

Plants of Passion

Nicole Telkes Traditional Roots Conference 2019

So, what turns you on? That's like asking a herbalist what their favorite plant is. Many of the studies and clinical trials surrounding herbal aphrodisiacs are actually a big turn off.

We are going to focus on how we might use herbs for ourselves first, and then how to bring them into the sexual arena with a lover or lovers. The herb allies we are discussing in this workshop are used within the context of a romantic evening, or to mark a special event. Let's take a look at holistic strategies for bringing about sexual health and wellbeing.

Properties and Actions related to Herbal Aphrodisiacs

Aphrodisiac: herbs or substances that can increase libido, or enhance sexual pleasure or performance. Generally the traditional uses as aphrodisiacs may stem from the plants having many of the actions you see below

Hormonal Herbs

As much as we can use herbs to affect our reproductive hormones, using them is not a straight shot, and we must remember that animal hormones and plant hormones are not similar enough to be effective the same way for people every time. These herbs may trigger reproductive hormones and studies have found some guide to their effectiveness but they require experimentation. I have found that everyone has their own relationship with hormonal herbs. Herbs may influence our reproductive hormones and have offered some effectiveness for helping influence sexual desire and libido. Typically the following reproductive hormones play a role in how and when we desire things and feel more or less sexy.

Testosterone: There seems to be a connection between individuals with higher levels of testosterone having higher levels of sexual desire. There is controversy over whether this is true for cis females, especially postmenopausal.

Estrogen: Though estradiol has shown to increase desire in cis females, it may be even more effective if combined with testosterone for postmenopausal individuals. Estrogen levels also affect vaginal lubrication.

Progesterone: may act as an aphrodisiac

Oxytocin: May intensify orgasms and make one feel more bonded.

Herbs in this category can include Shatavari, Wild Yam, Cotton Root, Damiana

Stimulating Herbs

Analeptic: A substance that affects the Central Nervous System, usually through stimulation and sympathomimetic activity.

Aromatic: Stimulating to our limbic system, and activates a very primal nature in us. Smell can trigger libido, especially when related to food

Circulatory/Diffusives/Rubefacients: Blood Movers that can draw blood to various areas of the body, which can enliven the area. Can be used internally and topically.

Herbs in this category can include *Yerba Mate, Damiana, Cinnamon, Vanilla, Cayenne, Prickly Ash, Rosemary, Spilanthes*

Relaxing and Euphoric Herbs

Calming: agents that are sedative, trophorestorative, and euphoric, calming the nervous system. Being stressed out can definitely put a damper on your sex life. With aphrodisiacs consider that you may not want to delve into the hypnotic category. Some of the herbs can actually stimulate and relax the body, especially if we are using herbs that offer relief as diffusives or diaphoretics. If the tissues are full and stuck, and you take a herb that helps to release this the body can then relax.

Herbs in this category can include: *Wild Oats, Kava Kava, Chocolate, Cannabis, Rosemary, Rose and other Aromatics*

Restorative Herbs

Adaptogen: herbs that improve your body's ability to adapt to stress, many seem to affect the immune and/or nervous system.

Trophorestoratives to the Nervous System: Herbs that restore balance to the nervous system

Nutritive Plants: Feed the body concentrated amounts of micronutrients that may rebuild and restore one's body, indirectly assisting with libido.

Side note: in Ayurveda there are specific classes of Rasayanas for this purpose

Herbs in this category can include: *Nettles Lf or Sd, Oat Grass or Sd, Panax ginseng, Eleuthero, Ashwaganda*

Demulcent Herbs

Herbs that form protective, slimy coating or film over mucous membranes may assist in sexual encounters. Lubrication and being juicy is important.

