

2025

HerbFest

FESTIVE SEASON
MAGAZINE

PRESENTED BY

Everyday
Empowered

A woman with brown hair and bangs is smiling warmly at the camera. She has a large, dark, textured flower or headpiece in her hair. She is resting her chin on her right hand. She is wearing a green tank top and a dark necklace. The background is a blurred indoor setting with shelves and plants.

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The Home Herbalist Club is your all-in-
one, heart-led home for learning herbal
medicine. A place to grow your skills,
confidence, and connection to nature
while caring for your family naturally.

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We are deeply grateful to the Gubbi Gubbi / Kabi Kabi custodians on whose land this magazine was created on.

We honour their deep connection to their ancestral lands and we pay our respects to their elders past, present and future.



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Meet the Team



CAT GREEN

Founder of HerbFest and Everyday Empowered



ASTARA LEON

HerbFest Magazine Editor and HerbFest Event Coordinator

Welcome and hello!

Hi, I'm Cat Green, founder of HerbFest and thrilled to introduce you to our first HerbFest Festive magazine!

In a world that seems intent on dividing itself, HerbFest stands as a bulwark against isolation. Just as the koala-pee smelling forest outside my door is richer for the diversity of species and life, so too is our herbal community.

I'm sure we've got a diverse array of opinions, ways of doing things and some of us are altogether wild and weedy; but we're united in our shared love and appreciation of herbs.

When we come together to celebrate, support and collaborate, we're doing more than keeping small businesses alive by shopping local, or reclaiming earth-centred festive traditions.

We're remembering that together, we get to choose where we put our focus. We can choose to focus on what separates us, or on what brings us together and what we hold dear.

And in that spirit, I invite you to celebrate each of the people and small businesses you'll meet in these pages. Each one is gifted in their craft, unique in their approach and when we support them, we support our entire ecosystem.

For each small business supports a family, keeps money flowing in a circular local economy and keeps knowledge alive and thriving in our local communities.

We are truly blessed and whether you're utterly new to herbs or been round the block a few decades, I'm so glad you're here and part of our abundantly awesome and diverse herbal community.

Happy herbal festive season to you!

Herbal love, 





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Our Community



HerbFest is our annual celebration of our epic herbal medicine community!

With our 50+ stalls and speakers, you'll find belonging, inspiration and community on your herb journey.

We celebrate each of us reclaiming our relationship with the land and plant kin and believe in herbal medicine as a living lineage; one that's treasured and generously passed from hand to hand.

Here's why people love HerbFest:

"HerbFest was an absolute ball! I loved the energy and met so many awesome people. It feels great to find belonging in a space with brilliant offerings of education and learning and likeminded humans. Absolutely will attend again! Kids corner was great too."



E s t u a r y
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Estuary Learning is a not-for-profit educational and mentoring community
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HERBOLICO



Cool by Nature

Three herbs to refresh you this summer

written by Cat Green

Here on the Sunshine Coast, where summer goes for 9 months (feels like it anyway), our herbal traditions need to adapt to our environment and showcase the cooling herbs.

So let's make summer all about 3 key cooling herbs that can refresh us inside and out:

hibiscus, mint, and lemon balm

So what makes them cooling anyway!?

In the world of herbal medicine, some plants are known as refrigerant herbs: they help us release excess heat, both physically and emotionally, and bring the body back into harmony.

1 *Hibiscus* (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*)

When talking about hibiscus in Australia, I always have to clarify what plant we're talking about. This ISN'T the common hibiscus flower you picture in idyllic scenes. We actually commonly refer to this plant as rosella (but in herbalism, we call it hibiscus).

Bright, tart, and jewel-red, hibiscus makes a stunning herbal tea that cools you down almost instantly. Its natural tang comes from plant acids that not only give it that distinctive flavour but also help gently lower body temperature.

Hibiscus is also rich in antioxidants and supports heart health.

Make a warm tea, sweeten with honey and lime then drink warm or chilled.

Best for: Hot, tired afternoons when you need a cooling lift.

Pair it with: Fresh garden mint or a few slices of cucumber for extra chill.



Photo credit: gardensonline.com.au



2

Mint (Mentha spp.)

Cool, crisp, and endlessly versatile, mint is summer's easiest herbal companion. The menthol in mint triggers cold receptors in your skin and mouth, creating that instant cooling sensation. But beyond its refreshing taste, mint also supports digestion and can help ease headaches brought on by heat or dehydration.

