



Herbal medicine - what's it all about? - Your guide to making Herbal medicine work for you.

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The Sunday Herbalist



FORWARD

The purpose this book is to provide an easy to read guide for people considering seeing a herbal medicine practitioner and what to expect from this experience.

In this short booklet I cover the main questions people have when considering seeing a herbalist such as cost, length of consultation, professional ethics etc. It is designed to be a quick easy read but also a reference you can come back to later on if needed.

This book came out of my desire to educate interested people and future clients so they understand and appreciate this ancient healing modality.

Backing up this book is 20 years of study into Natural healing and herbs, experiments (yes on myself) growing them (over 100 species), making medicine and finally being professionally qualified (Advanced Diploma in Western Herbal Medicine).

Enjoy!

Christopher Smith

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Who am I to speak to you on this subject?

Before we go too far – Allow me to introduce myself to you.

My name is Christopher Smith and I have been deeply involved with the plant world for most of my life.

My first brush with the plant world was Mums garden in Rostrevor Adelaide Australia where I liked to dig holes and decapitate daffodils.

Later when a teenager my Aunty Cath ignited a passion for the plant world by a gift of various potted plants that I then worked out how to grow. This passion was to continue over a lifetime.

I turned this passion into a profession with formal studies in Horticulture whilst working at the Adelaide Botanic Gardens resulting in the qualification of Certificate in Advanced Horticulture 1982.

Keenly interested in Science as well; I also later studied with Charles Sturt University to obtain an Applied Science Degree in Environmental Analysis in 1996.

I have been growing medicinal herbs since 2006 establishing a collection of over 100 species. A special interest has been growing endangered species from the USA. Coming out of this experience were workshops, sharing knowledge with interested people, showing the herbal plant collection and also the practical aspect of making plant medicines.

Other studies were in Herbal medicine, Homeopathy, Spagyrics with Tim Thomas and Kim Dudley at the Hierophant in Griffith Canberra, one of Australia's leading Herbal and Homeopathic dispensaries.

Formal qualifications are an Associate Diploma in Western Herbal medicine from Om Shanti College of Natural therapies in 2018.

I like to work with people strongly motivated to take responsibility for their wellness and open to take on new approaches to improving their health. People with complex health issues are warmly welcome.

My Specialities are Men's Health, good health for Country folk and people with Menieres Disease.

To those of you new to natural medicine or unsure what this is all about?

What is it like for you to enter into the world of herbalism?

Based on my own experience I do not take this question lightly. When we are ill we crave wise counsel, reassurance and a pathway to heal ourselves.

I remember what it was like to be on the edge of that decision. Let me tell to you my own first-time experience with seeing a herbalist.

Some while back I had found myself in a difficult and stressful workplace environment. The local Dr had prescribed a sleeping pill but the mental stress and its toll was still present.

I remember vividly the first time I made that appointment.

I still remember his name Terry Buckerfield. It was a time of great personal stress and a trusted neighbour seeing my need gave me his phone number.

An appointment was made and the rest is history. I was profoundly struck by his empathy and concern for my well being and that he really listened to my concerns.

On our last appointment he said at the conclusion “I am no longer worried about your health anymore” this struck me as to how much he cared about me as a patient.

His treatment pulled me out of my dire state, enabled me to make some big decisions and frankly changed my life.

So I deeply respect your position and want to lay out in this book information that will help you make a decision to improve your health.

With your permission I would like to be that trusted advisor and friend to guide you into this world.

Let's take a step forward together - I would like you to read this booklet to have your questions answered so that you can make an intelligent rational decision about seeking the care of Herbal medicine.

Copyright Notice

Thanks for reading this book and I hope it will meet your needs.

Here is what I ask of you:

I ask for respect of my intellectual property and all the effort that goes into making such a book. If you know people who would benefit from this book encourage them to download a free copy from my website (Tinderrymountainherbs.com.au).

This work is Copyright to Christopher Smith 2018 ©

Disclaimer

This book is not intended to diagnose, treat or cure any illness whatsoever.

What is written here is for information purposes, general in scope and not for you to diagnose yourself, self medicate or treat any other person. Consult a qualified herbal practitioner before using any herb medicinally.

Sudden acute illness and trauma needs a medical Doctors attention – NO EXCEPTIONS. Young babies especially can become ill very quickly and not having an adult's resilience needs a Doctors care without delay.

The purpose of this book is to educate you in what a herbalist is, does and can offer to you in health care.

What can you expect at your first appointment?

Like any other Health profession you ring or visit and make an appointment

You are expected to advise in advance if you cannot make that time so your appointment can be rescheduled.

