

## Herbal Wisdom and the 8 Great Herbs in Flor-Essence®

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Flor-Essence® is made from eight herbs rooted in North American traditional herbal medicine. This unique herbal beverage gently supports the health and cleansing of the whole body.

The origin of the Flor-Essence® formula dates to 1922, and a Canadian nurse named Rene Caisse. Rene was given the names of these eight different herbs by a woman she met in a hospital, who had originally been given them at the turn of that century by a helpful Ojibwa medicine man.

Flor-Essence® was perfected over the course of the next several decades, as Rene worked in her clinic and with various doctors, experimenting with various strengths and combinations of the eight herbs.

She sold the rights to one four-herb formula, named Essiac, which was made with half of the herbs. She then kept working with Dr. Brusch to develop a formula that

retained all eight original herbs. This eight-herb formula came to be known as Flor-Essence®.

About 30 years ago, Flora became the first and only company authorized to produce Flor-Essence®. We still use all eight of the original herbs Rene was given the names of: burdock, slippery elm, blessed thistle, sheep sorrel, watercress, red clover, Turkish rhubarb, and kelp.

Here is a little more about each of these great 8 herbs:

### **Burdock Root** *Arctium lappa*

Burdock can be eaten like a root vegetable and is often found on Japanese menus. Prebiotic inulin makes up between 40-50% of a typical burdock root, and it has many other nutritive fiber-like compounds like lignans (arctigenin, arctiin, and matairesinol), pectin, and mucilage to soothe the gut.\*

It supports liver health, acts as an alterative or blood cleanser, and as a diuretic to promote the flow of urine. The bitter action of this root stimulates digestive juices and increases bile secretion by the liver. Burdock is such a powerful detoxifier, it is used for the treatment of skin conditions that result in dry, scaly patches, such as psoriasis and eczema.\*

In addition, burdock acts as an immune modulator, likely because it has antifungal properties and contains antibiotic substances called polyacetylenes. It also has fatty acids, caffeic acid, and chlorogenic acid, phenolic acids that reduce amyloid plaque proteins and contribute to its free radical scavenging activity, thereby increasing cellular ATP production and protecting against damage at the cellular level.\*

### **Sheep Sorrel** *Rumex acetosella*

Sheep sorrel herb contains several anthraquinones that are effective antioxidants and free radical scavengers. Anthraquinones can also stimulate peristalsis and the secretion of water into the intestinal lumen to induce a mild laxative effect. This process enables cleansing; colonic mucosa cells increase mucous production, and accumulated wastes and toxins pass to be discarded by the body.\*

Sheep sorrel contains phytoestrogens with notable estrogen-receptor binding activity, which could help to reduce the negative effects of xenoestrogen chemicals in the body. Sheep sorrel also has antibacterial and antiseptic properties and is closely related to species that contain rumicin, a powerful compound effective against *E. coli*, Staph, and Salmonella bacteria.\*

A tea of sheep sorrel has been traditionally used to cool fevers and decrease inflammation, most likely because of its astringent and diuretic effects. It was also used to prevent the development of scurvy, due to its high content of vitamin C.\*

### **Slippery Elm** *Ulmus rubra*

Slippery Elm bark contains mucilage composed of galactose, rhamnose, and galacturonic acids. This mucilage lubricates and soothes irritated digestive mucosa. It also increases the amount of toxins being excreted from the body by absorbing toxins from the bowel and reducing bowel transit time.\*

Slippery elm bark is anti-inflammatory, demulcent, astringent, antioxidant, and nutritive. Because of its high nutrient composition, slippery elm is indicated in times of convalescence and illness, as it is easily assimilated.\*

A decoction of the bark helps soothe the throat and digestive tract and is safe for even the most sensitive stomach. It gives relief from diarrhea with its gentle astringent action and can be used by pregnant women without any side effects.\*

### **Turkish Rhubarb** *Rheum palmatum*

Rhubarb root has anti-inflammatory, antispasmodic, vasorelaxant, viricidal, and astringent properties. It is traditionally used for digestive ailments, stimulating the flow of saliva and gastric secretions, and improving weak digestion and appetite, and is considered the primary treatment for dysentery, used with success when nothing else has worked.

