

Herbal Bug Banishers

Ants invading the kitchen? Wondering if your favorite wool sweater will come out of summer storage unscathed by moths? Counting on your cat to keep mice at bay?

In the past, herbs were heavily relied upon for the serious task of pest control. Pomanders were hung in closets, sachets were slipped in drawers or between layers of linens or stored clothes, and handfuls of herbs were sprinkled in kitchen cupboard drawers or on pantry shelves. Herbs are as effective as ever, of course—and much friendlier (more pleasant smelling and non-toxic) than many of today's chemical solutions. Give some of these a try this summer:

> Sprinkle catnip, pennyroyal, or peppermint in your kitchen cupboards (or behind cabinets) to discourage ants and other kitchen-crawling insects. You might even leave a trail of herbs across an especially problem-atik kitchen counter.



> Place whole bay leaves on your pantry shelves to keep invaders out of your grains.

> Put a handful of very aromatic herbs in small muslin bags and hang in your closets, or place in a storage container with your winter clothes. You can also sprinkle the herbs in a small envelope and tuck the envelope between layers of clothes or in a pocket of something hanging in the closet. Good herbs for this purpose include: catnip, juniper berries, lavender, lemon balm, peppermint, red cedar, rosemary, sage, spearmint, thyme, and wormwood.

> Dried mullein was once used in barns to keep mice away from grains. Try it, or peppermint, in your pantry.



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17 SUMMER
SOOTHERS



Summer Skin and Hair Soothers

- > Hair-Raising Oil Pack
- > Refreshing Herbal Splasher
- > Itch-Relief Bath

... and more!

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What's witch hazel?

Witch hazel is an herb, but you'll also find it sold as a liquid. The liquid is distilled from the leaves and bark of the witch hazel shrub, *Hamamelis virginiana* and makes an excellent astringent (generally used after washing the skin, to tighten pores and restore the skin's pH balance).

I love to soak my feet after a long hike. What herbs would be good to add to my soak?

Soaking your feet can be relaxing, cleansing, invigorating, and/or soothing, depending on the water temperature and the herbs you choose. Make an infusion of chamomile, comfrey, horsetail, lavender, peppermint, or sage, and add to your basin. You might also add a little salt and/or baking soda (about 1 tablespoon per quart of water) for added soothing. To boost the freshening, add a little cider vinegar or lemon juice. Dry well afterward, and powder with a sprinkling of cornstarch (to absorb moisture and deodorize).



To learn more, visit our website:
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Summer Skin and Hair Soothers

Summer's fun in the sun—and wind and water—can take a toll on your skin and hair. When you're feeling parched, itchy, or just plain droopy this season, herbs can help nourish, relieve, soothe and refresh!



Hair-Raising Oil Pack

It takes a week to steep the herbs for this renewing treatment, so you may want to start a new batch as soon as you use up the old. Feel free to substitute other hair-nourishing oils for the olive oil. Coconut, almond, sesame, and jojoba are also good choices.

- 1 cup olive oil
- 1 tablespoon rosemary leaf (for dark hair) or chamomile flowers (for light hair)
- 1 tablespoon nettle leaf
- 1 tablespoon sage leaf
- 1 egg yolk, beaten

Place the oil and the herbs in a glass jar and cover. Let the jar stand, preferably in the sun, for about a week. Strain. When ready to use, mix in the beaten egg yolk. Apply the oil to dry hair, massaging into the scalp and along all of the hair strands. Wrap your head in a warm, wet towel. Leave on for an hour or more. Shampoo well and rinse with half cider vinegar/half water rinse.



Refreshing Herbal Splasher

Revitalize on scorching summer days with a spritz of herbal spray. This one's good for oily skin, which can feel especially overactive on a hot day.

- 1 cup water
- 2 tablespoons (total) of any of the following: nettle leaf, parsley leaf, peppermint, rose flowers and petals, rosemary leaf, sage leaf, yarrow flowers
- 1/2 cup apple cider vinegar

Boil water, then pour over 1 tablespoon of the herbs. Steep for 20 minutes, then strain. Combine with the vinegar and place in a spray bottle. Store in the refrigerator, to keep fresh and for extra vim!



Itch-Relief Bath

Take this soothing bath when bug bites, heat rash, or other itch instigators are getting the best of you.

- 1/4 cup lavender flowers
- 1/2 cup oatmeal
- 1/2 cup cornstarch

Combine all ingredients and tie into a muslin bag. Place in the tub while filling with warm water. (The cornstarch will dissolve into the water.) Use the bag to wash with; don't use soap, and don't rinse off.

Other itch-soothing herbs (especially good for a poultice for skin that's been irritated by poison oak or ivy or other plants) include: catnip, chickweed, comfrey, goldenseal, lemon balm, marshmallow root, mugwort

Sunburn Sigh

Herbs can be very soothing to skin that's been overexposed to the sun. The chamomile and witch hazel in this recipe are soothing and cooling, and the green tea is full of anti-oxidants. Test your remedy before applying it all over, though, because not everyone reacts to every herb the same way.

- 1/2 cup water
- 1 tablespoon chamomile flowers
- 1 tablespoon witch hazel leaf or green tea

Make an infusion (strong tea) of chamomile and witch hazel or chamomile and green tea by pouring the water over the herbs and steeping for about 20 minutes. Strain and cool, then dab on burned skin, or add to bath water.

or

Add 2 tablespoons of the infusion to the blender with 1 peeled and chopped cucumber. Process until smooth, then dab on skin.

