

FALL IN LOVE WITH THE MAGIC OF

Elecampane



MONTHLY PLANT MAGIC /// JANUARY 2021

Prepared exclusively for Joyful Roots Patrons

Monthly Plant Magic

Happy New Year Beautiful Friends!

Yessssssss! It's finally a new year! Here's to believing 2021 will be a little less tumultuous and a lot more wonderful.

In November, I got my hands dirty and dug up some roots in my garden - Elecampane roots and more. As I knelt on the ground and shuffled the soil with my bare hands, I traced the roots to the once beautiful plant, now brown and frost-bitten. They twisted and turned, meandering in many directions. I carefully released them from the earth, scrubbed them clean, chopped them, and dried them. There's something about digging roots that makes you feel so connected to the world - so embodied - like growing roots yourself and being embraced by Mother Earth. I highly recommend it!

I had not worked with Elecampane until this fall, but wow have I



"Enula campana
reddit praecordia
sana"

"Elecampane will
sustain the spirit."

LATIN PROVERB

fallen in love!! As we head through the throws of winter, Elecampane is a trustworthy companion to have by our side, offering us lung protection and inner warmth. As you read on, you will also see I've included a respiratory syrup recipe that we've been making in our home. I'm so excited to share this because it's wonderful to have on hand for this pandemic and for cold/flu season in general.

For those of you that receive the Monthly Plant Magic boxes, I debated over how to send the syrup. Ultimately I decided to send it as a kit rather than a pre-made syrup for a couple of reasons. The first, in order to make the syrup shelf stable for mailing I would have to use a lot of sugar in place of honey (and honey is so healing). Second, after making this myself I realized that part of the magic is in the amazing scent that will fill your home when you make it! It smells like an evergreen forest. I hope you enjoy the process! You can reach out if you have any questions.

Now, I must reiterate a few important things:

I will always strive to bring you the best and most relevant knowledge, but please always use your own judgment and intuition, as you should with anything. The information you will find here is not meant to be a substitute for medical advice and is not intended to treat any person or cure any disease. You also know your body better than anyone. Trust your instincts!

Everyone's bodies are different - if at any time you do not like how a certain herb makes you feel, please trust and listen to your body. Also know that if you are receiving botanical extracts and they don't resonate in full dose form, you can still interact with the spirit of the plant by taking a one-drop dose (but if you are experiencing any sort of allergic reaction, please discontinue any type of use).

If at anytime you have additional questions please feel free to message me through Patreon or at kim@joyfulroots.com.

May you be filled with extra joy and warmth this holiday season and into the New Year.

Xo,
Kimberly



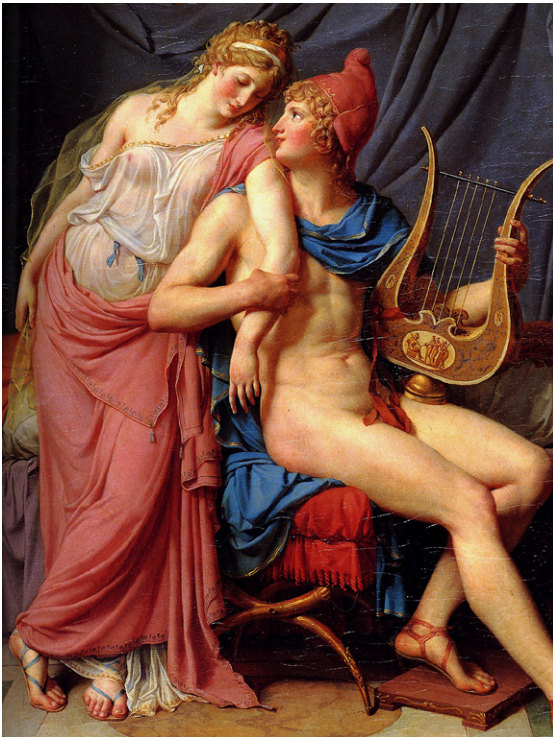
Inula helenium

In the dead of winter, who wouldn't crave to have a little sunshine magic in the cupboard? How about reminiscing on summer while you imbibe in an herb called Elfwort and dream of green grass and flowers? Wouldn't it be grand if that herb also helped you clear the crud of winter colds from your lungs? Lucky we have such an herb as this, also commonly known as Elecampane!