Herbs in the category can include: *Shatavari, Violet Leaf, Marshmallow, Cotton Root*

The Virtues of Some Herbal Aphrodisiacs

Ashwaganda *Withania somnifera* Known in Ayurveda as a "rasayana" or rejuvenative tonic whose name means "strength, or power of a horse". The root is used as an adaptogen and tonic. Studies have shown an increase in sexual function and increased sperm counts when used. It may be most effective as a calming, immunomodulatory agent, more so than a hormonally influencing one. In other words, working on stress which indirectly helps with desire and fertility. Studies find cortisol levels in the body decline with use of Ashwaganda. This plant is often put into ghee, or other fatty milks. I find the effects of this plant vary somewhat on time of life.

Chocolate *Theobroma cacao* This "food of the Gods" from the Mayan culture is thought to affect the endocrine system, and influence pleasure in our body through affecting hormones like

serotonin and dopamine as well as having an analeptic effect (sympathomimetic) which act as a stimulant to our CNS. So, it speeds things up and makes them more pleasurable...what's not to love? The euphoric effect of chocolate, may be the reason for chocolate cravings.

Cotton Root *Gossypium herbaceum* This agricultural plant as well as other oxytocin synergists may be useful aphrodisiacs. Not only does the root of this plant have a history of use for reproductive complaints, but it is part of the Malvaceae family, known for its slime. Cotton root may influence feelings of connection, increase intensity of orgasms, and help with lubrication. Use in drop dosage with caution and consider the source.

Damiana *Turnera aphrodisia* Small perennial shrub from Texas/Mexico. The name itself gives indication for use. The plant has held relations with us for many centuries and can be traced to uses in Mayan culture, and all over Mexico, more recently in Western herbalism. It is slightly stimulating, tonic and increases blood flow to the genitals and strengthens the tone of the genital organs, while also reducing anxiety. Damiana is really fun in a cordial and has a very nice flavor.

Horny Goat Weed *Epimedium koreanum* Comes to us from the use of its leaves in traditional Chinese Medicine. It is stimulating and hormonal. Most known as a substance that's believed to mimic testosterone through its icariin flavonoid. Most studies surround erectile dysfunction with this plant. The plant tends to draw blood to the gonads.

Kava *Piper methysticum* The root of this plant is used. It comes to us from the South Pacific and is used in many ceremonies, most often extracted into some sort of milk or fat to be most potent. Kava tends to relax inhibitions and anxiety without being overly sedating. Topically it is also numbing to mucous membranes which can be fun. I really enjoy putting it into aphrodisiacs, to loosen folks up. It works!

Maca *Lepidium meyenii* This plant comes to us from the Andes, and the root is used. There has been a lot of investigation into whether or not it shows an effect on testosterone, which in my research, has not been found. Interestingly, studies do show an increase in sexual arousal not related to hormonal shifts from taking it. For many, it is invigorating--it also tastes good.

Rose *Rosa rugosa et al.* The rose family is well known for being relaxant and in Ayurveda, the plant is known for softening up and soothing heat. I like to add rose in when you or someone else, may need to let go of some energetic thorns around your heart and let someone in. Traditionally, you can see the plant has been brought into romantic encounters and still remains a symbol of romance and love today.

Shatavari *Asparagus racemosus* Known in Ayurveda as a "rasayana" or rejuvenative tonic, the root of this plant from India is used to help restore healthy reproductive fluid balance and libido. Its name means "she who possesses 1000 husbands". The plant contains high levels of steroidal saponins. Though its associated most commonly with the uterus and fertility, it can be used for creating healthier seminal fluid as well, and is used to restore the reproductive organs. Recommended in ghee or other fatty carriers. Restorative. I find this plant to be really great for folks who experience rage around menstruation, followed by depression, which definitely affects libido.

Puncture Vine *Tribulus terrestris* Use of its fruit as an aphrodisiac can be seen in traditional Chinese medicine and Ayurveda. This is a noxious weed in many places of the Desert SW.

The spiny fruits seem to affect libido as well and it has been studied for ED, again seeming to draw blood to the gonads and warm the body.

Wild Oats *Avena sativa* This is a commonly found grass, planted for agriculture, and may be found wild throughout the U.S. is nutritive. The grass tones the nervous system and can be trophorestorative. Its prolonged use can build stamina and help rebuild frayed nerves. There is some evidence of use as an aphrodisiac stemming from China, and that it may actually free up Testosterone. Wild Oat infused into nut milks like hemp or other for a long period of time is delicious.

