

# Introduction to Flower Essence Therapy

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# Vis Medicatrix Naturae

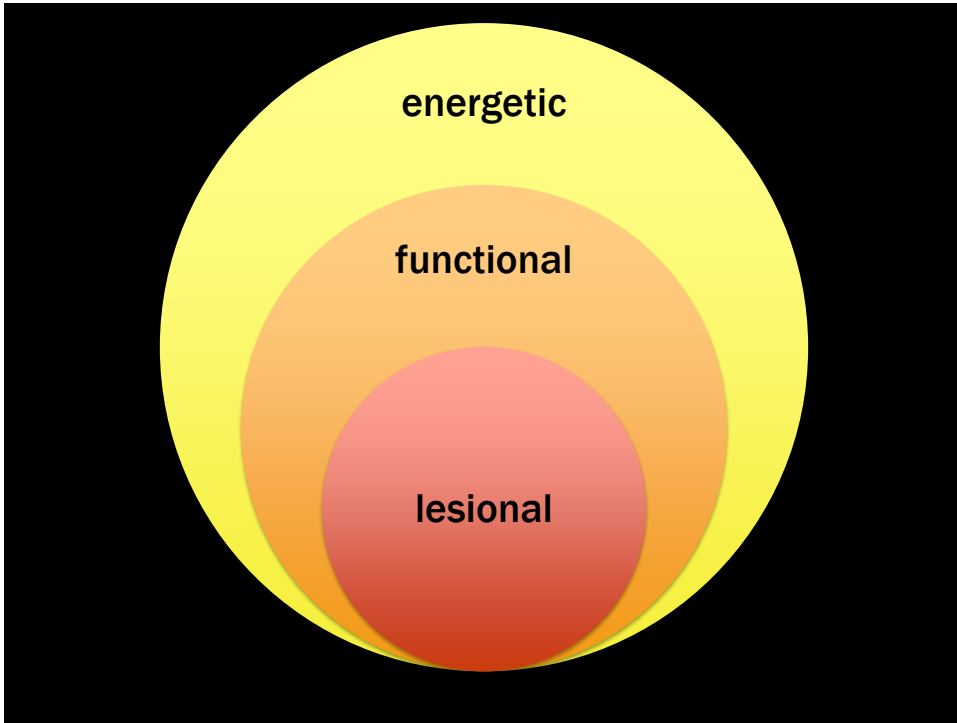


## How I learned



## The Therapeutic Order





**suppression**  
**palliation**  
**cure**

Since they are subtle energetic remedies, the essences tend to work mostly on the subtle and energetic aspects of ourselves.... For example, a common root cause of suffering is low self-esteem and feelings of unworthiness, which have many consequences ranging from inaction and disengagement from life, to more outwardly destructive or extreme self-sabotaging behavior. Flower essences are profound in that **they are actually able to transform these root causes into something positive and improve our overall health.**

— Sara Crow in goop

<http://goop.com/flower-power-floral-tinctures-for-6-ailments/>





## Not essential oils



EOs are concentrated volatile oils distilled from plant sources

It takes 6 pounds of lavender flowers to make 1 ounce of EO

It takes 300 pounds of rose flowers to make 1 ounce of EO

## Not homeopathy



## What are flower essences?



## What are flower essences?

- Start off diluted
- Broad indications
- Less specific than HP (+/-)
- Sustainable
- Long lasting
- Cost effective



## How do flower essences work?

- Vibrational coherence
- Plant-spirit medicine
- Intention/affirmation
- Suggestion (placebo)
- Unidentified mechanism (“magic”)



## History and philosophy



Dr. Edward Bach 1886-1936



## History and philosophy

Intention: a simple, accessible, comprehensive system

7 nosodes (intestinal toxemia)

12 healers (flowers)