With such fascinating glamor, we can see why Elecampane was so revered as a sacred herb among the Celts and Druids. Celtic folklore paints it as a plant of the elves which also protects against Elvin magic. It certainly is impressive in its size and stature, growing up to 6 feet tall. You would perhaps think an Elvin plant would be tiny and delicate, but maybe its magic lies in making us humans feel as though we have shrunk to elf size?

The species name, Helenium, comes from the legend of [Helen of Troy](#), in which it is said that she held an Elecampane flower in her hand when she left to live with Paris in Troy and that it springs up from where her tears fell. It is said that the goddess Aphrodite promised Helen to Paris in the

THE LOVE OF HELEN AND PARIS BY JACQUES-LOUIS DAVID (OIL ON CANVAS, 1788, LOUVRE, PARIS)



Judgement of Paris. She was seduced by him and carried off to Troy, resulting in the Trojan War when the Achaeans set out to reclaim her. Helen was considered to be the "ideal beauty" for whom it is stated: "Was this the face that launched a thousand ships / And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?"

In Germany, it was customary to put an elfwort blossom in the middle of a bouquet to symbolize the Sun and the head of Odin. The flower has the typical Sun shape and the freshly harvested seeds smell like frankincense. The Greeks and Romans considered it one of their most important herbs. A sauce was made by the Romans to aid digestion after



rich meals. Pliny the Elder said "let no day pass without eating some of the roots of *Enula*, considered to help digestion and cause mirth." The Aniyunwiya (Cherokee) use *Elecampane* for coughs, lung disorders, asthma, strengthening the womb, and tuberculosis. The Lenni Lenape use it as a tonic to strengthen digestive organs, remove intestinal mucus, and as a laxative. The Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) work with it for colds, pain relief, rheumatic pain, coughs, poultice for sores and cuts, diuretic, fever relief, asthma, and pulmonary chest pains. Traditional Chinese Medicine uses the flowers and leaves of two other species of *elecampane* (*I. japonica* and *I. chinensis*) as a mildly warming expectorant remedy for chest congestion and a strengthening digestive bitter.

Nicholas Culpeper, in his 1814 *Complete Herbal*, wrote that *Elecampane* is ruled by Mercury and used it to "warm a cold and windy stomach, to resist poison, to strengthen sight, and to clear internal blockages." The King's Dispensatory suggests it is indicated for "cough of a teasing, persistent character, accompanied with substantial pain and profuse secretion." Interestingly, this is exactly the type of cough I have heard those with Covid speak of. This is a remedy to be employed where there is cold/depression and/or damp/stagnation in the tissues. Cold/depression happens when mucous is stuck and unproductive and may be accompanied by poor blood flow and cold hands and feet. Damp/stagnation is seen as watery secretions that are thick and congested, possibly being yellow or green. It may be accompanied by sluggish digestion and stagnation in the lymph system. *Elecampane* helps get these fluids moving again so that the infection does not sink deeper into



the body. It could be considered a bit forceful in that it nearly instantly opens up the respiratory airways, imbibes warmth, and breaks up phlegm.

Despite its forceful nature, it has been historically used as a rejuvenate lung tonic for certain conditions, mainly chronic cold lung conditions, bronchitis, and asthma. It works similarly in the digestive tract by stimulating digestion which helps to better digest food and reduce digestive mucus.

As its genus name indicates, Elecampane is high in Inulin, a starch-like carbohydrate that has a sweet taste and can be used as a sugar substitute for diabetics or to help to stabilize blood sugar levels. Inulin is a prebiotic, which acts as a food source for healthy gut bacteria, that is also found in sweet potatoes, dandelion root, and other starchy vegetables. As described in a Polish study by Nowak et al, "Following ingestion, inulin reaches the lower part of the gastrointestinal tract where it is fermented increasing the bifidobacterial population of the colon. The growth of bifidobacteria regulates cholesterol concentration and absorption of minerals. Inulin added to food may prevent the spread of civilization diseases, like diabetes and obesity". Inulin content of the root is typically highest in the autumn, so it is best to harvest those roots in the fall during the 2nd or 3rd year of growth.

Herbalists Michael Tierra and Candice Cantin created the Herbal Tarot and assigned Elecampane to the Knight of Pentacles. In the accompanying book, they say this Knight is a "noble, stable, reliable person. Because of his understanding of the healing arts and the ways of the physical world, he is able to teach his wisdom through his actions, accomplishments, and words. His patience is symbolized by the snail helmet that he wears." His wisdom shows us that rest is important to wellbeing. Tension and holding-back of talents/emotions will bring



ELECAMPANE FLOWER

about stagnancy and energetic blockages that need to be released.

