



**A Note from Susan:**

I'm excited to bring to you a brief overview of the seven herbs I've found to be most effective and helpful to bolster health and well-being during the shortest days of the year, which typically coincide with the cold & flu season.

If you find this information helpful, please share with someone who might also benefit from learning more about herbs for the cold & flu season.

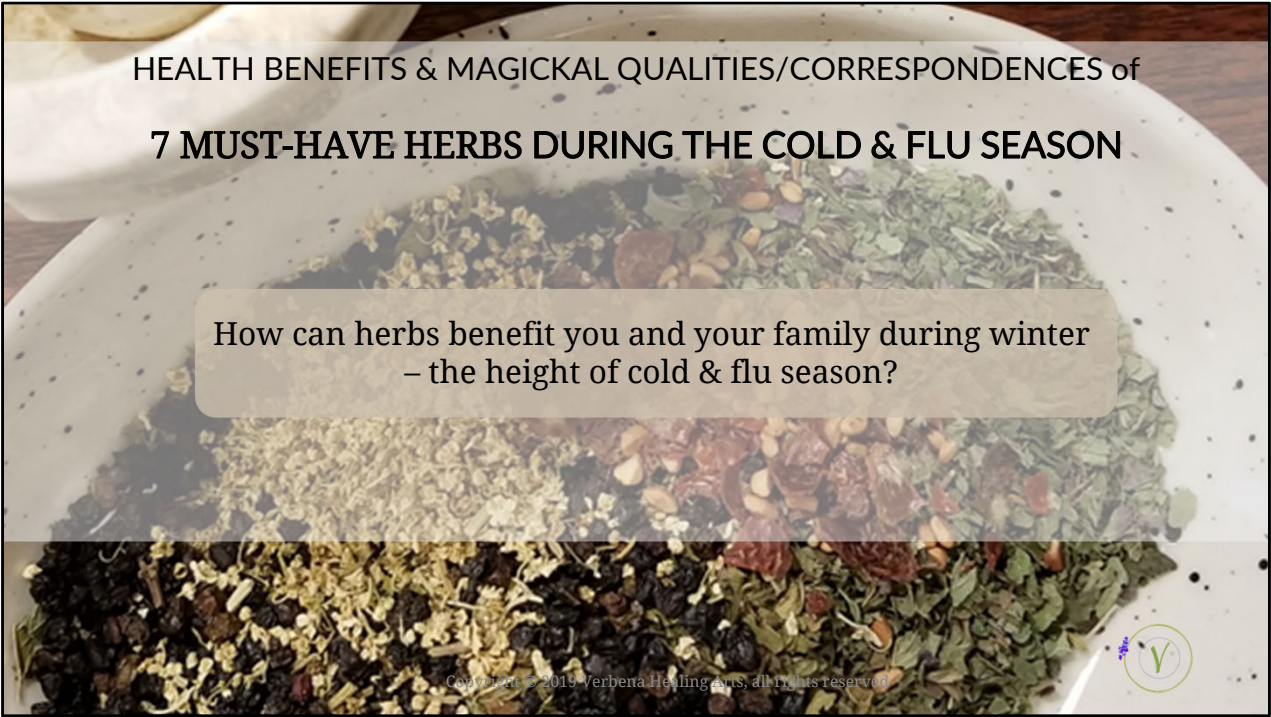
UPDATE 16 APRIL 2020: With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, it's even more important to have a strong immune system. Though this guide was written with the "traditional" winter cold & flu season in mind, these herbs can continue to support a healthy immune system any time of year.



Warm Wishes,  
xoxo  
Susan

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Verbena Healing Arts  
76 Snake Hill Road  
Garrison, NY 10524



Herbs are unique in their actions - or how they affect the body - when consumed. Choosing the right combination of herbs can go a long way to supporting your health & wellness during the short days of winter.

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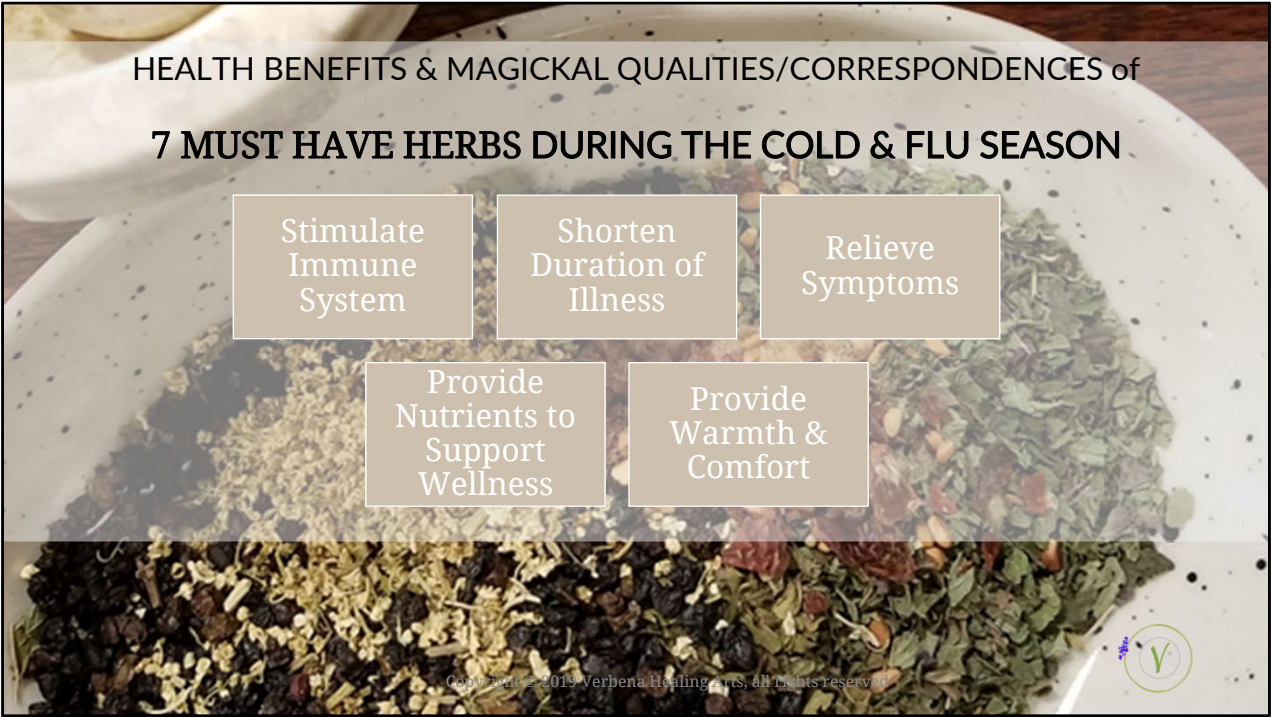
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These are just some of the ways herbs can benefit you and your family during the cold & flu season:

- Stimulate Immune System
- Shorten Duration of Illness
- Relieve Symptoms
- Provide Nutrients to Support Overall Wellness
- Provide Warmth & Comfort

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The first 3 herbs we'll cover are best used in root form.

