



FOLK HERBALISM FOR THE END OF THE WORLD:

PLANT ALLIES FOR TRAUMA, GRIEF, & OVERWHELM

The Nervous System: What We're Working With

Our nervous system has a job description it never signed up for - keep us alive. It's constantly scanning for threat, safety, connection, and resources - most of it happening below the level of conscious thought. When the world feels unstable, when loss piles up, when we're overwhelmed and overstimulated, the nervous system does what it evolved to do - it locks into protection mode. That might look like anxiety (the system revved up and scanning), dissociation (the system checked out), or a restless swinging between the two.

The branch of the nervous system that handles this is the autonomic system, and it's the part that runs without our thinking about it. There's the sympathetic (the gas pedal - alert, fight-or-flight, mobilize) and the parasympathetic (the brake - rest, digest, connect, heal). Most of us in modern life spend way too much time with the gas pedal pressed. The herbs in your oxymel are here to help folks find the brake.

What Nervines Actually Do

"Nervine" is the herbalist's word for plants that act on the nervous system. But it's a broad category, and the best way to understand it is by what kind of help the nervous system actually needs. Most of the herbs on your table are nervine relaxants - they calm the system during waking hours without sedating it. They don't knock you out, but they soften the edges. They help the nervous system remember it's safe to put the shield down for a bit.

PLANT ALLIES FOR THE END OF THE WORLD

Each of these plants has a particular relationship with the nervous system. Here's how to find the one that fits where you are right now.



Lemon Balm

- *Mood support + uplifting nervine
- *Antiviral properties
- *Digestive calming
- *Helps relieve stress + anxious tension
- *For when you can't find the off switch

Chamomile

- *Nervous system relaxation
- *Soothes digestive inflammation
- *Sleep support
- *Gentle medicine for children + adults
- *For when you feel irritated +
oversensitive + fussy (your inner child
needs soothed)



Rose

- *Emotional softening + grief support
- *Anti-inflammatory properties
- *Heart-centered herbalism
- *Cooling and moistening energetics
- *For staying present when your heart breaks



Lavender

- *Anxiety + tension relief
- *Sleep support
- *Headaches + stress
- *Antimicrobial properties
- *For you when you worry, for the
constant low-grade dread, the "what

if" loop



OXYMEL RECIPES

Honey and vinegar together are ancient medicine. Honey brings sweetness, moisture, and quick energy - comfort for the frayed system. Vinegar is sour and cooling, calling the liver and digestion into play and helping the body shift from stuck to flowing. Combined with these aromatic nervine relaxants, you get something that works fast (the volatile oils hit the olfactory system and gut immediately) and gently (the honey and vinegar carry the medicine slowly into the system). It's a folk preparation in the best sense - accessible, adaptable, and made with what's at hand.



Dried Plant Oxymel

- * 1/2 jar dried herbs
- * Fill remaining 1/2 with apple cider vinegar + honey
- * 2 Parts Honey, 1 Part Vinegar OR to taste

Fresh Plant Oxymel

- * 3/4 jar fresh plant material
- * Fill remaining space with apple cider vinegar + honey
- * 2 Parts Honey, 1 Part Vinegar OR to taste

Usage Instructions

Let steep for 4-6 weeks in a cool, dark space. Strain. Take a teaspoon to a tablespoon in water or straight as needed daily.

NOTES:

* A quick disclaimer - The plants in this class are food-grade allies with a long history of safe use. This handout is for educational purposes and is not intended to diagnose or treat medical conditions. If you're managing a complex health situation or taking medications, it's worth knowing that herbs can interact with some pharmaceuticals - particularly sedating medications.