are required to have boundaries, but where their sympathy and empathy may create the sort of emotional openness that can leave the professional feeling drained.

Dr. Laurie Pappas echoes some of the findings of Dr. Mesich: she says that flower essences take the edge off suffering. She heads the Center for Attitudinal Healing in Detroit. She finds the flower essences a useful adjunctive treatment for people who are good candidates for vibrational healing, usually people who process from the plane of thoughts to the physical rather than those who are merely seeking physical relief.

Yellow Yarrow

Supplies emotional protection during vulnerable times. Softens resistance and assists the integration process.

Perelandra Garden Essences
Many of the symptoms associated with electromagnetic waves are vague and non-specific. Because the aura is partially disconnected, there are frequently nonpathological but real problems associated with the nervous system, including coordination, spasms and/or numbness, concentration and memory, and moods. However, if the exposure is more pronounced, other complications can arise, ones over which there is very little consensus—because if we were to acknowledge the hazards, someone would be held responsible for the illnesses and deaths that occur and the problems would have to be fixed.

Given our dependence on all kinds of transmissions and the equipment used to receive transmissions, it is likely that research findings will be officially regarded as inconclusive. In the meantime, individuals have to make educated decisions and appropriate adjustments to the risks.

The hazards are, however, pervasive: televisions, computer monitors, x-ray equipment, microwave ovens, cordless phones and cell phones, not to mention the towers that transmit the calls. Since cell phones are probably much more dangerous than is generally admitted, a word or two might be helpful.

Cell phones are not really phones; they are miniaturized radios based on Tesla technology from the 1880s. Unlike the devices used until recently, cell phones are very sophisticated transmitting and receiving instruments that use different frequencies for speaking and listening. Successful communication relies on the availability of 800 frequencies in every ten square miles. Loosely translated, this means that in order to provide the quality of service people expect, the “cell” has to be nearly saturated with low power transmitters. The phone itself is a transmitter using two signal strengths. The more users there are, the greater the need for base stations. In addition, there is a main station called a mobile telephone switching office. Every city is now blanketed with towers that support this type of communication. If you are moving around during a call, your call may be handled by different base stations when you move to limit of a cell’s coverage. If the switching station is working as it should, your call will be seamlessly transferred from cell to cell as you drive or ride in some other form of transportation. To support all this, there is a constant stream of low frequency transmissions to prevent the call from being dropped. In health terms, this translates to the fact that we live in a sea of low frequencies transmissions that literally bombard us.
The Aura

The physical body actually exists inside the vital body or aura. The etheric aura consists of lines that have counterparts in the nervous system. These lines should be evenly spaced and perpendicular to the body. When exposed to radiation or strong electromagnetic fields, the aura is disturbed, often dislocated or juxtaposed, usually off to the right, leaving the left side of the body particularly unshielded, but more importantly, the inflow of vitality that should flow easily and naturally towards the physical body is thwarted. If there are consistent stresses to the aura, individual lines may become weak. They can “flop” leaving a gap or collapse that results in an even bigger hole. Irradiation produces immense gaps in the aura so anything that can help rebuild the aura will also have the effect of revitalizing the body.

The theory, one theory, of flower essences is that what the full strength herbs can achieve on the physical level, the vibrational essences can do on the subtle level so repairing the aura is a simply exquisite undertaking. If the wounded healer component of the herb can also relieve the memories of past trauma, the healing effect of the remedy goes deeper yet.

What is fascinating about yarrow is the protection it provides while journeying beyond the veil. The unusual combination of attributes makes it ideal for those who seek answers but fear pain. Contrary to some beliefs, yarrow is not hypnotic, but this has often been alleged because of small amounts of thujone contained in the plant.

Give your aura a tweak by putting some flower essence on your hands and moving your hands over your aura.

Photo credit: Christen Rosamilia
Aura graphic: Damien Francoeur
Essential Oil

The essential oil of yarrow is a spectacular blue color due to the presence of azulene, the same constituent found in chamomile, but it is more abundant in yarrow. However, it is created during the distillation process since the plant only contains the precursors, sesquiterpene lactones. Depending on the plant source, the azulene content can be up to 51% of the total components in the essential oil, and this, in addition to cineol, contributes to the anti-inflammatory actions and healing properties.

Yarrow essential oil is most often used in combination with carrier oils and other essential oils—such as fennel, lavender, lemon, peppermint, and rosemary—as a chest rub or on varicose veins or scars. However, since it is antiseptic, it can be used as a general wound ointment or detoxifying agent for acne and eczema as well as open sores.

As far back as 1798, Lémery described yarrow as useful for asthma attacks. It has also been used to prevent epileptic seizures.

Susanne Fischer-Rizzi discusses many gynecological uses of yarrow essential oil, but these are not really appropriate for inexperienced individuals since direct contact with the skin can sometimes be irritating. However, those who are comfortable with their understanding can consider this herb for dysmenorrhea and even vaginal infections. She describes some creative combinations with other oils that can be used is sitz baths, diffusers, and douches.

