

The naturopathic advisor



Experts from the College of Naturopathic Medicine answer your health questions. This issue, you asked:



Q What wild herbs can I use to give myself a DIY spring clean?

Herbs can have a powerful effect so it's best to see a herbalist for advice about what is appropriate for you personally. However, every spring, the classic weed cleavers is abundantly available in Ireland. The fresh plant can no longer be used after it goes to seed towards

the end of May.

If you are confident about recognising the right plant, making a cold tea from it is an easy and free way to benefit from this gift of nature. Alternatively, you can take cleavers as a dried leaf in a hot tea, or in tincture form, available through your herbal supplier.

Cleavers is believed to support the lymphatic system, making it an effective spring cleanser. If our lymphatic system becomes congested, phlegm and mucous can more easily accumulate, leaving you with signs such as a nagging cough, or swelling of the ankles or other body parts. A congested lymphatic system can contribute to longer term chronic disease. Cleavers may help clear residues by giving the lymphatic system a kick-start. It is also a diuretic, thus supporting the kidneys in flushing toxins from the system, reducing water retention, and helping to improve some skin conditions.

To make your own tea, collect a bunch of the sticky weed called cleavers, (the Latin name is

Galium aparine). Make sure you pick it away from polluted roads or pesticide sprayed areas. Pull or cut a handful of the herb, rinse well, and chop coarsely into pieces. Pour cold water over the plant, cover and leave to sit overnight. In the morning, strain off a cup of the liquid and drink it. It is a beautiful pale blue-green colour with a mild taste.

If you are not on any medication you can drink up to three to five cups per day, for up to one week. If you want to take any more, or if you are on medication, you should consult your health practitioner to check for any interactions as longer-term use of diuretics can deplete potassium levels.



Your expert

Your question has been answered by Herbalist and Naturopath, Dana Kraft, for CNM. CNM trains students for successful careers in Naturopathic Nutrition, Herbal Medicine, Acupuncture, Homeopathy,

Naturopathy, and Natural Chef. Short Courses also available. Visit www.naturopathy.ie or call 01 6725036.



HEALTH STORES IRELAND UPDATE

ONE SUPPLEMENT, MANY USES



Take the time to choose the right nutritional supplement for you, advises Health Stores Ireland President, Gerald Colfer.

Many natural health supplements are quite specific in their uses but I love it when one with real multiple uses comes along. It's great to see users get so many advantages from them. Collagen, much in vogue just now, is one such supplement and, on this basis alone, and its versatility, we'll be recommending it.

Osteoarthritis and other joint related issues can often be relieved by taking collagen. When it comes to our joints and tendons, in simplest

terms, it's the 'glue' that helps hold the body together, and we can suffer from joint pain as collagen production slows down as we age.

If you suffer from leaky gut syndrome, a condition where bad-for-you toxins are able to pass through your digestive tract, collagen can be super helpful as it helps break down proteins and soothes your gut's lining, healing damaged cell walls.

On top of this, it can boost metabolism and help liver function but what seems to be catching most attention is its huge potential as a natural beauty aid; increasing collagen

levels can help your skin look firmer, increase smoothness, and help your skin cells keep renewing and repairing normally. Along with appropriate lifestyle measures, such as correct diet, proper exercise levels and drinking lots of water, it would seem to be the way to go if you want younger looking, plumper skin, revitalised nails and stronger, healthier hair.

Find out more at www.healthstores.ie