Try adding fresh mint to your water bottle, blending it into smoothies, or use it in meals like minty peas or mint and watermelon salad. A handful crushed into a jug of cold water makes a simple, elegant drink for any warm day.

Best for: Cooling down after time in the sun or easing post-meal heaviness.

Pair it with: Hibiscus for a tart-sweet iced tea or lemon balm for calm clarity.



Photo credit: plants.jimwhitingnursery.com

3

Lemon Balm (Melissa officinalis)

Traditionally referred to as a herb that "maketh merry", lemon balm excels at cooling emotional heat, especially the kind of irritability and blerghness that hot weather can bring.

Lemon balm tea, syrup or ice blocks are great for hot afternoon wind-downs without making you sleepy.

Best for: Calming frazzled nerves, gentle mood uplift, or cooling down emotionally during mid-afternoon heat.

Pair it with: Fresh mint for an uplifting twist, or chamomile for a deeper calm.



Photo credit: myseeds.co

Let's make these herbs our new summer normal (especially if you live in the balmy tropics and subtropics) and create festive traditions with them front and centre.

Herbal love,

Cat



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DIY Festive Herbal Gifts

written by Sandra Nanka

“What better way to show someone you love them than giving them something that you have made yourself.”

I love making gifts for Christmas presents. It makes you feel like the festive season is here. I always do a bag of goodies up for the staff with a few different homemade products in them. Our family also enjoys homemade treats, and herbs and spices add their magic to the foody gifts shared.

A couple of weeks out from Christmas is always so busy at the shops with people searching for the perfect gifts for their loved ones. What better way to show someone you love them than giving them something that you have made yourself. Creating gifts can also slow the time or rather slow you down while you are engrossed in the process. As a maker, there is nothing quite as satisfying. I hope you enjoy making these yummy treats as much as your friends and family will love receiving them.

Here are a few of my favourite gifts from the kitchen.

Rosella Syrup



Rosella syrup is perfect for drinks, baking or desserts. 10mL of syrup can be added to a cup of iced water or soda for a refreshing drink. It can also be used to add colour and a lemon flavour to baking. You can pour it over ice cream or add some to yoghurt. Or, use it to make colourful cocktails... and don't forget, yummy ice blocks!

You can find the recipe and a video on our [blog](#).

Rosemary and Garlic Sicilian Olives

Here's what you'll need:

- 1 jar of Sicilian olives
- 2 Tbsp of chopped fresh rosemary
- 1 clove garlic chopped
- 1/4 cup of extra virgin olive oil

Here's what to do:

1. Strain the olives reserving the liquid.
2. Mix all of the ingredients in a jar or bowl, cover and let the flavours infuse overnight.
3. Then pack it all into the jar and top up with the reserved liquid.
4. Store in the fridge for one to two weeks.



Rosemary Spiced Almonds

These are great on their own or served on an antipasto platter or they can be roughly chopped to top a green salad. Stir them through a rice or quinoa dish at the end of cooking to add a delicious crunch. This year I popped them into cellophane bags and cardboard cups tied with a red ribbon...very festive.

Here's what you'll need:

- 250g raw almonds
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh rosemary
- 2 tsp smoked paprika
- 1 tbsp honey
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp salt

Here's what to do:

1. Set oven 180C.
2. Mix together all ingredients except the almonds.
3. Place almonds on a baking tray and toast.
4. Toss the hot toasted almonds through the mix and let cool.



Herb Butters



The basic method for making herb butters:

- Leave the butter out of the fridge for a couple of hours before making to soften.
- Chop herbs finely.
- Mix all ingredients well and add any juice in gradually.
- Shape into a log shape or fill a jar.
- Keeps in the fridge for a few weeks or freeze for up to 6 months.

Dill and Lemon Butter

Nice with fish, eggs, stir-fried or steamed vegetables and in white sauces.

- 250g butter softened
- 2 Tbsp chopped dill
- 2 Tbsp lemon juice
- 2 tsp lemon zest

Mexican Tarragon, Garlic and Orange Butter

We use this one for our roast chicken, tuck slices of this butter under the skin before roasting - delish. Add a slice to a plate of steamed veggies.