Times for the consultation will range from 1 – 1.5 hours for your initial consultation.

Prior to the appointment you will need to make note of any prescription medication you are taking and any recent pathology tests.

You will sit down and have an extended conversation with the Herbalist in a private room about your health. For many people it is probably the longest time they have had focussed solely on talking about their health.

You can expect the Herbalist to be friendly and professional with time for you to go through your story and circumstances without pressure.

The Herbalist will work from a questionnaire so as to thoroughly capture about all aspects of your health and medical history.

There may be some physical examination such as blood pressure, pulse and looking at your face hands and tongue.

You are free to ask any questions during this talk.

The history of herbal medicine

Just in case you think it is some new kind of alternate practice - Herbal Medicine is closely entwined with human history. We have turned to plants for thousands of years for healing properties just as we have for food, clothing and shelter.

Barbara Griggs in her book Green Pharmacy talks about the Neanderthal grave 60,000 years old in Iraq where the body was surrounded by clusters of flowers and branches.

Of the eight species identified in the grave seven have medicinal usages such as Yarrow, Ephedra and Marshmallow – all of them still major medicinal herbs today.

Egypt, Greece, Rome and Mesopotamia were all Ancient civilizations where herbs were a major part of the healing process. Australian Aboriginals have used Herbal medicine too for over their 60,000 years in this land.

Pharmacists worldwide and in Australia still dispensed herbs for people's ailments right up to the Second World War. After this time mainstream medicine changed its focus to pharmaceutical drugs created in laboratories.

Herbal medicine is also one of the most conservative of healing professions in terms that its plant medicines have been used for long periods of time.

In 2008 The World Health Organisation WHO in their Beijing conference with 80 member countries created the Beijing declaration recognising Traditional medicine. Two of the points made are below.

I. The knowledge of traditional medicine, treatments and practices should be respected, preserved, promoted and communicated widely and appropriately based on the circumstances in each country.

II. Governments have a responsibility for the health of their people and should formulate national policies, regulations and standards, as part of comprehensive national health systems to ensure appropriate, safe and effective use of traditional medicine

The World Health Organization defines health as ‘a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity’

Answering your questions

Who are Herbalists anyhow?

This is someone who has studied how to use medicines sourced from plants with medicinal properties (We call them remedies) to treat illness and imbalance in the human body.

Herbalists have been using plants for healing for thousands of years. It's one of the most conservative medical healing systems currently in use. Whilst there are fads in herbs (Echinacea, Golden seal, Turmeric) a lot of remedies have been used consistently for hundreds of years.

A Good herbalist aims is to restore balance and support the bodies systems.

David Winston North American Herbalist says *Good Herbalists treat people not disease.*

So OK how does it work?

Herbs contain in themselves a complex mixture of a wide range of chemicals. Yarrow a common herb has over 50 different constituent chemicals alone in its makeup.

But it is more than just chemicals, there is a theme and pattern to what these chemicals do in human bodies. Herbalists work with this knowledge to select the right herbs for each situation.

It's the human individuality that herbs treat. Each herbal plant remedy represents a human condition that it can restore balance to.

When taken for medicinal purposes they work on regulating our bodies systems (blood, lymph, nerves etc).

Avoid thinking on the lines of what herb is good for specific conditions (heart disease, arthritis, varicose veins etc). That's stepping outside the most effective way for using herbs.

Good herbalists think in **terms of body systems and what the herb actions are on the body.**

We have co evolved with plants for millions of years – we share a lot of the same chemistry hence they are so effective in our metabolism. An example of this is chlorophyll and haemoglobin – only one atom difference between these two molecules Iron in humans and Magnesium in plants. Carrying oxygen in the blood for us and capturing sunlight to make food with plants.

Is this weird alternate hippy stuff?

NO & YES!

Herbal medicine predates the Hippies by a few thousand years! You could just as easily say are herbalists Ancient Egyptians or Babylonians or Ancient Greeks? All these cultures used and developed the craft of Herbal Medicine.

Herbal Medicine is actually a quite conservative healing tradition with long historic roots.

Hippies in the 1960's and 70's helped reinvigorate herbal medicine after a long period of decline in the 20th century. We owe them a lot of credit for that.

Quoting David Hoffman - "*Herbalism was the grounding of flower power. Flower power wasn't just about hippies celebrating with flowers in our hair; nature got us. Nature woke us up.*"

Here are some Hippies and what they were able to do.

Rosemary Gladstar – Founded a Botanical trading company, herbal medicine teaching school, set up the annual International Herb Symposium then founded United Plant Savers that lobbies for Medicinal Plant Conservation.