Roots are typically harvested in spring or fall and dried after being cleaned and cut.

Because of their tough structure, roots are generally most effective when prepared as a tincture or decocted (simmered, covered over low heat for 20-45 minutes). They can also be infused in alcohol or glycerine to create a tincture.

The 3 Roots we will look at in detail are:

**Echinacea Root** [*Echinacea angustifolia*]

**Licorice Root** [*Glycyrrhiza glabra* (European)]

**Astragalus Root** [*Astragalus membranaceus*]

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Echinacea has been studied extensively for its effectiveness at shortening the duration of a cold.

It is most effective when used at first onset of a cold.

Because of its popularity, echinacea is now considered an at risk plant in the wild. We encourage you to purchase organic, cultivated herb from a reputable seller – or grow it on you own.

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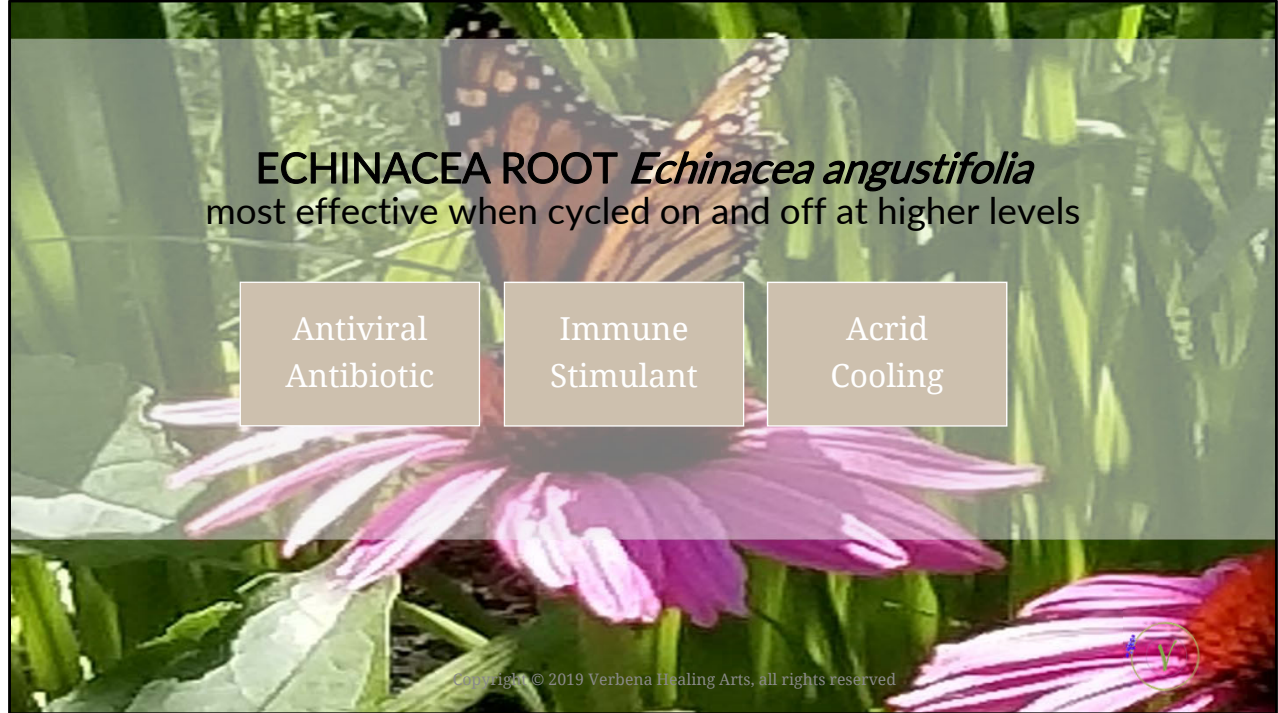
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Studies have shown that, when used at higher levels, echinacea is most effective when taken at the first onset of a viral infection and needs to come in direct contact with the virus. It should also be “cycled” on and off to increase effectiveness. Because it is an immune stimulant, echinacea is also effective when taken at lower doses over longer periods of time (the entire winter season, for example). NOTE: may be contraindicated for individuals with autoimmune issues and for those who have experienced hypersensitivity reactions in the past (Hoffmann, 2003)

Actions: alterative, immune stimulant, immunomodulant, analgesic, antibacterial, antiviral, sialagogue

Taste: acrid

Energetics: cooling

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Magickal Properties: strengthening spells (masculine | Mars | earth | sacred to Athena, Venus, Cerridwen)

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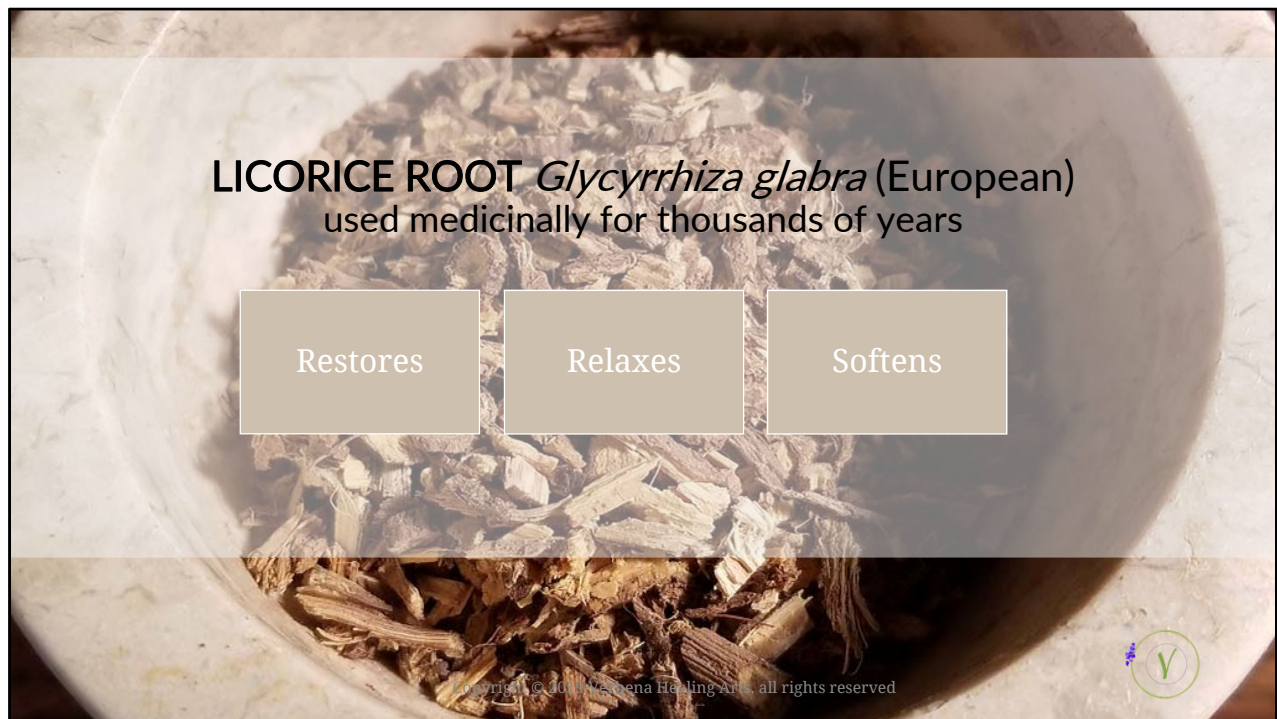
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Licorice is one herb that most people either love or hate the taste of. I've learned to sneak a little into formulas for the health benefits while masking the taste with other, stronger tasting herbs. Licorice is an immune balancer, boosting immune function while reducing excessive immune response in those with autoimmune disease. Traditional indications include dry cough and wheezing. (Winston & Maimes, 2007) NOTE: Licorice should be avoided by individuals with high blood pressure, or even a tendency for high blood pressure, and those taking potassium-depleting diuretics, digoxin, or monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOIs) due to potential interactions (Winston & Maimes, 2007).