Yohimbe *Pausinystalia yohimbe* Evergreen tree native to West Africa, whose bark is used as a functional stimulant for erectile dysfunction and has traditional use as a aphrodisiac. It also may affect adrenaline in the body. The plant is hot in nature and has too many side effects in the cardiovascular system to be used safely.

Aromatic Plants with a Erotic history(consider finding sustainable sources)

Vanilla
Jasmine
Sandalwood
Rose
Cardamom
Mint
Cinnamon

More Preparations to Consider

Flower Essences
Foods

Lifestyle considerations:

How do we set the stage for sexy encounters? Where are you at emotionally? Are you on any drugs that could be affecting your libido?

Deal with your own past trauma, and/or issues that haven't been resolved in a partnership.

Clean up the bedroom. Make time for sexy time! Add ins:candles anointed with aromatics, fresh flowers no pesticides, essential oil diffusers. Preparations that are easy to get to and easy to use. It's creating a aphrodisiac spell. You get what you put. Scent and sight plays a role!

Use yummy smelling spritzers and incense or create an erotic feasts using herbal aphrodisiacs with foods known for their aphrodisiac qualities, like oysters, avocados, figs, and berries.

Sexy Baths

. Light red candles.

Epsom salts may be added with bags of herbs that include
Rose, Oats, and Rosemary

Massage and Manipulation

Balms versus oils

Margi Flints Ride and Glide Balm

1/4 cup prepared infused oils of Black cohosh, comfrey root, calendula flowers, and wild yam powder in olive or jojoba

1/4 cup coconut oil

1/4 cup jojoba

Heat and add in .8oz of beeswax. As it cools add in 1 tblspn wheat germ and 1/2 tspn emulsified Vit A or Cod liver Oil.

When cooling to cloudy add pure certified therapeutic grade essential oils

30 Drops Lavender

7 Drops Bulgarian Rose

15 Drops Rose Geranium

Erotic Massage Oil

(choose your container wisely!)

Warm 4oz Coconut and 12oz Grapeseed Oil

Add a 1/2 oz of cocoa butter until melted

Add a 1/2 oz of Shea Butter until melted

Add a mix of Therapeutic Grade High Quality, sustainable essential Oils

10 drops of Ylang Ylang 4 drops of Cedarwood, 2 drops of Jasmine

Ebible Herbal Love Recipes

Love Balls, Adapted from Rosemary Gladstars Zoom Balls

2 cups of tahini (sesame butter)

2 cups almond butter (or any nut butter will do)

1 1/2 cup of honey (start with 1 cup and add if you need more)

Herbs(powder)

2 oz of Damiana

1 oz of Ashwaganda

1oz of Maca

2oz of Kava

1oz of cinnamon

1oz of Ginger

4oz of cocoa

For the Outside

2 tsp of cardamom powder

2 tspn of Rose

Mix the base ingredients well, so honey can be evenly distributed. Add powdered herbs Roll the balls the size of a walnut, and cover them with a dusting of rose and cardamom. Store in the fridge. Take 1-2 as desired.

First Date Kava Cocktail

1 oz of kava root powder in a nutmilk bag

1oz of Wild Oat Seed

Steep 20 min in a mixture of 2 cups of hot water and ¼ cup coconut milk

Knead for 5 minutes and then let steep for 5 minutes

Decant off

Add vanilla extract and honey to taste

All Night Long Elixir

Powder and Combine 1 oz of Damiana, 1/2 oz of Cottonroot, 1/2 oz of Tribulus, 1 oz of Ashwaganda, 1/2 oz of Ginger, 1/2 oz of Rosemary

Chop up a handful of berries in season or (strawberries)

Add in 20 oz of Brandi and 10 oz of honey. Steep for 1 month, decant off into a beautiful container and take a shot before a hot date. Offer it to willing participants.

Sources Used

Personal Experience!

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