Michael Moore – Preserved Mexican Spanish herbal knowledge and usage of South West USA herbs plus trained many herbalists.

Michael Tierra – Developed Planetary Herbology composed of Indian Chinese and traditional European practices blended together.

David Hoffman -Has written excellent books on the practice of herbal medicines and trains future Herbalists in California. He also helped found the American Herbalist Guild.

Christopher Hobbs – Fourth generation Botanist Herbalist Author trainer and collector of historic herbal books

Susan Weed – Promoter of Wise Woman herbalism and author of an excellent range of books on woman's health.

My point here is that hippies they may have been and are – their contributions are many and of serious achievement.

Are Herbalists like doctors?

Herbalists are not doctors however there are elements in common with seeing the Doctor - more than you realise.

- You make an appointment to see a trained medical professional.
- You are asked questions about your current and historical health plus life style and environment.
- The consultation is completely private and your records kept private as well.
- Herbalists often make up their own prescriptions whilst Drs. refer you to a Chemist

Do I have to believe anything for it to work?

Getting results from Herbal medicine is not dependent on you believing anything – some of my best results have been from complete sceptics. All you have to do is show up for the consultation and follow the directions – it's easy.

I do my research on Google – How reliable is Dr. Google?

We all do it – including me. But what is the relevance and accuracy of the information we get from a Google search? Do we know the person that wrote this information – are they experienced - trained or just showcasing their opinion?

Just because it is on the internet does not make it true.

I vividly remember seeing women heavily pregnant with her first child come in to an herbal dispensary asking for a particular remedy as ‘she had researched it on the internet’

Luckily for her the shop assistant was aware and steered her away from this ill informed choice. Had she taken this remedy it could have induced an early labour apart from being quite useless for the condition she was concerned about.

Google can be useful - but you need training and experience to be able to discern knowledge from fluff.

Short cut the frustration and consult a professional – you will be grateful you did.

Are herbalists into growing and smoking dope?

NO!

To be an effective herbalist requires study and application to the task over a long period of time - the very opposite of a stoned laid back irresponsible attitude to life. Herbalists are serious students of their craft, continually learning and being curious about the wonder of the Human condition.

Good Herbalists assume serious responsibility – they are treating live human beings in all their wondrous complexity and variety. You will also find many of them have had previous careers, degrees and serious life experience.

OK What does it cost?

Herbalists charge a range of prices for their consultation fees. These fees are not regulated by Government policy and Herbal medicine is not Government subsidised.

You would expect to see a range of \$75 to \$275 per consultation.

The education process of becoming a Herbalist is run by private Colleges not subsidised Government schools or Universities. The Government does not build Herbal clinics as they do Medical centres or hospitals. No one's wage is paid by the Government.

Herbal medicines are not subsidised as in the Pharmaceutical benefits program for Pharmacy medicines.

A variety of Health funds do financially subsidise Herbal medicine consultations. As this varies between funds you need to inquire about your particular health fund coverage.

So you pay the full real life cost.

The cost is an investment in your health. Poor health costs you money in a number of ways,

- time off work with reduced income and earning capacity
- just feeling poorly and as such lower enjoyment of life
- Strain and stress on your relationships
- Reduced opportunity to do things you would like to do such as travel or physical activities

My proposition to you is this!

You spend more on the maintenance and servicing of your car than your own health.

True or False?

Do you wait for the red light on the car dashboard to show before servicing?

Would you ignore its

- Sluggish performance
- Funny smells from the exhaust
- Weird clunking noises
- Inability to go uphill

No you would not! - It would be booked in for a service and repair pretty smartly.

Do not wait for the red light on your body's dashboard to light up before taking care of your health.

Time for appointments - how long does it take?

An initial appointment will be between an hour to two hours depending on the range of issues to be dealt with.

An hour and half is the average for an initial appointment. Follow up subsequent appointments are shorter, usually a half hour to an hour as the groundwork has already been established.

Why so long - The Dr sees me for 15 minutes, you want an hour and a half?

Herbalists take the time to understand and record a full case history for the people they treat. This means your medical history, the current complaint you bring to the appointment and a lot of other stuff.

- It's how we match the herbal remedies to your individual situation.
- It gives you time to tell your story without being rushed
- It also allows time respectfully for trust to be established between yourself and the herbalist, a very important factor in the healing process

It takes time to go through this process. Herbalists use this information to choose the right remedies and actions for your health improvement.

So when was the last time you had a focussed conversation with a Health professional about your health and its improvement?

What will you give me to take? -Does the medicine taste yucky?