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Actions: adaptogen, antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, antiviral, demulcent, antispasmodic, hepatic, tonic

Taste: Sweet

Energetics: moistening, sweet, neutral

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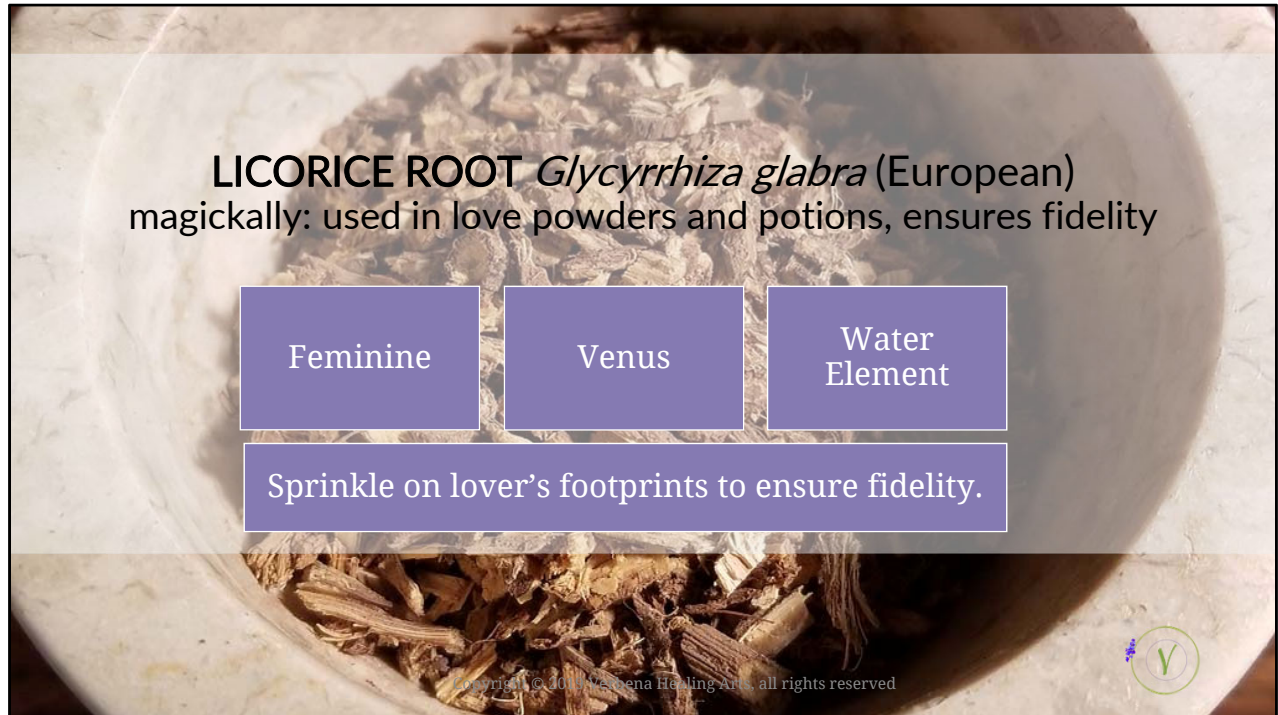
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Magickal Properties: used in love powders and potions, ensures fidelity (feminine | Venus | water)

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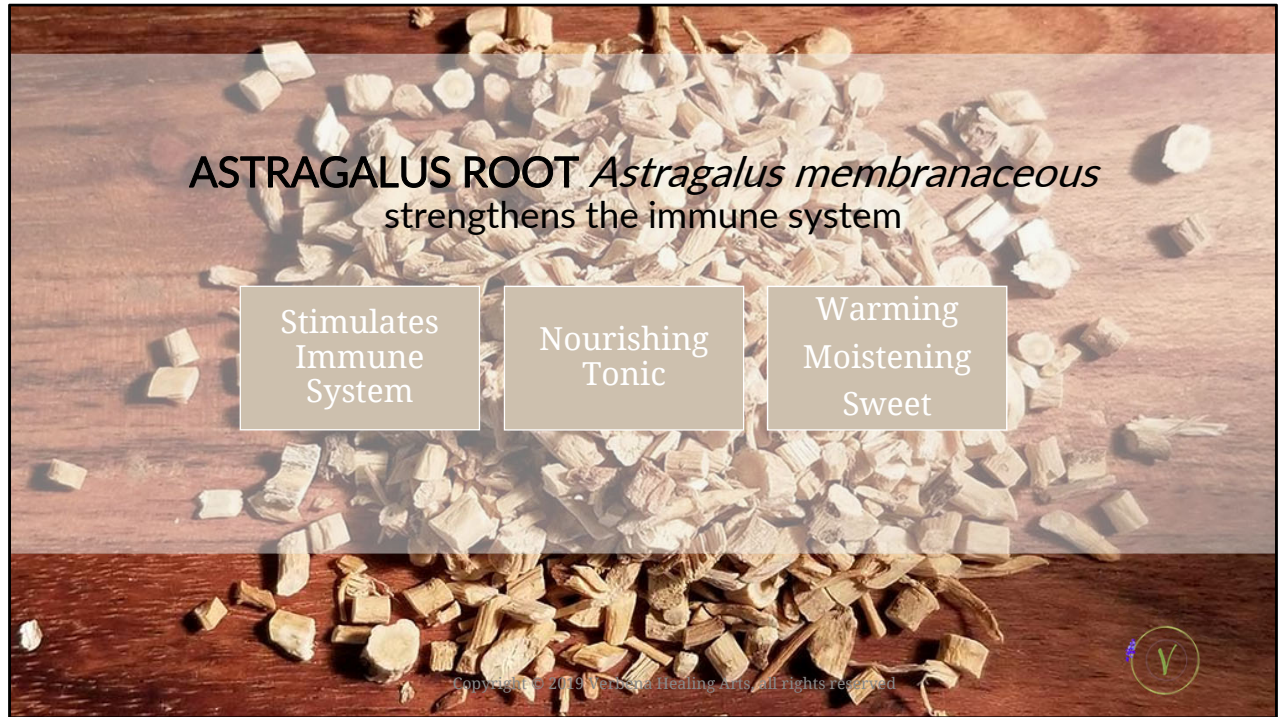
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The root of the perennial astragalus is used widely as an immunomodulant, which strengthens the immune system and helps the body fight off infection and disease.