The essential oil of yarrow can be added shampoo and conditioner, just a few drops per bottle of shampoo. This would be something people with hair loss could consider.

There are spiritual uses for yarrow that are revered by their proponents. Since yarrow is associated with piercing the veil, giving insight into the future, it is not surprising that the essential oil of yarrow is often combined with prayer when seeking guidance for deep questions. Valerie Worwood, respected author of aromatherapy books, states that yarrow remains anchored on the earth plane but aids receptivity to messages from other dimensions.

The fragrance of yarrow is said to aid receptivity and harmonization of opposing forces. Thus, this oil should be used whenever there is a need for clarity, inspiration, or added insight as well as when there are changes in life, whether hormonal, such as puberty or the Menopause, or when there is turmoil “outside” rather than inside.

Yarrow delicately balances the flow between the yin and yang energies received from the sun, the moon, and the stars. Once the balance and harmonization of yin and yang energy within a person has been completed, the fragrance acts as a conduit for the opening of intuitive perception and the acceptance of the hidden faculties of the mind. Although it at all times remains firmly attached to the earth plane, it intercepts and assists in the delivery of messages and prophecies from other planes of existence. It is the fragrance for dreaming, for visionary experiences, for traveling on the energy of the universe, while being protected and nurtured.

Valerie Ann Worwood, Aromatherapy for the Soul
Tea and Sitz Baths

The tea is traditionally used before the onset of a cold, when there is fever and congestion. Use one ounce of dried herb, leaves and flowers, to a pint of water or 1-2 teaspoons to a cup of hot water. Infuse for 10-15 minutes. Do not attempt to store the tea but drink immediately while still warm. Repeat three times a day for general use or hourly at the onset of fever. Be sure to filter the tea well to prevent scratchy particulates from going into the gastrointestinal tract.

In this form, yarrow opens the pores, promotes perspiration, and purifies the blood. Though generally thought to be slow acting, most users report relief within 24 hours. Some also use the tea to relieve menstrual cramps and others to cleanse the kidneys.

For a sitz bath, use four ounces to five gallons of water, as warm as possible. Those who have never done a sitz bath should know that one literally sits, waist deep, in the bath tub. The upper body should be wrapped with towels to prevent chill. Stay in the water at least 20 minutes. If wanting to soak the entire body, use the essential oil instead: 5-7 drops to a tub of warm water.

It goes without saying that variations of this strategy can be use in saunas and sweat lodges. Either the herb or the infusion can be put on the hot stones of a sauna. Native Americans used the crushed leaves in baths to relieve arthritis. The dry herb can also be burned in a similar manner as sage or thuja. In these instances, the purpose is more than a ritual to ward off evil spirits. Yarrow can be disinfecting as well as an equal partner in the effort to align one’s consciousness with the source. For the latter uses, the flowers have more value than the leaves.

Some clinics are adding essential oils to yarrow tea to treat yeast infection. They often use lavender or tea tree oil. Yarrow can also be used for measles and chickenpox. A stronger decoction can be applied to bleeding piles. It also has a reputation for preventing baldness if used to rinse the head. This infusion can be jazzed up with a dash of cayenne.

A decoction of the flowers is often used to relieve the mucus accumulations associated with allergies, including symptoms of hay fever. The potency is more fully released if steam is used. It is also used to relieve soreness of nipples and varicose veins. For such purposes, a stronger brew is used and then a clean cloth is saturated with the liquid and placed over the treatment site.

Do it yourself: cut the flowering tops being sure to preserve some of the stem and hang upside down away from direct sunlight. When dry, remove the stems and put the flowers into an air tight jar and store in cabinet (no light).

Native American Uses

Not surprisingly, the many tribes of North America also used yarrow medicinally, mostly for the same types of situations as people in other places: detoxification, excessive bleeding, menstrual problems, and wound healing. There is an enchanting story among the Peyote that the stars fell down on yarrow so it could be seen and harvested at night. In fact, the plant contains “fluorescence” so the various stories are useful ways to remember the uses as well as special characteristics of the plants.

Dr. Constantine Rafinesque believed that the American varieties of yarrow are more medicinally potent than the European plants.
Historic herb books nearly always gave both planetary influences associated with herbs as well as characteristics of the herb such as hot, cold, moist, or dry. Yarrow has traditionally been under the planetary rulership of Venus and it was sometimes sewn into a pillow to induce visions of the future spouse or given as a gift at weddings to ensure seven years of true love.

The association with Venus also accounts for many of the gynecological uses of yarrow throughout history as well as today.

Thou pretty herb of Venus’ tree,  
Thy true name it is Yarrow;  
Now who my bosom friend must be,  
Pray tell me thou tomorrow.

**Divination**

In China, yarrow sticks (*Achillea sibirica*) are used to consult the *I Ching* which depends on interpretation of hexagrams consisting of yin and yang lines. The plant is said to clear meridians and bring these forces into balance.