- 250g butter softened
- 2 Tbsp chopped Mexican tarragon leaves
- 2 Tbsp orange juice
- 2 tsp orange zest
- 1 clove garlic finely chopped

Scarborough Fair butter

Add to mushrooms or melt on cooked steak or chicken. Melt over cooked corn.

- 250g butter softened
- 2 Tbsp total of a blend of Parsley, Sage, Rosemary and Thyme
- 2 tsp smokey paprika
- 1 clove garlic finely chopped

Chilli Jam

Here's what you'll need:

- 2 large onions, chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, peeled
- 400g long red chilli, chopped
- 3 coriander roots
- 1 cup peanut oil
- 1 tablespoon tamarind concentrate
- 1/4 cup hot water
- 1/2 cup grated palm sugar
- 1/3 cup fish sauce
- 1/3 cup lime juice
- 1 tablespoon shrimp paste
- Extra peanut oil for storing

Here's what to do:

1. Place the onion, garlic, chilli, coriander and oil in a food processor and process until finely chopped.
2. Place the mixture in a large deep frying pan over low heat, stirring frequently, for 30 min or until dark red.
3. Dissolve the tamarind concentrate in the hot water. Combine with the palm sugar, fish sauce, lime juice and shrimp paste and stir into the chilli mixture.
4. Cool stirring for a further 20 minutes.
5. Store in warm sterilized jars with the extra oil on the surface.

Notes: Makes 2 cups. The chilli jam will keep in the fridge for three months.



These beautiful recipes have been shared with us from Sandra at Mudbrick Herb Cottage, one of our HerbFest sponsors.

www.herbcottage.com.au



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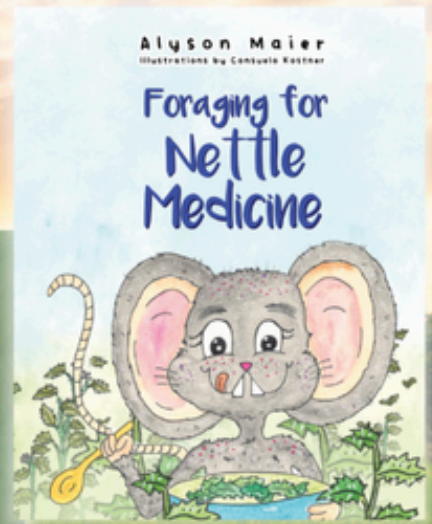
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The Art of the Bamboo

(or How Not to Lose Our Shit This Christmas)

written by Holly Grace

“*So, it may come as a surprise to hear
that I have a bone to pick with the idea
that we must always be calm.*”

As a herbalist and writer, my job is to weave storytelling with herbs as a way of finding meaning inside the beautiful mess that is life.

A mess that is predictably part of the human experience, whether we like it or not. For what it's worth, I think that we are all doing our best with the scenarios we find ourselves in and the only way out is to journey through. I am blessed to work in two fields that bring me immeasurable hope: herbalism and storytelling.

I knit these two fields around the topic of mental health by crafting tinctures, teas and rituals alongside stories which are filled with compassion. These remedies are for anxiety, low-lying restlessness, situational depression and grief.

So, it may come as a surprise to hear that I have a bone to pick with the idea that we must always be calm.

Please allow me to elaborate.

When I had three children under the age of five, I worked very diligently at never losing my cool. If my baby was feeding from my breast seized with mastitis and he bit down on my nipple?

You best believe I would breathe through that shit while silent tears coursed down my cheeks.

To show pain or depleted exhaustion, or to negatively react to my children's occasional emotional dysregulation felt like failure to me. However, the truth inside that chapter of my life was that I suppressed far too much, and it became a form of martyrdom. **I learned to manufacture a sense of calm while anxiety quietly swirled around my bones.**

In fact, if my insides could speak, they would have said, ***"Look at how calm I am, look at how much I can hold!"***

I sought calm in every interaction in my home and ironically what ended up happening was the exact opposite. My world regularly imploded as the storms inside of me threatened my foundation.

Fast forward almost a decade (and with it many beautiful lessons), I now have customers seeking out herbal remedies with the hopes that it will magically take away their worries and make them calm. I regularly find myself replying, "I'm sorry, but this (tincture, tea, oil) won't do that" to these hopeful customers.

I mean, if you'd like to sedate yourself altogether then sure I could assist you (enter: helpful remedies for CPTSD). But I also believe that in most cases, ***we can't heal what we don't feel*** (this is not a generalisation, and I would like to acknowledge the trauma those with chronic illness face every day).