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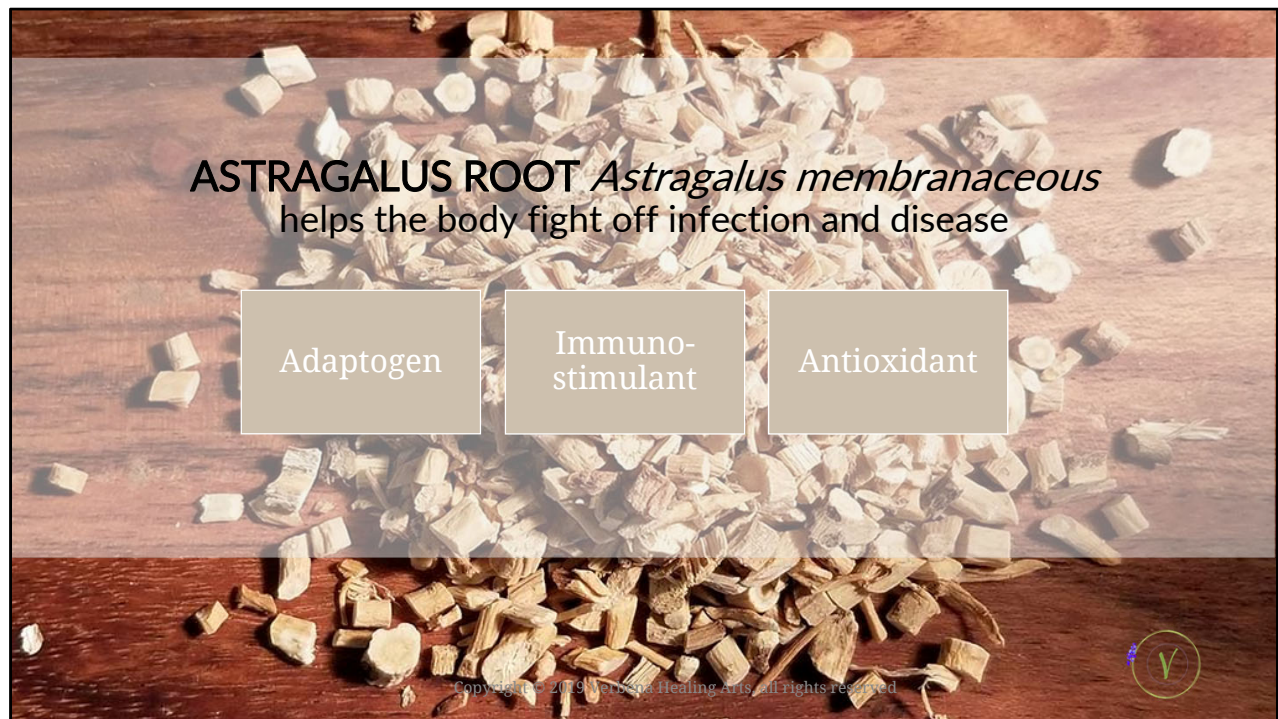
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Actions: adaptogen, antioxidant, cardiogenic, hepatic, immunostimulant

Taste: slightly sweet

Energetics: moistening, warming

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Magickal Properties (as Tragacanth Gum – dried sap of several Astragalus species: A. adscendens, A. gummifer, A. brachycalyx, and A. tragacantha ): binding, transformation in the subconscious/dreamwork (masculine | Earth | fire)

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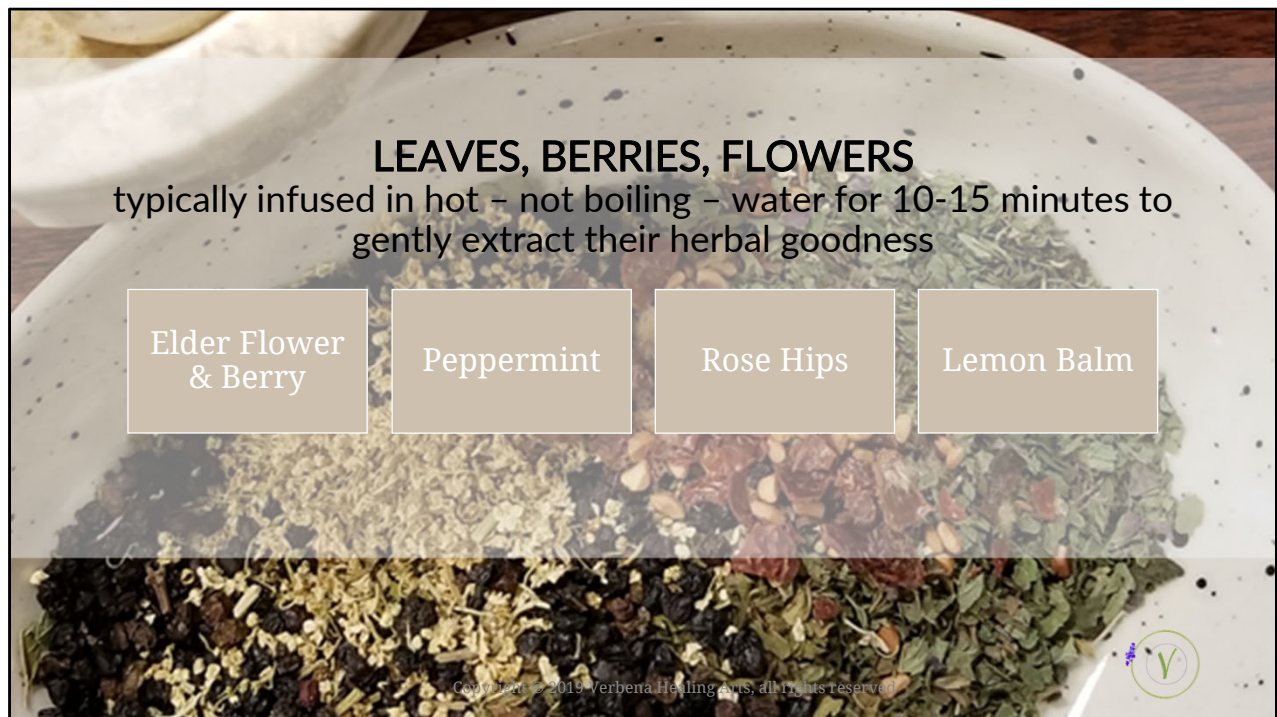
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Due to their more delicate nature, leaves, berries, and flowers are typically infused in hot – not boiling – water for 10-15 minutes to gently extract the herbal goodness. They can also be infused in alcohol or glycerine to create a tincture.