Much in Chinese medicine and philosophy depends on right receptivity to Heaven followed by right action on Earth. Humanity stands between Heaven and Earth and is jostled this way and that by forces tugging on our attention. Integrity depends on understanding the will of Heaven and expressing it on Earth so consulting the Oracle is a serious rather than casual undertaking.

The Chinese also use yarrow to increase intelligence.

"Those below look toward him and are transformed. He affords them a view of the divine way of heaven, and the four seasons do not deviate from their rule. Thus the holy man uses the divine way to give instruction, and the whole world submits to him."

*King Wen, 12th century B.C.*
In the Doctrine of Signatures, the finely-segmented leaves of this plant and its profuse growth suggested to ancient users that each leaf is equal to a thousand uses. The root stock, which is creeping, indicates its thorough blood-cleansing properties. It contains much of the blood fortifying chemicals such as iron, calcium, potassium, sulfur, and sodium. The silky hairs on the whole plant indicate external irritations and the use of yarrow for cuts, scratches, and wounds to the skin.

Yarrow is regarded variously by people who garden. It grows in all temperate climatic zones, up to 10,000 ft or a bit more. Though only the one with white flowers should be used medicinally, some yarrows of other colors are used in flower essences and many varieties have visual as well as bee appeal. Thus, for horticultural purposes, a wide variety of yarrows can be planted.

Yarrow has a powerful root system that allows it to spread in the ground and an abundant supply of light seeds that are easily carried by air. Those who do not want or appreciate yarrow may regard it as a nuisance plant; but it attracts beneficial insects like lady bugs and butterflies. It is also useful where there is soil erosion.

The feathery leaves are so potent that it is said that adding one to compost speeds up the decomposition of organic matter. What is perhaps more interesting is that there are root secretions that stimulate disease-resistance on the part of other plants that benefit from their proximity to yarrow.

According to many theories, the appearance and behavior of a plant is a clue to its medicinal properties so one of the gifts yarrow would appear to offer is the ability to share its hidden strength with those who are weaker and suffering.

Tips: to increase the medicinal potency, do not water more than necessary.
Colony Collapse Disorder

For reasons yet to be determined, bees in areas other than where organic agricultural practices are used are dying and disappearing. In some areas, the bee population has been reduced by as much as 80% of the normal population. Speculations as to the cause range from electrosmog to chemicals to GMO crops to mites and viruses. The consequences could be dire. Bees pollinate many crops, including berries and fruits, nuts, beans, and many other crops. For instance, in California, which produces 80% of the world’s commercial almond crop, there would be no production without bees. Whether almonds or apples or watermelons, bees provide a critical service so their demise is not just tragic for the bee kingdom but for all who depend on their assistance to pollinate the crops used as food for other species on the Planet.

Since colony collapse disorder has not apparently affected organically grown crops, we have to assume that, at minimum, planting of species favored by bees is helping to sustain the bee population and hence the food supply on Earth. Yarrow is but one such flowering plant: bees like many others such as basil, lavender, mint, rosemary, sage, St. John’s wort, and thyme—to name a few.

About the Author:

Ingrid Naiman is the author of Cancer Salves: A Botanical Approach to Treatment and countless articles on holistic health and healing. She has 20 web sites and her own line of specialty formulas for immune enhancement, parasite cleansing, detoxification and tonification, fungal infections, and support for people with cancer. She was an Asian Studies major at the East-West Center at the University of Hawaii (B.A.1962) and received an M.A. from Yale University in 1964. She is a long-time student of Ayurvedic medicine and a passionate environmentalist. She was awarded a doctorate of medicine in Copenhagen in 1987 and an honorary doctorate of science in Sri Lanka in 1995. For more on Ms. Naiman, visit http://ingridnaiman.com.
The Yarrow Products

MASTER YARROW
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This combination is a master healer of the auric shield. It brings protections from energies and emotions that inappropriately invade your personal boundaries. This often will test positive for hyperactive individuals, those who are too sensitive to be comfortable in day-to-day life, and those undergoing chemotherapy, radiation therapy, or other strong drug therapies.

YARROW EXTRACT, 2 oz.

The normal dosage for a 150 pound adult is 20 drops, three times per day. The amount can be adjusted according to body weight and the specific recommendations of your health care provider. Long-term use is not recommended.

TEA, 4 OZ. BULK FLOWERS

Infuse approximately one teaspoon of yarrow flowers per cup of hot water. Steep for approximately 10 minutes. Drink immediately. Do not refrigerate or place in thermos. Drink three cups per day or as directed by your health care provider.

SITZ BATH

Make as a concentrated tea. Strain before pouring into the bath rub. Use four ounces, one bag, of tea per five gallons of water. Sit in the water for at least 20-30 minutes.

For more information on other Sacred Medicine Sanctuary Products, please visit http://www.bioethikainternational.com

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