While I often work with herbs like Lemon Balm and Chamomile, Tulsi and St. John's Wort, ***I have come to the belief that just taking a herb with no introspection at all can become a band aid over the dis-ease.***

And so last year I decided to walk the talk; I created an immersive tea ceremony called The Meadow.

This holistic offering was made without sparing a single detail. Housed in a luxurious keepsake box, she comes with a personalised music playlist, a story, journaling prompts, a glass teapot, 21 serves of organic tea and a vial of wildflower seeds. These seeds accompany a nightly ritual that invites the customer to write out their own story before planting it underneath the seeds.

The Meadow is my response to those who desperately hope that a three-drops-under-the-tongue-nightly remedy will heal their heartache. Because if there is one thing I have learned during my adulthood, it's that ***when it comes to depression, anxiety and grief, it doesn't just go away without us first travelling to the roots of the thing.***

Looking at the whole picture or scenario, the whole person and finding a ritual that tells the whole story has a greater mental health outcome than pretending to be unaffected by life's triggers or hoping that a magic pill will make it all go away.

Or, as my psychotherapist once said, ***"A gumtree might look strong and powerful, but she snaps and falls over in a thunderstorm. Whereas under lightening and terrifying winds, the bamboo can bend all the way down to the ground, before rising once more."***

In other words, the bamboo acknowledges the storms, and she even lets it affect her, but she rises when it's over. This rings true for me. Yes, The Meadow holds your hand as you journey to the darker thoughts in your mind, and while you write out the stories that are holding you back from experiencing peace. However, this ceremony doesn't dull the hard lessons just so that you can experience calm. ***She asks you to dissect the chaos underneath your patterns.***

Somewhere along the way, The Meadow teaches you to find a deep self-friendliness, to hold up the mirror and **learn to love the story staring back at you.**

It isn't calm that I seek nowadays, rather I have accepted that hunkering down in the rain, (sometimes screaming with tears and snot running down my face), is soon followed by me standing back up.

In accepting life's storms and in allowing myself to feel however I need to, I have found a mental resilience that has, perhaps ironically, made me a more grounded person.

This year I have thought a great deal about my business; about the stories I share and what my remedies speak to in each of us. I am hoping that the herbal blends whisper something like, "You are safe here."

And perhaps in making the long journey to their centre, I pray that my customers would **learn to love all the stories within that have made them who they are.** In time, perhaps they would be able to dissect why the storms feel the way they do. Through ritual, herbalism and brave introspection, maybe they'd learn how to be ok with bending to the ground, maybe they'd learn to trust that the rise will follow.

This Christmas, as we inevitably break up our year with busy festivities, I would love to share this following reminder. Flailing our arms outwards to pull in a false sense of calm during what is a chaotic time is perhaps not the most truthful thing to focus on.

Instead, if the focus is on **cultivating a self-kindness during this season of unrelenting expectation, maybe that would make the journey a more honest one.**

I pray that this festive season becomes a reminder to **put the grocery list down and spend ten minutes in mindfulness each day – however that works for you.**

It might be keeping a daily journal or sipping a relaxing tea blend (either side of screaming profanities into the wind) or even lingering a little longer in bed to do a couple minutes of breathwork.

Wherever you are on your journey, I wish you all the very best with it. The work on ourselves, our stories and our patterns isn't easy, but the rewards are worth it.

Go easy on yourself.

You've got this.

Love,

Holly Grace

www.thewildandher.com



“

In accepting life's storms and in allowing myself to feel however I need to, I have found a mental resilience that has, perhaps ironically, made me a more grounded person.

”

Herbal Advent Calendar

24 family rituals to slow down, cool off, and connect with nature.

written by Cat Green

I've never wanted Christmas to be all about Christmas day and presents. I've always tried to weave in other traditions based around books, family, friends, creativity and giving.

Hope this list sparks some inspo to craft your own herbal festive traditions, ones made for sunlight, bare feet, and cool breezes through the trees.

This Herbal Advent Calendar is a way for families to pause together each day, a tiny ritual to connect with nature, the senses, and each other.

Not into Christmas? Make summer solstice the climax of your advent calendar instead, or whatever other faith tradition you follow.