The 4 herbs we will look at in detail here are:

**Elder Flower (dried) & Berry (cooked)\*** [*Sambucus nigra L. ssp. canadensis (L.)*]

**Peppermint** [*Mentha × piperita*]

**Rose Hips** [*Rosa spp.*]

**Lemon Balm** [*Melissa officinalis*]

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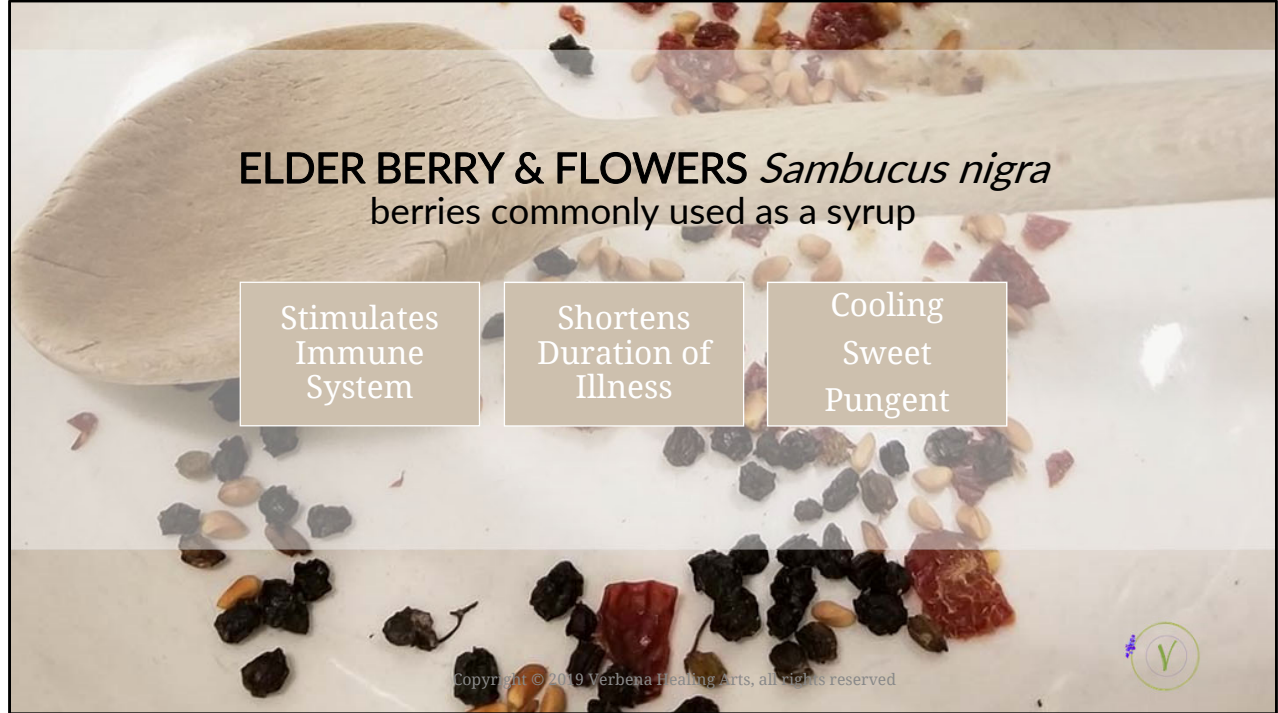
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Commonly used as a syrup for children as an immune stimulant to help shorten the duration of colds, elder berries and flowers are a must have herb during the cold & flu season.

Safety: elderflowers are considered safe even for small children, and the ripe fresh berries are considered safe unless consumed in high quantities or by someone sensitive to the compounds in the plant (Buhner, 2013); however, cooking or drying them before use is the safest approach. NOTE: While herbalists believe that for most individuals elderberry is safe before infection, it may be that it should be avoided if symptoms develop. Elderberry may also not be safe for some individuals with autoimmune conditions or who have experienced hypersensitivity reactions in the past (Hoffmann, 2003).

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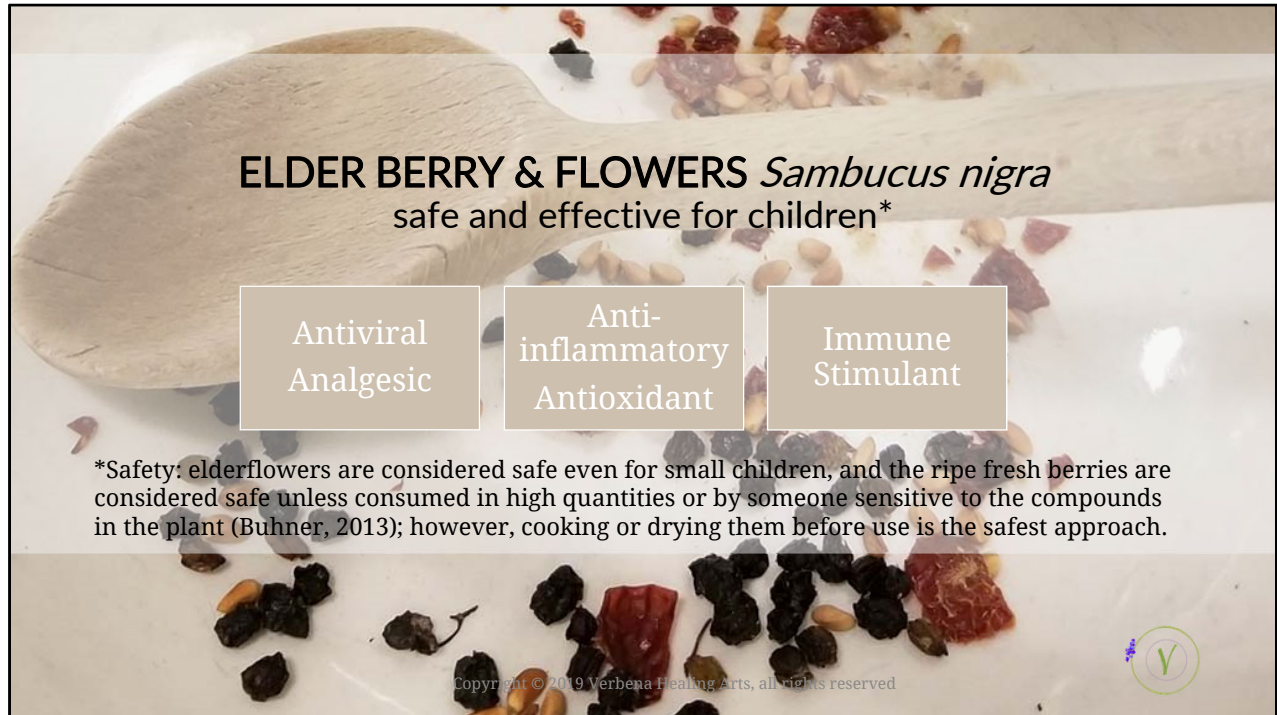
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Actions: diuretic, antivirals, analgesic, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, immune stimulant

