

## **Herbal Bathing**

By Kami McBride

Herbal bathing is a great way to relax, heal and support healthy skin function. The skin is the largest organ in the body. It contributes to many important functions such as secretion, absorption, excretion, temperature regulation, immune function, and sensory reception. The skin has receptor sites that transfer information through the nervous system to the spinal chord and brain. It not only provides a boundary between us and the rest of the world, but because of its millions of receptor sites, is a major player in how we perceive, experience, and interact with the world.

The skin is also a major organ of elimination just like our lungs, kidneys and colon. It plays a key role in helping our body to eliminate toxins, heavy metals, and carcinogenic substances. Herbs have many healing benefits for the skin and there are many simple herbal bathing treatments that can help our skin do its job of keeping us healthy.

### **Bathing with herbs**

Many cultures throughout the world use herbal bathing as a primary healing modality.

Herbal bathing can be powerful preventive medicine. The healing benefits of the herbs can be absorbed directly through the skin and many herbs stimulate and enhance healthy skin metabolism and secretion. Herbal bathing can help us relax, feel renewed, fight off colds and increase detoxification.

To make an herbal bath, you basically cook up a very big pot of tea. Put four gallons of water in a large pot. Add two to three cups of fresh or dried herbs to the water and bring it to a boil. Let simmer for 15 minutes, turn off the heat and pour the hot tea into an already drawn bath. It is not necessary to strain the herbs out before pouring the tea into your bath tub. It is nice to have the herbs in the tub with the tea, but you may want to strain them out first if you don't like cleaning the herbs out of your drain.

You can use the following recipes or just choose when healing herb that you love and put it into your tub. Lavender flowers, calendula flowers and rose petals are of course all time favorite herbal bathing herbs.

### **Nerve Tonic bath**

4 gallons water  
½ cup lavender leaf/flower  
½ cup oatstraw  
½ cup lemon balm  
1 cup whole oats

**Invigorating bath**

4 gallons water  
½ cup rosemary  
½ cup calendula  
½ cup yarrow leaf and flower

**Bedtime Bath**

4 gallons water  
2 cups lavender  
1 cup chamomile

**Pleasure bath**

4 gallons water  
4 cups rose petals

**De-tox bath**

4 gallons water  
1 cup burdock root  
1 cup elder flowers  
1 cup yarrow flowers  
1 cup Epsom salts

An easier way to bring herbs into the bath tub is to put one cup of herbs into an old sock or stocking and tie a knot at the end so the herbs don't fall out. You can also buy cotton muslin at the fabric store, wrap the herbs in the cloth and make tea bags for the bath tub. You can make a supply to keep on hand and they also make great gifts.

Put the pouch of herbs in the bathtub while you are drawing the bath. Think of it like putting a large teabag in your bathtub to steep while you are bathing. This method does not take as much time and there isn't as much mess. This method is also not as strong as the first method. The first method has more therapeutic effects since the herbal preparation is stronger.

Another way to bathe with herbs is to use fresh herbs from the garden. Just gather fresh aromatic herbs from your garden and put them directly into the bathtub as the bath is being drawn. Make sure you know the properties of the herbs you are using before bathing with them. One of my favorite things to do for myself is to walk around my garden picking whatever herbs smell good to me. I gather a whole basket of fresh herbs and put them all into my bathtub. I love lying in a bathtub of colorful floating flowers.

**Kami's Calming Garden Bath**

2 cups lavender flowers  
2 cups lemon verbena leaf  
1 cup rosemary leaf and flower

1 cup California poppy leaf and flower  
½ cup catnip leaf

**Healing flower bath**

½ cup fresh calendula flowers  
½ cup fresh lavender flowers  
½ cup rose geranium leaf  
½ cup fresh rose petals  
¼ cup fresh peppermint leaf

Visit Kami's website at [www.livingawareness.com](http://www.livingawareness.com) and sign up for her free quarterly herbal enewsletter. Or contact her at 707-446-1290 about classes, books and consultations