Elecampane can help one to be more connected to the Earth and I can attest to this from my own experience of digging up the roots. There's something about that process that brings about a deeper connection to our wild side and our place within the world around us. This herb is very pungent and bitter, which indicates that it stimulates energy to move within the body. On an emotional level this helps to "clear away outmoded ideas and fixations." On a physical level this can help to expel congestion and mucous from the respiratory tract, cleanse blood,

support detoxification, and promote menstruation.

Due to its uterine stimulating nature, Elecampane is contraindicated during pregnancy. Caution is warranted when breastfeeding. Because of its high inulin content, caution should be use for those who are diabetic or hypoglycemic, as inulin can sometimes reduce blood sugar levels. Elecampane may cause allergic reactions for people with allergies to the Asteraceae family. Very large amounts of the herb may cause vomiting, diarrhea, cramps, and temporary symptoms of paralysis. It is contraindicated in people with hot/dry conditions since it can exacerbate that energetic.

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PHOTO BY ANUP GHAG

Summer Days Cough Syrup

This is an excellent recipe for boggy, damp, congested coughs and is an ode to the memories of sunny days and the light that helps us through winter. This blend combines warming anti-viral herbs with cooling and soothing bio-film busting herbs, all of which have an affinity for the respiratory tract. Feel free to make adjustments to the recipe based on the herbs you have on hand. Note: Honey is not recommended for children under the age of 12 months. Avoid during pregnancy. Check with your doctor if you are on medications or have underlying conditions.

INGREDIENTS:

- 3 TBS DRIED ELECAMPANE ROOTS
- 2 TBS MARSHMALLOW ROOT
- 1 TBS ECHINACHEA ROOT
- 4 TBS MULLEIN LEAF
- 1 TBS CINNAMON CHIPS OR 1 LARGE CINNAMON STICK
- 1 TSP DRIED GINGER (OR 1/2 TSP FRESH GRATED GINGER)
- 4 WHOLE CLOVES
- 1 TBS BEE BALM
- 3 CUPS WATER
- 1 1/2 CUP RAW HONEY

HOW TO MAKE:

1. Chop or grate fresh ginger and set aside.
2. In a 2 quart saucepan, add the 3 cups cool water.
3. Add the herbs (except bee balm) and the fresh ginger to the water, mix well, and bring to a boil. Once boiling, turn the heat down and allow to simmer - steaming, not boiling - for 30 minutes. Turn off heat and add Bee balm. Cover and let steep for an additional 20 minutes. Allow to cool to just a bit warmer than room temp.
4. Strain the herbs out so that liquid remains. Fine mesh Cheesecloth (included in box) works well for straining since you are able to squeeze out more liquid, however, you can also use a fine-mesh strainer. You may want to use a funnel to direct the liquid into a mason jar, which you will be able to seal up after you add the honey. Discard or Compost the remaining herbs.
5. Once the herbal infusion has cooled to nearly room temp, you can add the honey. Mix well to dissolve.
6. Refrigerate in a glass jar that is labeled and dated. The syrup should last upwards of 1 month. Adding more honey will make the syrup last longer, and vice versa. Enjoy!

Imbolc & Brigid

January is one of the coldest, darkest months of the winter and a time when we may be feeling the ongoing affects of a lingering winter. Imbolc is a traditional Celtic Festival marking the beginning of spring that is celebrated around the 1st of February which is about the halfway point between the Winter Solstice and Spring Equinox. Imbolc was originally a pagan festival associated with the goddess Brigid and was adopted by the Christian religion as St. Brigid's Day and Candlemas. Even though this zine is written for January, I thought it would be a wonderful time to prepare you for this upcoming date.

I felt like this was a perfect holiday to correspond to the Elecampane flower, a plant with such brilliant sun-like blossoms that signal brighter days on the horizon. Traditionally, candles were lit in every room at this time to welcome the Sun King to return, bringing his light, warmth, illumination, and inspiration with him. The goddess Brigid - the triple goddess representing maiden, mother and crone - was celebrated this day. She is associated with spring and the growing of the light, the planting of seeds, fertility, healing, poetry, and blacksmithing and representative of the priestesses who tend the eternal flame.