Taste: slightly sweet

Energetics: cooling, pungent

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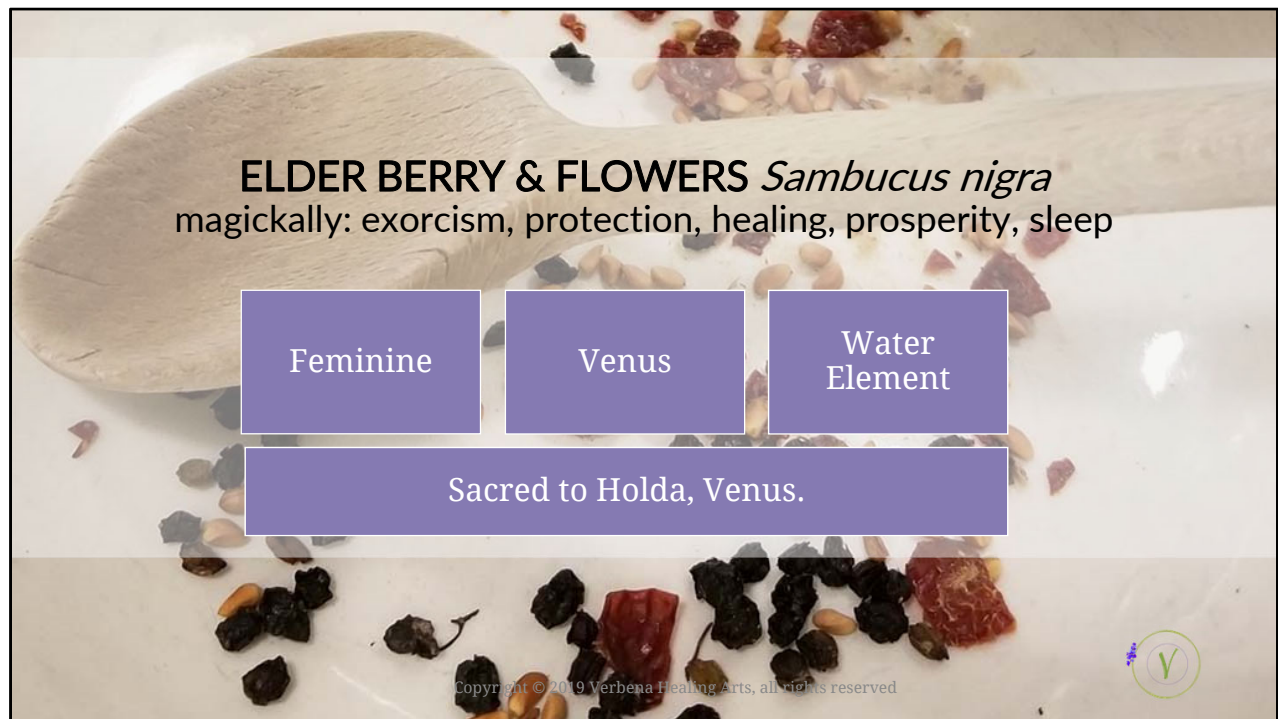
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Magickal Properties: exorcism, protection, healing, prosperity, sleep (feminine | Venus | water | sacred to Holda, Venus)

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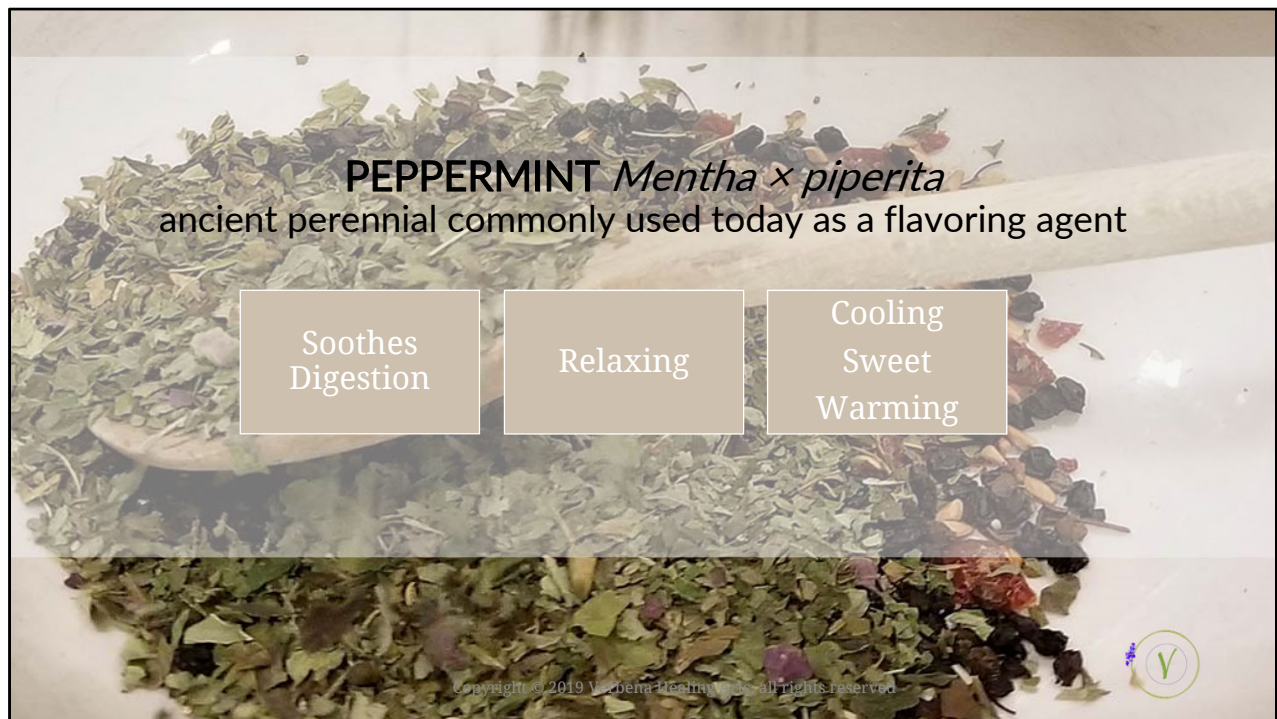
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This ancient perennial is commonly used today as a flavoring agent for candy, gum, toothpaste, mouthwashes, and medicines, but don't let that fool you! In addition to its great taste, peppermint (and its cousin Spearmint) is equally beneficial to supporting health and wellness, jam packed with minerals and vitamins.