1. Welcome the season

Create a Summer Altar. A little space with flowers, seashells, and herbs from the garden, or whatever else is around you. You might like to light a candle and say, "let our herbal Summer/ Xmas advent begin"

2. Make a minty iced tea

Harvest garden mint together, and pop it in water with slices of lemon or cucumber. Let infuse for a few hours then drink outside with bare feet on the grass.

3. Flower hunt

Take a walk and spot summer blooms. Enjoy being beauty hunters together, or learn their names if you don't already know them.

4. Cooling foot soak

Fill a big bowl warm water, Epsom salts and mint leaves, and a few drops of lavender essential oil. Can either use warm, or on hot days, let cool before using.

5. Herbal first aid kit

Make mini herbal healing salves for an on-the-go first aid kit, perfect for summer scratches and bites. Great herbs for first aid salves include calendula, yarrow and plantain.



6. Pick dandelion or catsear for a festive salad

These sunny flowers will brighten any salad and empowering kids to pick food from wild spaces introduces them to a way of being in the world that will last a lifetime.

7. Sun tea

Pop hibiscus, garden mint, and/or lemon balm in a jar (total quantity of herbs will be 1-2 tablespoons). Fill with water, leave in the sun to steep, and share the first sip at sunset.

8. Citrus day

Thinly slice organic oranges, peel and all, and dry in dehydrator or oven. Use in festive teas, as garnishes or even hang them on your tree!

9. Nature mandala

Collect petals, leaves, and seeds to create a circle of beautiful outdoor nature mandala. This could be a super gorgeous ritual to do with friends, or as a mindful family moment amongst the chaos.



10. Aloe love

Cut a fresh aloe leaf, scoop the gel, and use it for sun-soothed skin or as part of a mini home spa session.

11. Evening gratitude tea

At dusk or part of a bedtime wind-down, sip a simple tea (chamomile, lemon balm, or even mint) and share one thing you're grateful for.

12. Herbal ice cubes

Freeze edible flowers, herbs or foods like watermelon, cucumber and lemon slices in ice cubes. Drop them into water or juice and enjoy the visual delight!

13. Make herbal bath salts

This is a great simple gifts kids can make to give to family, friends and neighbours. Combine Epsom salts with beautiful herbs like rose petals, calendula, chamomile and lavender. Store them in glass jars and decorate with ribbon or fabric squares over lids.

14. Make herbal ice blocks

Inspire the kids to love herbs by turning them in delicious ice blocks! Make a strong chamomile, lemon balm or linden tea, sweeten with honey and blend that with fruit. Pour that into ice block moulds and freeze for 4-8 hours or overnight. Some combo's could be: mint + watermelon, or lemon balm + lime, chamomile and strawberry.

15. Garden gratitude

Water the garden together and thank the plants for their gifts.

16. Herbal salt scrub

Mix sea salt, sweet almond oil, and dried herbs (like lavender or mint). Use it to scrub away the day or as part of a mini spa day.

17. Herbal Storytime

Make up a bedtime story about herbs, it can be as realistic or fanciful as you like.

18. Nature drawing

Either head to the garden with pens or watercolour and paint or draw what you see. You might be inspired to do a landscape but focusing deeply on one small flower can be so eye-opening how delicate and amazing they are! To keep it herb-themed, either draw a herb, wild weed, or perhaps a photo from one of your herb books. Great way to inspire little artists to engage with herbs!

19. Make a mini herbal bouquet

Pick herbs, wild weeds or other plants to pop in a vase for the table so you can enjoy nature all throughout the day!

20. Eucalyptus walk

Take a family walk and breathe in the scent of trees. This is especially gorgeous after rain.

21. Summer Solstice celebration

Make sun cookies to celebrate the summer solstice. Celebrate with a BBQ outside or gather with friends. You might want to use the summer solstice reflection guide Cat from Everyday Empowered, puts out each year. [CLICK HERE](#) to join our mailing list to receive your copy.

22. Cooling spray

Make a fun cooling spray, and watch the kids giggle as they get each other (and cool down in the process). Maybe a strong rose petal tea and put it in spray bottle. Store in fridge and use within a few days. Optional to add a drop or two of lavender essential oil.

23. Sweet herbal treat

Pick your fav bliss ball recipe and herbify it by adding rose petals. We find you need handfuls to really get the rose flavour and it's utterly gorgeous!

24. Christmas Eve Calm

Make cinnamon-spiced iced eggnog as a herbal aussie spin on it. Definitely not for the dairy-free among us!

