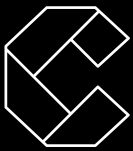


Monastic Medicine



CANOLFAN
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CONWY
CULTURE
CENTRE



Introduction from Phillip the Monk

I'm Phillip. It is tiring being a Monk these days, I have to haunt the castle, haunt the church and now I'm here keeping the medieval monastic history of Conwy alive.

My 'fellow monks' moved here in 1186 (834 years ago, I look good for my age, looks at teacher – you must be from around the same time!!). What did we do here? Well we prayed a lot, didn't sleep much and worked hard in the gardens and fishing. We received seeds and information from visiting monks. We sowed crops and planted seeds and learned about how plants could help people when they were sick. Did you know, the princes of Gwynedd thought we were great

and gave us whatever we needed. In return we gave them advice and stuck up for them when people were mean. The abbey became a mausoleum

(a place for important dead people) for the greatest of the Welsh royal dynasties, even Llywelyn ap Iorwerth was buried here. Aberconwy Abbey was important to this area, and we were striking in our unusual white robes. We lived and worked and prayed here until 1283 when King Edward I encouraged us to move to Maenan so he could build Conwy Castle and the walled town.



One of the most important things we did was to make medicines. Many plants have healing properties. We mixed plants and sometimes animal bits together to see if they healed people. Some worked wonders and others were a disaster.

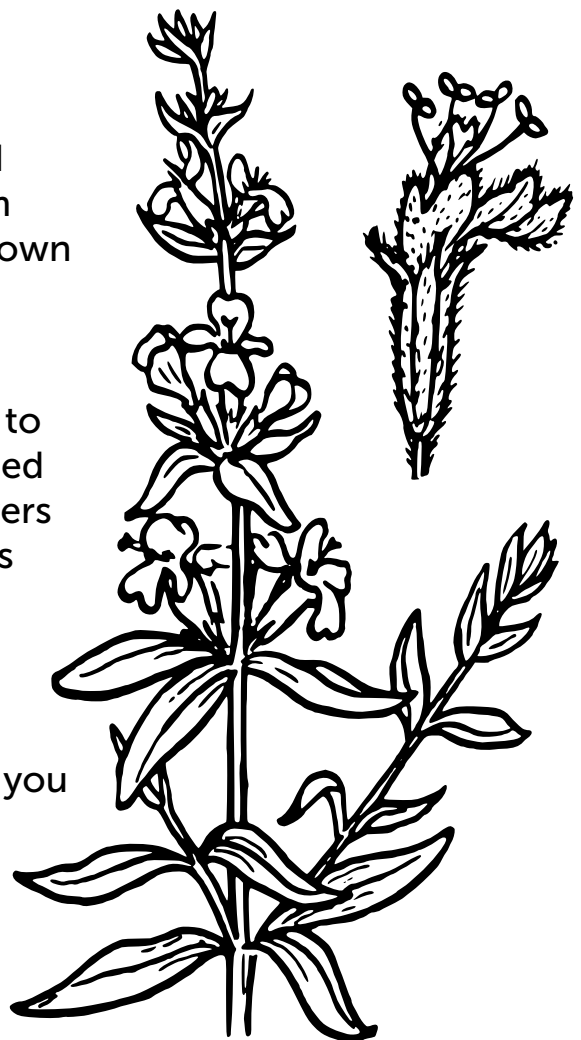
A scientist recently discovered one of our medieval manuscripts that had lists of ingredients that we used to make potions. They experimented with one of our recipes and found that it had astonishing antibiotic properties. Now it's being used to fight the superbug MRSA and it may even hold the answer to antibiotics that are becoming ineffective.

That particular medicine was a salve, a bit like a cream that you would use today. We made salves, ointments, scents, rubs, compresses, all sorts of medicines for every disease or injury. Most of the medicines used today contain plants. Aspirin came from willow bark, heart medication was developed from foxgloves and morphine was developed from poppies. You have to be very careful though and study and learn about plants, because some can make you poorly.

Today I thought we'd test your Medieval Medicinal Monk skills. I've harvested and dried some of our wonderful plants from the garden and invite you to make your own medicine.

You're going to make scent bags. All of the plants we have here are safe for you to touch and smell – but no eating! You need to take your time to smell the dried flowers and leaves, it helps if you close your eyes – sniff - and think about how the smell makes you feel. All of these plants have calming and relaxing powers. They are particularly good if you are worried or can't sleep. Some are also good to help you to breathe more easily if you have a cold. They don't all go together well, so sniff and mix carefully.

I'm going to leave you with your instructions. I must appear at the Castle, I will be back in 30 minutes.



Make your Monastic Medicine

Equipment:

<i>1 bag</i>	<i>To put your dried plants in</i>
<i>1 label</i>	<i>To label your ingredients</i>
<i>1 pen</i>	<i>To write</i>
<i>1 piece of paper</i>	<i>To help you work out the amount of each plant to use to add up to 10g</i>
<i>Bowl</i>	<i>To mix your dried plants</i>
<i>A nose</i>	<i>To smell the dried plants</i>
<i>Patience</i>	<i>To take your time and get it just right for you</i>

Method:

You will need a total of 10 grams of plants in each bag. You will need to work out which plants you would like to use and how many spoons of each you will need – use the paper provided for your workings out.

Dried plant	Grams per spoon	Medicinal powers	Latin name
Chamomile	1g	Calming and promotes sleep.	<i>Matricaria chamomilla</i>
Hyssop	2.5g	Clear breathing.	<i>Hyssopus officinalis</i>
Jasmine	2g	Relaxation.	<i>Jasminum</i>
Lavender	2.5g	Calming and promotes sleep.	<i>Lavandula</i>
Lemon balm	2.5g	Relaxation.	<i>Melissa officinalis</i>
Peppermint	1g	Breathing and relieves headaches.	<i>Mentha</i>
Rose	0.5g	Calming and relaxation.	<i>Rosa</i>
Thyme	2.5g	Clear breathing.	<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>