38 essences at time of death

More reportedly in the works

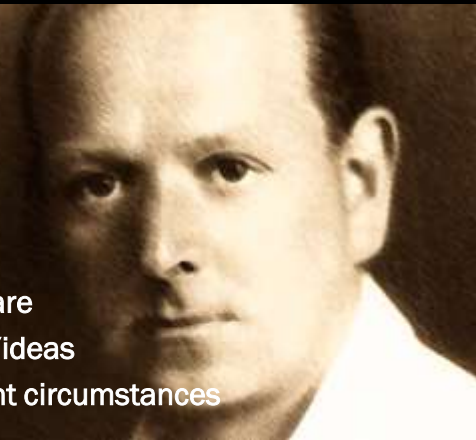


Dr. Edward Bach 1886-1936

## History and philosophy

Bach's 7 types:

1. Fear
2. Uncertainty
3. Loneliness
4. Despondency/despair
5. Overconcern for others' welfare
6. Oversensitivity to influences/ideas
7. Insufficient interest in present circumstances



Dr. Edward Bach 1886-1936

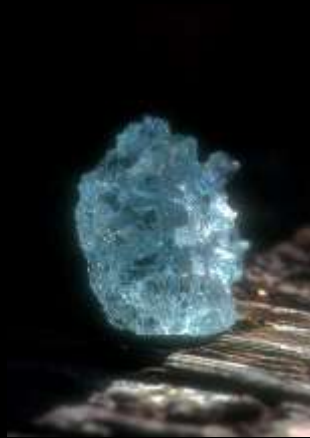
Lots of choices now. Bioregional, endangered, garden, etc.



## Gem essences



Black tourmaline  
(detox)



Aquamarine  
(clear mind,  
eases learning)



Covellite  
(protection)

## Environmental essences



Portage Glacier



Solstice Sun



Tidal Forces

## Preparation and dosing





## Preparation



May be simple or complex

## Preparation



### Mother essence

- Flowers infuse in water
- Strain
- Dilute 1:1 with brandy

### Stock bottle

- Four drops mother
- In water-brandy mix
- This is what you buy

### Dosing bottle

- 4 gtts single stock essence
- 2 gtts each multiple stocks
- In water-brandy mix
- May use in other bases



## Formulating



- 1-5 essences per formula
- Some use many more
- May prepare dose bottle with plain water, glycerite, tincture, etc.

## Dosing



- 4 gtts in water QID
- Q 15 minutes PRN for emergencies
- May also apply topically
  - Pulse points
  - Area of injury
  - Spray
- More often if needed
- Update rx as needed

## What to expect



- Some essences, formulae, work faster than others
  - May work in days
  - May take full month to see changes
  - I have seen both
- Sx relief  $\neq$  cure
- Bach cases show cures in 3-12 months.
- Some cases take years to cure

## Contraindications

- Technically there are none. Essences are safe, do not interact with other meds, including homeopathy.
- I've had one patient have a bad reaction after second formula.
- Are people ready to change? Are their symptoms actually important coping mechanisms (secondary gains)?
- Limit number of essences in one treatment. Too many essences confuse the picture. (Not all agree.)

## Case: nightmares

- 47yo M for nightmares
  - Sphagnum moss
  - Black tourmaline
  - Chapparal
  - Stone circle
  - 4gtts in water QID/PRN
- Symptoms resolved in days
- Stopped taking essence
- Nightmares resumed
- Was tx suppressive?
- Resumed tx
- Nightmares resolved
- Stopped taking essence
- No more nightmares
- Cure!



## Chaparral (*Larrea tridentata*) indications

“The dream life acts as an important filter for the soul, digesting disturbing or chaotic experiences which may be too powerful to contact consciously. Chaparral is an important psychic and physical cleanser... It is broadly applicable, but works especially through the dream life to cleanse the psyche.”