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Actions: antispasmodic, carminative, bitter, antimicrobial, analgesic, diaphoretic, stimulant, nervine, anti-emetic

Taste: bitter (mild), refreshing

Energetics: pungent, slightly sweet, dry, stimulating, relaxing, and warming with a secondary cooling action

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Magickal Properties: purification, sleep, love, healing, psychic powers (masculine | Mercury | fire | sacred to Pluto)

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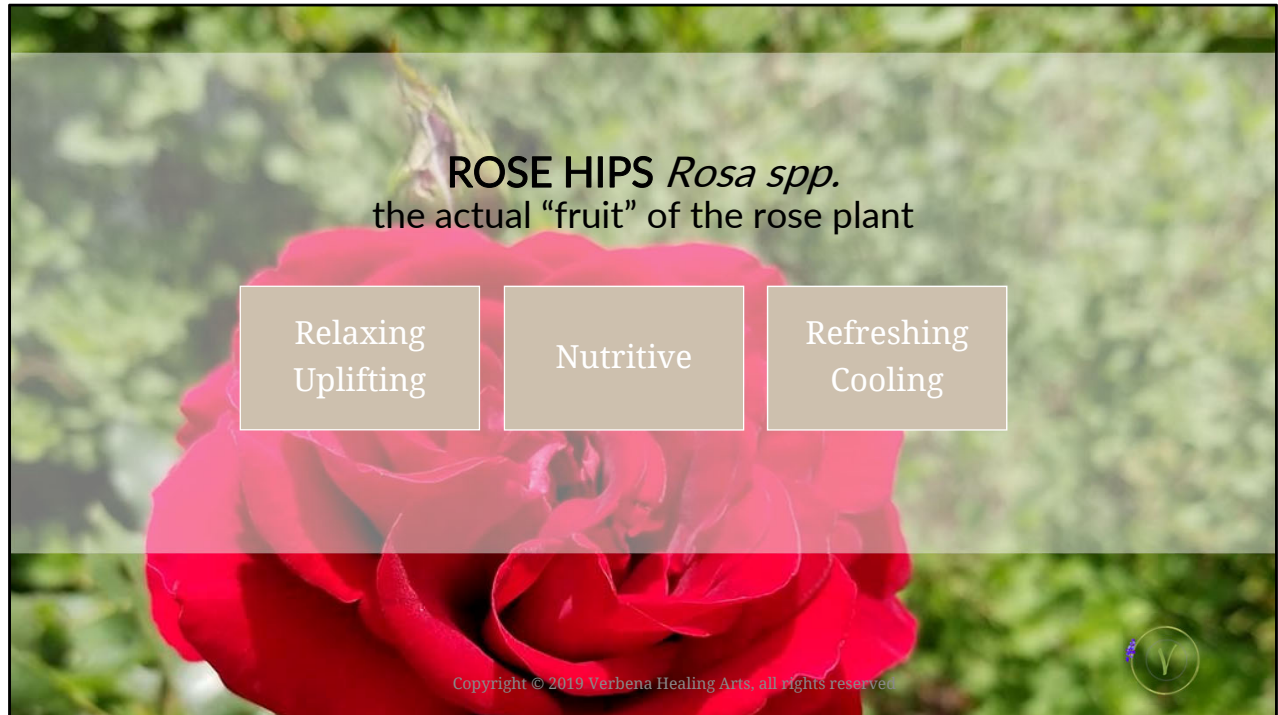
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The actual “fruit” of the rose plant, rose hips are harvested in fall, after the rose petals have fallen away and the fruit has ripened to an orange or red color, and are high in vitamin C content. I love adding them to many formulas for their sweet taste and the energetic “hug” they give to whoever consumes them.

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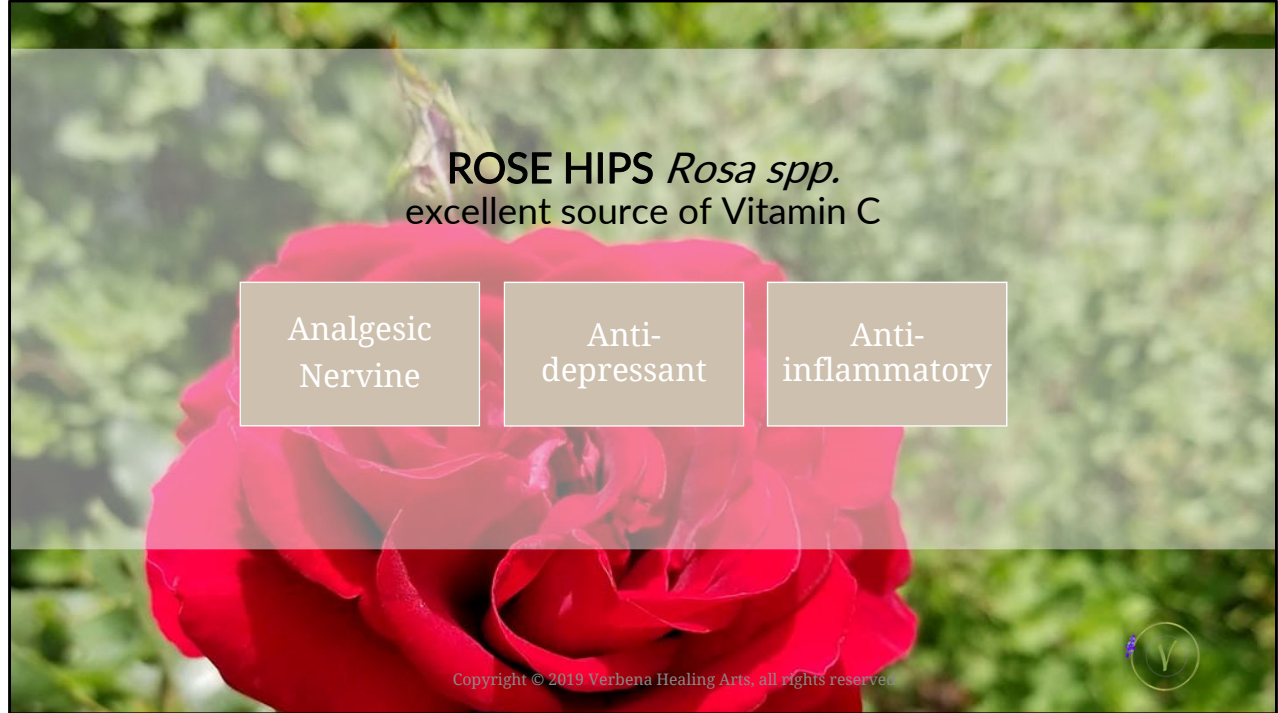
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Actions: analgesic, antidepressant, anti-inflammatory, nervine, astringent