Most herbal prescriptions will be in liquid form. Occasionally tablets will be prescribed. For correcting mineral deficiencies dissolvable tablets will be given.

The taste of herbal tinctures varies – Its purpose is for helping your body, not to be your favourite beverage. If you find the taste a bit strong then you can dilute with a very small amount of water – but don't drown it!

Sometimes the remedy will taste to you like Mothers milk – lucky you!

How long do I need to take the medicine?

The usual pattern is to take the medicine according to a set regime for an initial period.

Once your health has improved then the regime becomes one of health maintenance and frequency of dosages reduce.

It is a rare case that you have to take herbal medicine for life, so common with pharmaceutical medications.

The goal is to restore your health to the best possible state as quick as possible.

So how long does it take to be fixed?

Answer - So how long have you been ill?

The two are generally related.

Complaints and conditions that have been around for a short while generally take a short while to rectify.

Chronic or longer term matters take longer. Not as long as they took to manifest but still could be months to maybe a couple of years.

Your herbalist will give some indication of the time span involved.

Allow at least six weeks for results to show up, carefully noticing the small things.

This is why the initial consult takes so long. We want to establish clearly what the current state of your health is like so that any changes or progress can be noticed and recorded.

Much like navigating, if you have not recorded carefully where you started and the landmarks along the way it is hard to chart any progress.

Some medicines such as tissue salts and flower essences are taken over longer periods of time to restore balance.

Healing when carried out well is quite subtle to the point you usually do not notice. Its only when you think back that you remember and notice its resolution.

Initial consult – the purpose for both parties is to meet and establish a professional relationship and a level of comfortable trust. The Herbalist seeks to understand and document your current health status.

Follow up appointments – They monitor and record your progress, and adjust any medicines, health actions being taken. It could also be to deal with a minor ailment that has occurred

You're part in the dance -9 Ways you can support your own healing

1. **Notice what is different**, any changes at all so that when you come along for your follow up - progress can be recorded
2. **Being coachable** is the ability to take on new or unfamiliar actions, advice and regimes to improve your health without argument or excuses on why it won't work for you
3. Taking on recommended **lifestyle changes** to support the herbs – Herbalists do not dispense magic get better pills (unfortunately) Habits that have been around for awhile may need to be challenged and steadily changed.
4. **Have courage** to step into the unknown!
5. **Empowerment** – This is about giving you the tools and assistance needed to regain your health. Yes the Herbalists will prescribe medicine; you will also find a lot of health positive actions that you can do yourself.
6. **Ask Questions** – If you are unsure of anything during the consultation or afterwards.
7. **Patience** – There no set time for change to happen. It is usually looked for by the six week mark. The follow up visit is to monitor progress, answer important questions and monitor dosage. Sometimes it takes months for change to happen.
8. **Keep in touch** – Do not be a one appointment wonder! All keen then fizzling out when you have to take medicine to a regimen, note changes and check in. Even if it's a quick phone call most practitioners are very happy to hear how you are going.
9. **Massive action** – This one is for the very keen. It involves tackling an issue from as many angles as possible at the same time. It is the **fastest way to achieve a health breakthrough**. Herbs, Lifestyle, nutrition, diet, exercise plus mental and emotional relaxation. In combining these elements enormous progress is possible.

Here is what I expect from my clients

Turn up to the appointment on time with any required documentation

Know your current medications – name and dosage prescribed plus details of any recent pathology tests

Get your herbal prescription filled if it is not filled at appointment time – You may need to go the Health food store or Chemist to obtain required items.- DO NOT DELAY

Take your medicine – do not sit it up on the shelf and look at it. It is not a souvenir! It needs to be taken to work

Keep in touch – Follow up and follow through. A quick phone call or email as to how you are going

Here is what you can expect from me

As a professional herbalist I am a member of the Australian Traditional Medicine Society (ATMS).

This means that as member I adhere to set of professional ethics; the main points of which I will outline here.

- Members conduct themselves ethically and professionally at all times.
- Members render their professional services in accordance with holistic principles for the benefit and wellbeing of clients.
- Members do no harm to clients.
- Members maintain current professional knowledge, skills and attributes through continuing professional education.
- Members refer clients to other appropriate healthcare professionals when necessary.
- Members treat clients with respect, and do not engage in any form of exploitation whether financial, physical, sexual, emotional, religious or for any other reason.
- Members must behave with courtesy, respect, dignity and discretion towards the client.
- Members must accept the rights of clients to make informed choices in relation to their healthcare.
- Members must not attempt to dissuade a client from seeking or continuing medical treatment.
- Members must not engage in a sexual or other inappropriate personal, physical or emotional behaviour or relationship with a client.
- Members must comply with all applicable privacy legislation and keep confidential the information given by a client in the therapeutic relationship.