—P. Kaminski and R. Katz



## Chaparral (*Larrea tridentata*) indications

“Cleansing. Clearing physical, emotional, and mental toxins. Inviting guidance or spiritual assistance. Sense of ancient support, a lifting of the burden. Opening and energizing a receptive space for new experience. Transformation. Can be a doorway to more profound perceptions, an invitation into the magic of the Sonoran desert.”

— Mimi Kamp



## Commonly used essences





## Commonly used essences

- Essences for fear and anxiety
  - Case: butterflies
- Essences for depression
- Essences for procrastination
- Essences for self worth
  - Case: sanctuary
- Essences for fatigue
  - Case: overwhelm
- Essences for boundaries
- Essences for emergencies





**Mimulus**

Fear and anxiety about specific things.

Examples: finances, exams, blind dates, public speaking



**Aspen**

Anxiety with no specific known cause.

**Keyword:** reassurance



**Rock rose**

Extreme terror.

**Keyword:** fearlessness



**Cherry plum**

Fear of losing control.

**Keyword:** composure



**Red chestnut**

Fear for loved ones.

**Keywords:** peace of mind

## Case: “butterflies”

- 51-yo M with dx of bipolar disorder. Had crippling attacks of “butterflies,” which prevented him from working on some days.
- Big fears were about money, family.
- Checking in after several months, he mentioned no sx when I asked about mood. So I asked about butterflies.



“What butterflies?”

## Essences for depression





**Mustard**

Depression without clear cause. Melancholy, gloom.

**Keyword:** Brightness



**Gorse**

Discouragement, hopelessness, resignation.

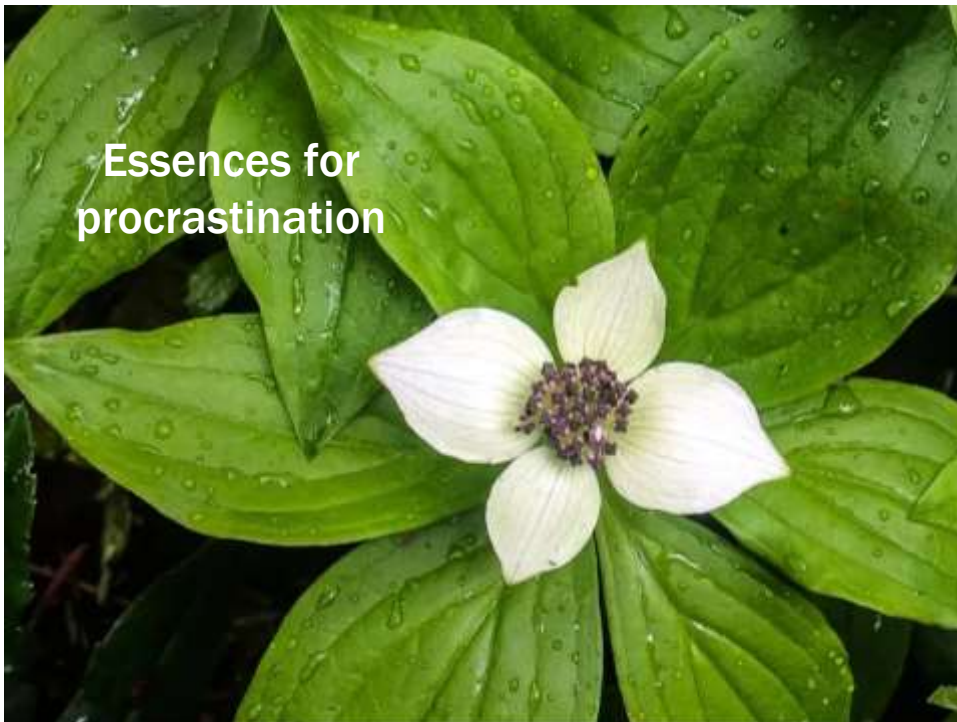
**Keyword:** Hope



**Sweet chestnut**

Despair, no hope left, "dark night of the soul."

