

Herbal Clays

By Kami McBride

Everyone needs to know a few bee sting remedies! We have been walking barefoot and eating outside in the warm summer weather and several people here have been stung by bees in the last few weeks. There is nothing like a bee sting in the middle of dinner to ruin your appetite. Last weekend my husband was weeding in the garden and stumbled upon a yellow jacket nest in the ground. They didn't like his hoe landing in the middle of their living room and he got multiple stings all over his body as they chased him into the house. Within minutes the bites turned into hard welts that were painful and itchy. I treated it with Sting Relief remedy # 3 and he felt instant relief.

There are several herbal treatments for bee and wasp stings. The more painful and stronger the reaction someone has to the sting, the more herbs I add to the treatment. Usually one treatment of a clay and water mixture or a plantain poultice will take care of it but sometimes a sting needs more herbs and needs to be tended to several times for even up to two days.

Some people have very serious reactions to stings and need to be taken to the hospital immediately. However, most people do well with these home herbal treatments.

Sting Relief #1

2 tablespoons clay

3 tablespoons water or echinacea tea

60 drops echinacea tincture

You can use any kind of clay such as white clay, French clay or bentonite clay. The quickest remedy is to add water to the clay and mix it into a paste. If the bite seems like it is going to persist, make a tea with echinacea root. Put two tablespoons of echinacea root into one cup of water and bring it to a boil. Let it simmer for fifteen minutes and then turn off the heat and let the herb continue to steep in the water for one hour. Then strain the herbs from the water. Add the Echinacea tea and echinacea tincture to the clay instead of the plain water and apply the clay and tea mixture to the sting area. The clay helps to draw out the poison from the sting; it reduces the pain and eliminates itching. The echinacea also helps to draw the poison out and reduces inflammation.

Sting Relief #2

If you have fresh plantain (*Plantago majorus*) growing where you are, pick some plantain leaf, chew it up well and apply it to the sting area. This plantain poultice will draw out the poison and stop the pain. Fresh plantain poultices are a very effective sting remedy, it is just a matter of if you are lucky enough to have this great weed growing in your yard. There are many different varieties of plantain (*Plantago*); all of them are equally effective remedies for bites and stings. It is a very common weed found growing in most lawns.

Sting Relief #3

2 tablespoons bentonite clay

3 tablespoons plantain tea

5 drops lavender essential oil
5 drops blue chamomile essential oil

Sting Relief #4

2 tablespoons bentonite clay
3 tablespoons water or echinacea or plantain tea
60 drops Echinacea tincture
30 drops plantain tincture

Mix everything together and apply a thick paste to the bite area throughout the day. Echinacea tincture is readily available but you don't usually find plantain tincture for sale in stores. To make your own supply, pick some fresh plantain leaves from a clean area. Chop up one cup of plantain leaves and put them in a jar and pour 100 proof vodka over the plantain so that it covers the leaves by one inch. Let the plantain steep in the vodka for one month and then strain it from the vodka. Discard the herb and the liquid is your plantain tincture. You now have a plantain tincture that is good for several years and is good for all insect bites and stings.

It is good to drink lots of water and maybe even take a little rest to give your body a chance to work out the poison depending on how effected you are by the stings. Drinking a couple cups of echinacea root tea can also help to reduce the effect of the poison on your system.

***Kami McBride** has taught herbal medicine and women's health since 1988. She is the director of Cultivating the Herbal Medicine Woman Within, an experiential herbal studies program where women are inspired to reclaim their heritage as herbalists and healers. Kami is the author of 105 Ways to Celebrate Menstruation and she teaches Women's Wisdom workshops for women to experience optimum health in relation to their body cycles. Kami can be reached at (707) 446-1290 or www.livingawareness.com*