

Hope Renewed

Living things cannot be wholly pressed into a rational, scientific box. Categorizing and labeling are foreign to any living thing. This is just as true of plants as it is of people. Every living thing has its own subtle beauty and inherent strengths.

Writing any book requires that the material be organized for presentation in an orderly fashion. Although, in these pages, I categorize, label, dissect, and organize the medicinal properties of the various plants, please remember the following:

First: My husband and I (he does this better than I do) look at the plants—every one, and perhaps the rocks and minerals, too—as personal messages from a loving Heavenly Father. Because He understood that we would not always ask for, or even recognize His help in our lives, He endowed the various plants with His own healing capacities and invited us to partake of them to balance and heal our own lives. Plants affect us, not just on a physical (vitamin and molecular) level, but on a spiritual plane as well. It is impossible to use an herbal remedy to heal the physical body without partaking of its ability to bring light and wisdom, healing and peace into your life. The peace and wisdom will be multiplied many times over if you use the herbs with thanksgiving to the Creator and an acknowledgement of the role of the atonement in the healing of both physical and emotional (spiritual) pain.

Secondly: Plants are living things. To feel the living spirit and intelligence of each plant is the true foundation of herbal medicine. Just as each plant can exemplify the attributes of our loving Father, so can the plants personify some lessons about the operation of the body and the soul. The possibilities for learning are endless. To think herbally is to think differently; we must think as nature does—holistically. Nature emphasizes the whole, rather than the precise piece, and nature has an inherent logic and wisdom.

In studying herbals, our goal is to appreciate the mysteries inherent in a human soul, and ascertain the best holistic approach to imbalances within that soul/body/mind complex.

In order to understand a medicinal herb, it is helpful to understand its use in an historical context. Unfortunately, much herbal knowledge has been lost and this continuity is not always possible. It is interesting to note that whether the use of a particular herb was by ancient folk doctors, allopathic medical personnel, homeopathic practitioners, etc., the medicinal properties claimed for the herb were always very similar. The medicinal properties of the herb do not change with time, methods of preparation, or the philosophy of the user. What works, works—even for the skeptical!

Herbs live in and adapt to environmental stresses which correspond in many ways to problems in our own lives. The excesses of climate they experience are much like the distressing life situations which we sometimes face. The triumphs of their life force over the adversities of nature become an integral part of their genetic makeup and healing properties. We can find strength and growth in our own lives and bodies through our experiences with God's creations. Herbs can be both our medicines and a reference point for understanding ourselves and the world around us. *Plants, by their very nature, act upon the imbalances within our systems, not on the viruses and bacteria which settle into these imbalances environments. They strengthen us against adversity and attack.*