**Keyword:** Consolation



**Essences for procrastination**





### **Hornbeam**

Procrastination. I'm exhausted just thinking about the work I need to do.

**Keyword:** Resolve



### **Bunchberry**

Promotes mental steadfastness, focus and emotional clarity.



### **Sticky geranium**

Getting unstuck. Supports decisive and focused action. Helps us move beyond previous stages of growth and self identity.





### Sphagnum moss

indications: overly self critical.



### Pine

You feel guilty and blame yourself.



### Crab apple

You feel unclean, ashamed or embarrassed about your appearance.

Example: "My genital warts make me disgusting."



### Alpine azalea

Self doubt, low self esteem, withholding love and compassion from ourselves; unable to love/accept parts of ourselves.



### Larch/tamarack

You expect to fail and lack confidence in your abilities.

**Keyword:** Confidence

## Essences for fatigue



### Olive

Exhaustion from life's difficulties.



### Elm

Capable people following their calling who start to feel the task is too difficult and beyond the power of a human being to complete.



### Fire opal

Exhaustion, depleted energy reserves; chronically tired from overwork; lifestyle and work habits not replenishing to the body.

## Case: Overwhelm

60-yo PTC for CVD, constipation, stress.

Workaholic, overwhelmed. Doesn't always get emotional support from others in the form they want it.

I gave them two essences.

First, a type essence, roughly equivalent to a constitutional remedy in homeopathy.

Second, a formula to take PRN as a hug from the universe when they weren't getting support from others in their life.



*Verbena officinalis*

## Vervain indications

Patterns of imbalance: Overbearing or intolerant; over-enthusiasm or extreme fanaticism; **nervous exhaustion from overstriving.**

Positive qualities: Ability to practice moderation, tolerance, balance. The middle way. **Grounded idealism.**

— Kaminski & Katz



*Verbena officinalis*



## Case: Overwhelm

Emotional support formula:

- Angelica genuflexa
- Chalice Well
- Jadeite jade

Administered in rose glycerite.

Dose 4 gtts in water or SL PRN.

15 months later, they requested a refill.



*Angelica genuflexa*

## Angelica indications

**Indications:** feeling lost or abandoned and without spiritual protection; isolated in one's anxiety; **overburdened by life.**

**Healing qualities:** connects us to the protective energies of the angelic kingdom; promotes **acceptance of spiritual support** in all situations; helps us experience protection as coming from a certainty of our divine nature.



*Angelica genuflexa*

— Steve Johnson

## Angelica indications

**Positive qualities:** Feeling protection and guidance from spiritual beings, especially at threshold experiences such as birth and death.

**Patterns of imbalance:** Feeling cut off, bereft of spiritual guidance and protection.

— Kaminski & Katz



*Angelica genuflexa*



### Angelica genuflexa

Protection, spiritual support



### Chalice Well

Spiritual support, reminds us we are not alone and can draw on this matrix of support when we are struggling.



### Jadeite jade

**Indications:** easily pulled off center by experiences; attached to drama; makes things harder or more involved than necessary; unable to accept the way things are.





### Yarrow

Several yarrow essences — white, lavender, pink, yellow, combination. All work on maintaining energetic boundaries. Protective light.



### Devils club

Boundaries, grounding into the physical body.



### Poison oak

**Positive qualities:** emotional openness and vulnerability, ability to be close and make contact with others.



### Walnut

Not getting knocked off course by others. Important in many cases of family issues.



### Stone circle

Naturally occurring stone circle creates protective space.



### Coelinite

Strength and clarity to auric field, protective filter that lets us relax and thus receive love and support from the environment.



## Case: sanctuary

36yo F sick in multiple systems. Empath, healer, constant fight or flight, depleted, not quite hopeless. Multiple trauma history, many diagnoses.

What does she need? A moment to make the crazy stop so she can regroup. Quiet, retreat, but she is unable to get away due to health and other issues.