This herb is considered a safe and effective way to normalize bowel movements. Because it contains stimulating laxatives and anthraquinones that cause a purgative laxative effect, followed by the toning astringent effects from tannins, it not only cleanses the intestinal tract but also astringes and disinfects. It also contains emodin, which is antimicrobial and liver-protective.\*

Rhubarb is contraindicated in pregnancy and should not be used in large quantities in combination with prescription diuretics, or by individuals who wish to limit oxalates in their diet.

### **Red Clover** *Trifolium pratense*

Red clover contains antimicrobial compounds that are effective against bacteria, viruses, and fungi. This herb is often recommended for detoxification programs, as it removes microorganisms and debris from the blood and mucous by increasing

the activity of phagocytes in the body and facilitating the elimination of wastes and toxins through the skin, kidneys, bowels, and lungs.\*

It also contains isoflavones (genistein), and other flavonoids such as kaempferol, as well as volatile oils, coumarins, and resins providing anti-estrogenic, antioxidant and alterative properties. It is also a source of quercetin, known to be antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, anti-allergy, and neuroprotective, support healthy blood pressure and blood sugar levels and promote sirtuin activity.\*

As an alterative or blood cleanser, it is indicated for chronic conditions, especially those of the throat or glands. It has traditionally been used as a tea for cleansing the lymphatic system and has been used in the treatment of skin diseases by promoting healthy granulation of tissue.\*

### **Blessed Thistle** *Cnicus benedictus*

Blessed thistle, a relative of milk thistle, contains anti-inflammatory cnicin, and can reduce liver congestion through choleric substances that increase the volume of bile secreted by the liver and the quantity of cholesterol and other solids excreted by the liver. This has proven helpful in the treatment of dyspepsia and digestive pains and even the headaches associated with liver conditions.\*

Blessed thistle is detoxifying and antibacterial, showing effects against *Staphylococcus aureus* and *S. faecalis* bacteria. It gets other juices flowing, beyond its stimulation of the liver's bile production. It is known to increase breast milk production and is also very useful for cleansing, improving the flow of gastric juices, urination and perspiration.\*

### **Watercress** *Nasturtium officinale*

Watercress leaves are so nutrient-dense, they can be used as an edible, nutritional supplement. Due to its high levels of vitamins and minerals like vitamin A, C, and iodine, this cruciferous plant has been used traditionally in herbal medicine to treat nutrient deficiency, and as a detoxifier and restorative in chronic conditions. It is a source of indole-3 carbinol, a compound that supports liver detox, reduces high estrogen levels, and acts as an antioxidant.\*

Though watercress is now popular among gourmet chefs and at health food restaurants, it also has therapeutic value for the treatment of lethargy, rheumatism, and bronchitis. It has a mild stimulating effect on the metabolism and is known as a blood purifier and diuretic, a blood cleanser and digestive aid.\*

### **Kelp** *Laminaria digitata*

Kelp contains alginates that have a soothing and cleansing effect on the digestive tract and may prevent the absorption of toxic metals like mercury, cadmium, plutonium and cesium. It also acts as a demulcent, soothing the intestinal mucosa and offering a slight laxative effect.\*

Kelp is traditionally used for the nutritive benefits of its abundant minerals, namely iodine, which helps to regulate energy levels. Along with its iodine content, it has antibiotic and antiviral activity, making it a useful immune stimulator. Kelp is also therapeutic for the maintenance and regulation of blood pressure and may help to lower cholesterol levels.\*

### **The unified spirit of Flor-Essence®**

In addition to all the support provided by these herbs individually, the Ojibwa believed that all plants possessed the power to conjoin with other plants to form a “unified spirit” many times stronger than the spirit of a single plant. It was this “unified spirit” which endowed their herbal medications with such tremendous healing powers.

### **Flor-Essence® Tea**

The “tea” as many call it, is actually several times more concentrated than a normal cup of herbal tea might be, and is therefore usually diluted with water before consuming.

Flora has kept it as close as possible to the original, traditional use of the product. Therefore, it is strictly made from (certified organic) plants grown without the use of petrochemicals. The plants are then extracted using only pure water, as the Ojibwa, nurse Rene, and Dr. Bruschi intended, as we feel this is especially important when cleansing and detoxifying. Flor-Essence® is then tested for a wide variety of quality markers including heavy metals, pesticides, and active ingredients in the herbs.

*\*These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease.*

***Dana Green Remedios, RHN, RNCP, is a Vancouver-based educator and coach. She is a regular contributor to the FloraHealthy blog and can answer your questions in English, French, and Spanish as a Product Information Specialist at Flora.***