Fire Renewal Ritual

Just as this time of year brings about fresh beginnings, we can symbolically prepare ourselves for new beginnings by setting forth our intentions for the coming "harvest season." One way is to light a candle to represent the return of the sun which will inspire your coming months. Peer into the flames as you bring to mind your intentions for the next half of the year. What would you like to see come to bear fruit or to blossom? In which ways are you going to start anew? Focus on bringing the warmth and light of the fire into your heart center to be stored for the rest of the winter and use that energy to illuminate your hopes and wishes. As you go about your next few weeks, pay attention to the places within your life where you are working with the energies of warmth and light. Can you bring your attention to these gifts and imbue them with some extra gratitude?



Botany + Harvest

Elecampane is a tall plant that grows to a height of 2 to 6 feet. The oblong leaves are alternate and large, ranging from 10 to 18 inches long and 4 inches wide. The upper leaves become progressively smaller toward the top of the plant where they clasp the stem with their heart-shaped bases. The leaves are rough on their upper side and soft and wooly on their lower side. The yellow flowers occur singly or in groups of three or four. They are 2 to 4 inches across and comprised of disk florets surrounded by a fringe of long, narrow ray florets. Flowers bloom June to August, starting in the second year. The root is large and fleshy with and rootlets that are about 6 to 12 inches long and 1 to 2 inches in diameter, brown on the outside, and white on the inside.

Elecampane is easy to grow from seed and can be divided once mature. Space it 12 to 30 inches apart. It spreads via rhizomes, underground “runners” that bear both roots and upward-climbing shoots, but it is not aggressive in its spreading. It may also self-seed.

Harvest the root in the fall season the second or third year. The roots and rhizomes spread out in an octopus shape, so dig a broad area to retain as much of the root as possible. Digging with a pitchfork helps to loosen the soil without damaging the roots too much although you can also use a shovel. Harvest the entire plant or divide it and harvest just a portion of the root growth and foliage so that the plant grows again next year.

After harvesting, clean the roots well and squeeze the tough outer skin of the root by hand to break it apart, then peel the brown skin off of the outside, if desired. Prepare or dry in a dehydrator for later use.

Info from The Spruce:
<https://www.thespruce.com/grow-and-use-elecampane-1762291>



Elecampane Quick Look

OTHER NAMES

Elfwort, Elf Dock, Scabwort, Horseheal, Horse Elder, Velvet Dock, Marchalan, Wild Sunflower, Raiz del Moro, Helopia, Aielleann, Creamh

FAMILY

Asteraceae

ENERGETICS/TASTE

Warming, Grounding, Drying, Mildly Bitter, Pungent, Sweet, Aromatic

CORRESPONDENCES

Mercury/Air

ORGAN AFFINITY

Lungs & Respiratory System, Digestive System, Female Reproductive System

PARTS USED

Roots dug in the 2nd or 3rd year; Flowers and leaves are used in Chinese Medicine

ACTIONS

Anti-catarrhal, Antimicrobial, Antitussive, Astringent, Anesthetic, Anthelmintic, Alterative, Carminative, Cholagogue, Emmenagogue, Expectorant

CONSTITUENTS

Polysaccharides (primarily inulin), resins, sodium, calcium, pectin, mucilage, iodine, magnesium, vitamins A, C, E b12, B5, beta-carotene, selenium, niacin, sterols, saponins, volatile oils and possibly alkaloids.

DOSAGE & METHODS

- **Tincture:** 1-2 ml (1:5 in 40%) 3x per day
- **Decoction:** 4.5-12g of dried root per day ((Materia Medica Resource); 1 teaspoon shredded root per cup boiling water, steeped for 8-10 hours, reheated and taken three times per day. (Hoffman, David).

PRECAUTIONS

Do not use while pregnant. Elecampane may cause allergic reactions for people with allergies to the Asteraceae family. Elecampane can be irritating to mucous membranes due to its sesquiterpene lactones (particularly alantolactone), which may cause allergic contact dermatitis. Large amounts of the herb may cause vomiting, diarrhea, cramps, and symptoms of paralysis (American Botanical Council). Caution with asthmatics, as the heating and drying nature of this herb could exacerbate an attack.

I HOPE YOU ENJOYED THIS PLANT MAGIC ZINE! PATREON.COM/JOYFULROOTS



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