## Case: sanctuary

Formula:

- Angelica
- Covelite
- Stinging nettle
- Stone Circle
- Yarrow



## Yarrow (*Achillea* spp.) indications

- **Positive qualities:** Inner radiance and strength of aura, compassionate awareness, inclusive sensitivity, beneficent healing forces.
- **Patterns of imbalance:** Extreme vulnerability to others and the environment; easily depleted, overly absorbent of negative influences, psychic toxicity.

— Kaminski & Katz



## Stinging nettle (*Urtica* spp.) indications

Helps highly sensitive people stay connected to the earth and their feelings; promotes grounding and reorientation after being overwhelmed by too much input.

— Steve Johnson





**Rescue remedy/5  
flower formula**

Classic emergency formula

Rock rose, cherry plum,  
Star of Bethlehem,  
impatiens, clematis.



**Cottongrass**

*Eriophorum* spp.

Shock or trauma from  
accident or injury. Can't  
heal w/o identifying root  
cause.



**Malachite**

Grounding for physical,  
emotional, mental and  
spiritual.



## A word on trauma

Look at essences for **grief, shock, trauma, boundaries.**

Several species of fireweed (*Chamaenerium*, was *Epilobium*) are specific for this. Pioneer species after fire, flood, deglaciation.

**Healing qualities:** Heals shock and trauma; strengthens grounding; breaks up and moves out old energy patterns, initiates new cycles of revitalization and renewal. (Steve Johnson)



## When to use essences in practice





## When to use essences in clinical practice

- When you see a spiritual, emotional or mental obstacle to cure
- With patients on polypharmacy
- In complicated or critical cases
- With patients who are too sensitive for more physiological remedies

## Case: Gluten free

33yo F PTC for a variety of issues including neurological and hormonal.

TTG+

All sx improved with gluten-free/paleo diet.

Reported difficulty adhering to diet because she felt she had to eat cookies coworkers brought to the office.

Why?



## Case: Gluten free

### Formula

- Yarrow
- Centaury
- Agrimony

Dose: 4 gtts in water

QID/PRN



## Centaury indications

Positive qualities: Serving others from inner strength, with a healthy recognition of one's own needs. **Acting from strength of inner purpose, saying "no" when appropriate.**

Patterns of imbalance: Weak willed, dominated by others, servile, **acting to please.**  
Difficulty saying "no," **neglecting one's own needs.**



*Centaurium erythraea*

## Case: Gluten free

“The people around me often say ‘I could never do that’ or other comments that sort of wear away at my resolve. I appreciate support and I started today with a new outlook that I hope to keep going, the belief that this is for me and no one else. It doesn't matter if other people think it's strange or if they think it is not realistic. I need to do this for myself and my health.”



## Case taking: what are you treating?

Identify and treat the root cause  
personality vs. specific issue  
(type remedy vs. temporary state)



## Case: Seasonal Affective Disorder

57-yo male with seasonal depression, loops of negative thoughts about others and himself. Irritable. Joint pain, stiffness. High-dose D3 helps mood (blood levels optimal.)

Strict, inflexible. Annoyed by beeps of phones, microwave, anything left on counters.

Professionally and personally detail oriented. Things must be a certain way. This is a "core value."

Conservative, religious.



## Case: Seasonal Affective Disorder

Formula:

- Solstice sun
- Orange calcite
- Aquamarine
- Beech
- Rock water

Labeled the formula "Compassion" to harness ideas already in place through faith.







### Solstice sun

Solstice Sun catalyzes one's ability to access and circulate a stronger current of light energy throughout the physical body.

–Steve Johnson



### Orange calcite

**Indications:** lack of joy in daily life; lethargy; feeling weighed down with no creative spark; greatly affected by seasonal fluctuations of sunlight and darkness.