What if you took your health to another level?

Are you Curious?

How far do you want to travel along the road of better health? Millimetres, Metres, kilometres, As far as you can?

Most of us end up in a medical consultation to get a specific issue addressed and that is fine.

That is a tactical focus and helps with the here and now issues to hand.

I want to talk to you about another way of looking at the matter.

Tactical – relating to a plan of action designed towards gaining a desired action or end.

Strategic - relating to the identification of long-term or overall aims.

I am asking you to lift your gaze to see further down the road; further than you might have ever looked before and see strategically how your life can improve.

To see how you can improve your life by taking simple actions now and establishing health routines that support and nourish you for your life ahead.

Addressing a number of key health factors is proven² to reduce the risk of many chronic diseases. The term chronic disease applies to a group of diseases that tend to be long lasting and have persistent effects.

Chronic diseases are the leading causes of death in most age and sex groups and are the leading cause of illness, disability and death in Australia, accounting for 90% of all deaths in 2011 ¹

The following chronic diseases are the largest causes of death in modern Australians.

Cancer Cardiovascular disease (Heart attack & Strokes)
Diabetes and Chronic Kidney disease.

Chronic diseases have a range of potential impacts on a person's individual circumstances, including quality of life, social interaction and financial effects.

The main actions for reducing chronic disease are as follows²

- Avoid tobacco use
- Maintain a Healthy weight
- Avoid excessive alcohol usage
- Daily physical activity and limit television watching
- Healthy eating
 - No trans fats
 - Plenty of omega 3 oils
 - Generous eating of fruits and vegetables
 - Adequate folic acid intake
 - Cereal in their whole grain/ high fibre form
 - Limited sugar and sugary drink intake
 - Limit salt intake

None of the above actions should be too much of a surprise to you!

So ask yourself the following questions; answer yourself honestly mind!

Are you?

Drinking enough plain old tap water?

Got enough fibre in your diet?

Your digestion healthy?

What about that hearing loss you just put up with?

Craving chocolate, sweet or salty food?

Eating enough vegetables other than those called potato?

Reflexes just not what they were?

Flexibility was something you had in your youth

Feeling exhausted at the end of the day and flop in front of the TV?

**Obtain professional advice on how to address these factors now
before you have a serious health decline and options become
limited.**

Get reliable information from a trusted professional in healthcare

Dorothy Hall a famous Australian Herbalist in her book Herbal remedies outlines three reasons for seeing a Herbalist

- 1- You wait until you are sick – you see a Herbalist - take your medicine and recover
- 2- You see a Herbalist for a general consultation to evaluate the Health potential of your whole life and start on the removal of past causes or incompletely resolved illness
- 3- You have an educational consultation to establish what you need or don't need in terms of food – vitamins - exercise - lifestyle change.

Options 2 & 3 are the place to be

Good health is the foundation stone of your life

We are bombarded daily with health information from a diverse range of sources Men's & Women's Health magazines, bits in the news etc that are out of context, abbreviated and general in nature, placed there to sell you the latest miracle product.

I am asking you to look longer term and with a wider scope as to what your health potential may really be!

Seeing a herbalist regularly to fine tune your health, gain advice on eating & lifestyle to maximise your life potential can establish that foundation stone of good health for you.

Ongoing coaching and maintenance

See a herbalist from a different perspective - that of health assessor and advisor

What would that be like?

You would be following through on any serious health issues that need consistent care over a longer period of time rather than episodic fix ups.

These follow ups could range from weekly to quarterly depending on your state of health.

Just like maintenance on anything else you are involved with such as your car, garden and financial matters some regular skilled attention makes all the difference.

You could be looking at herbal medicine as an ongoing nutrition and tonic for your body. This can be something as simple as drinking a range of herbal teas over time.

Maintain your peak Health- however that is for you

You are subscribed to my free client newsletter as a bonus for downloading this booklet. Coming out once a month it contains short articles about health-related matters and simple actions you can take to improve your life.

Thank you for reading this eBook and I hope it has whetted your appetite to know more about herbalism and book an appointment with me to further your health needs.

To book an appointment call The Hierophant 6 Barker St. (Upstairs) Griffith Shops Canberra

This is where I see clients.

Phone number for consultation 02 62956939

I appreciate any comment or feedback you may have via the email below.

Email to sundayherbalist@gmail.com

Yours for improved health

Christopher Smith

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