Taste: bitter (mild), refreshing

Energetics: cooling, drying

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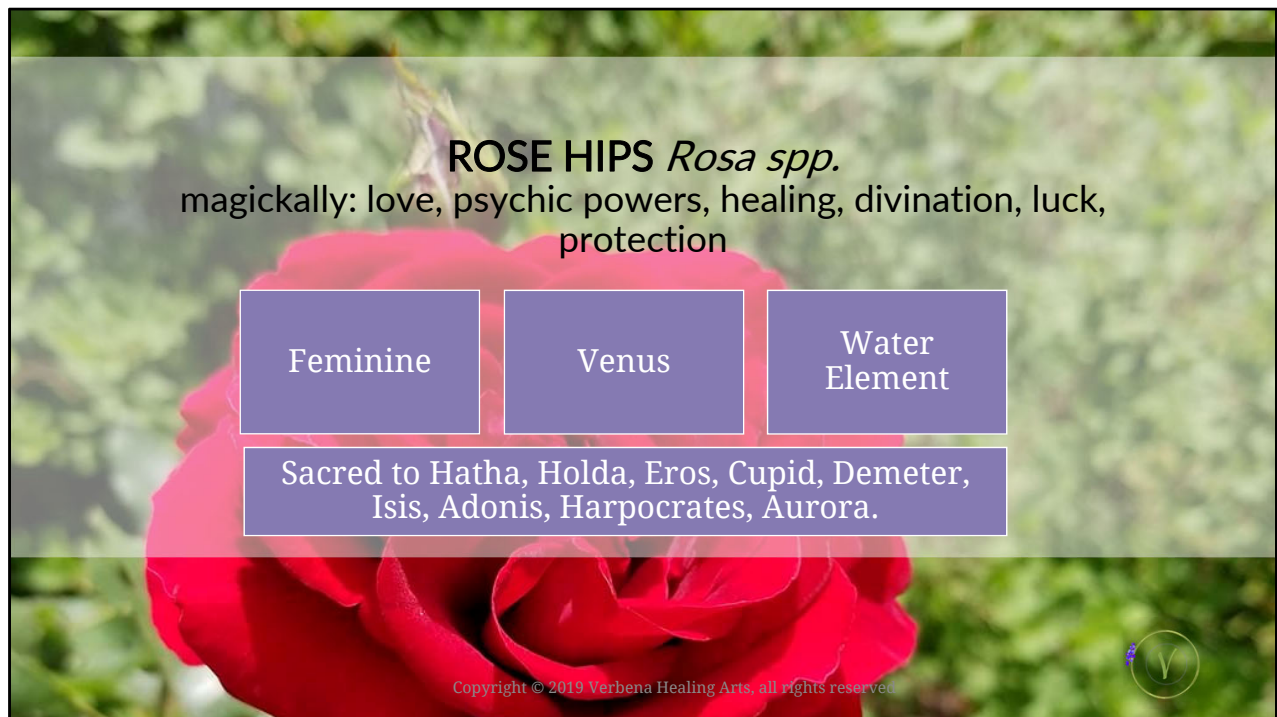
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Magickal Properties: love, psychic powers, healing, divination, luck, protection  
(feminine | Venus | water | sacred to Hatha, Holda, Eros, Cupid, Demeter, Isis,  
Adonis, Harpocrates, Aurora)

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This fragrant, lemony member of the mint family is an excellent choice for young and old alike. A gentle nervine that soothes anxiety, nervousness, and depression, lemon balm also relieves digestive upset relative to anxiety or depression. I find its strong fragrance very uplifting and its mild, refreshing taste the perfect addition to many tea formulas.

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Actions: antiviral, antispasmodic, antidepressant, antioxidant, carminative, anxiolytic, nervine, radioprotective, trophorestorative (nervous system)

Taste: refreshing, sweet, astringent, sour

Energetics: cooling, drying

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Magickal Properties: love, success, healing, health, friendship, attraction and  
psychic/spiritual development (feminine | Moon | water)

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Resources:

<https://honeycoyote.tumblr.com/post/86280810010/lemon-balm-magic-and-medicinal-uses>

Cunningham's Encyclopedia of Magical Herbs

Materia Magica; Draja Mickaharic

A Green Witch's Cupboard; Deborah J. Martin

The Herbarium; [www.theherbalacademy.com](http://www.theherbalacademy.com)



## RECIPE

### Mabon Witch's Brew to Chase Away Colds & Flu\*

#### Step 1 (decoction)

1tsp Org. Echinacea Ang. Root

1tsp Org. Licorice Root

1tsp Org. Atragalus Root

2 Tbsp Org. Elder Berries

#### Step 2 (infusion)

2 Tbsp Org. Peppermint

1 tsp Org. Rose Hips

2 tsp Org. Elder Flowers

2 Tbsp Org. Lemon Balm

Cover and simmer roots and berries (Step 1) in 16oz water for 30 minutes. Strain through cheesecloth or a fine mesh strainer and reserve the liquid in a 32 oz heat-proof jar with lid. Add the herbs (Step 2) to a large, 32 oz. heat proof glass jar with lid. Make an infusion by covering the herbs with 16 oz of boiled water that has been allowed to cool for 30 seconds. Cover loosely and let sit for 30 minutes before straining the liquid (into the jar containing the root decoction) through cheesecloth or a fine mesh sieve. Allow to cool, cover, and refrigerate for 1-2 days. This recipe makes a strong brew that should be diluted by half for everyday use (1-2 cups/day) or served as is, 2-3 times throughout the day as soon as cold symptoms appear. \*pre-mixed blend available at [www.vervainandruue.com](http://www.vervainandruue.com)



We hope you enjoyed this Winter Herbal and find the information useful. Please share with others you know who may benefit from learning more about these immune boosting herbs.

For more helpful tips on natural wellness, please visit the blog at [www.verbenahealingarts.com/blog](http://www.verbenahealingarts.com/blog) or connect with us on social media:

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[Instagram.com/susanheidifilardo](https://www.instagram.com/susanheidifilardo)

[Pinterest.com/susanhfilardo](https://www.pinterest.com/susanhfilardo)

[Youtube.com/susanheidifilardo](https://www.youtube.com/susanheidifilardo)

Wishing a blessed and healthy, happy winter season to you and yours.

xoxo

Susan

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A licensed medical professional should be consulted for diagnosis and treatment of any and all medical conditions.



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<http://www.verbenahealingarts.com/blog/becoming-an-herbalist>