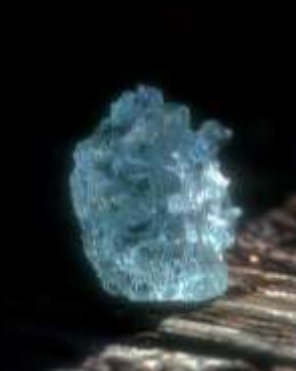
### Beech

**Indications:** Critical, judgmental, intolerant, irritable



### Rock water

Perfectionism. “They set themselves rules and targets and are strict and harsh with themselves when they feel they are falling short.” – The Bach Centre



### Aquamarine

Repetitive thoughts; overstimulated from studying, worrying and circular thinking; difficulty letting go of thoughts and shifting into a meditative state of mind.

## Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) indications

People in a Beech state ... **lack compassion** and understanding of the circumstances and paths that other people are given... Sometimes **Beech intolerance is manifested as outbursts of irritability; the remedy helps to encourage tolerance and understanding**, and as this happens so the irritability also fades. – The Bach Centre



## Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) indications

**Positive qualities:** Tolerance, acceptance of others' differences and imperfections, seeing the good within each person and situation

**Patterns of imbalance:** Criticalness, judgmental attitudes, intolerance; perfectionist expectations of others; hyper-reactive to one's social and physical environment due to underlying sensitivity. – Kaminski & Katz



## Case: SAD/Can you help my golf swing?

Summer 2018: Feeling better, mood in check as long as takes FE QID. Negative self talk resumes if he skips doses.

Realizes he's always the middle of the pack, never awful, never excellent. Will have those thoughts repeat in his head.

Because it was summer, we switched out the orange calcite and added alpine azalea. He still had his regular formula, just in case.



*Loiseleuria procumbens*

## Alpine azalea (*Loiseleuria procumbens*)



## Alpine azalea indications

**Indications:** self doubt;  
low self-esteem;  
withholding love and  
compassion from  
ourselves; unable to love  
or accept certain parts of  
ourselves.

**Healing Qualities:** helps  
us achieve unconditional  
self-acceptance through  
the release of self-doubt;  
opens our hearts to the  
spirit of love; teaches us  
compassion through  
understanding.

– Steve Johnson



*Loiseleuria procumbens*

## Case: Can you help my golf swing?

“Golfed a personal best after  
an Orna Cocktail of red and  
blue label potions mixed in  
water. Shaken, not stirred.

“Shot 40 on the front 9 at  
Gresham Golf course last  
Thursday. Most golfers would  
be quite pleased with that  
score.”



*Loiseleuria procumbens*



## Choosing essences



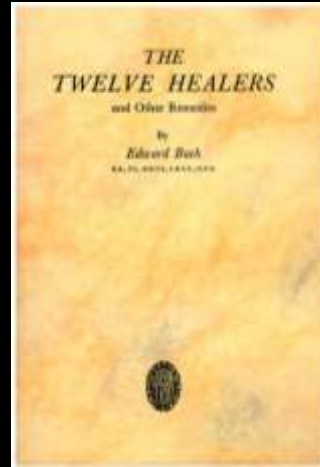
## Case taking

- Where do you feel an emotional issue holds you back? Where would you like help?
- With a partner, take 10-15 minutes to discuss, then switch.
- Partner chooses 3-5 essences and makes a dosage bottle.
- We'll regroup to discuss.



## Further study

- **Observe**
  - Choose one essence, sit with and/or take for a month, journal your reactions
- **Read**
  - *The Bach Remedies Workbook*, Stefan Ball
  - *The 12 Healers*, Edward Bach (free online)
  - *Illustrated Handbook of the Bach Flower Remedies*, Philip Chancellor
  - *Flower Essence Repertory*, Patricia Kaminski and Richard Katz
  - FE company websites, catalogs offer detailed information about indications.
- **Practice**
  - Start with yourself, friends and family
  - Clinic shifts if supervisor allows
  - You can formulate without actually dosing



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