Cat's got heaps of these recipes on her website if you want to make them!

Whether you do one or all of these as a herbal advent, I hope you love bringing nature, and herb-inspired traditions into your family life.

Visit: www.everydayempowered.com.au



Herbal Advent Calendar

1 Welcome the season	2 Make a minty iced tea	3 Flower hunt	4 Cooling foot soak	5 Herbal first aid kit
6 Pick dandelion or catsear for a festive salad	7 Sun tea	8 Citrus day	9 Nature mandala	10 Aloe love
1 1 Evening gratitude tea	1 2 Herbal ice cubes	1 3 Make herbal bath salts	1 4 Make herbal ice blocks	1 5 Garden gratitude
1 6 Herbal salt scrub	1 7 Herbal Storytime	1 8 Nature drawing	1 9 Make a mini herbal bouquet	2 0 Eucalyptus walk
2 1 Summer Solstice celebration	2 2 Cooling spray	2 3 Sweet herbal treat	2 4 Christmas Eve Calm	

A WITCH FORGOTTEN



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Secret to Herbal Prescriptions

Pulse Diagnosis

written by Dr. David Moore

“*In my view, health isn't defined by athletic fitness, too much strain can in fact harm the heart. Health is when richly oxygenated, nutrient-dense blood moves freely throughout the body. When this is the case we feel vital, sleep well, are emotionally stable and have sufficient energy to manage our busy days.*”

Traditional Chinese Medicine utilises a sophisticated diagnostic framework which assists to investigate the cause and mechanism of disease. Often other herbal medicine frameworks assign herbs to specific symptoms. For example, St John's Wort for depression and Comfrey for fractures.

Chinese Herbal Medicine instead seeks to understand the mechanism symptoms which determines herbal category selection.

Think of it like building a house: if too many materials are piled up, it becomes hard to move and work efficiently; if too few, nothing can be built properly.

In the body, “too much” may appear as Dampness (fluid accumulation), Phlegm (congealed fluid), Blood Stasis (thickened or obstructed blood flow), Heat (inflammation),

Cold (constriction), or Wind (chaotic movement). “Too little,” on the other hand, might mean insufficient nourishment in the Blood, or an under-functioning organ system.

Any one symptom can arise from several different patterns. Anxiety for example might stem from Heat or Phlegm disturbing the Heart, or from a lack of Blood nourishment. One patient suffering anxiety may need Suan Zao Ren, a sweet, calming herb like a gentle hug for the Heart. Another may need Huang Lian, an intensely bitter and cooling herb akin to an ice cube for the Heart to clear agitation and restlessness.

With this diagnostic understanding, the focus is on selecting herbs from the correct category, not on finding one miraculous, individual herb.

To uncover these patterns, Chinese Medicine practitioners draw on several diagnostic tools. For me, Pulse Diagnosis is the most precise and immediate. By gently palpating the radial pulse at the wrist, this reveals how the blood moves through the body, whether it's too tight, sluggishly, inflamed, or weak and lacks nourishment.



Different pulse positions correspond to different organ systems, much like how iridology relates the eye to the rest of the body assisting with understanding how different organs systems are affecting one another. Commonly I describe a patient's exact symptoms before they have told me a single word, simply by reading their pulse.

There are various definitions of health. In my view, health isn't defined by athletic fitness, too much strain can in fact harm the heart.

Health is when richly oxygenated, nutrient-dense blood moves freely throughout the body. When this is the case we feel vital, sleep well, are emotionally stable and have sufficient energy to manage our busy days.

Over time, there are measurable changes in the pulse and blood flow that reflect a patient's deeper recovery, not just temporary symptom relief.

If you're curious about what your pulse might reveal, I offer a free 10-minute pulse diagnosis at my clinic in Montville, in the Sunshine Coast Hinterland.

Starting in 2026, we will host a series of health workshops aimed at sharing practical, at-home tools to support: anxiety and emotional balance, digestion and weight management, chronic pain, headaches, and heart health.



To find out more visit: <https://emperorsmedicine.com.au/events/>

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Pen to Paper

Here are some festive season inspired journal prompts to carve out a moment of reflection, intentions, self check in and awareness.

written by Astara Leon

Make a cuppa, grab a journal/paper & pen, sit in a comfy spot and ponder these journal prompts below...

“ The idea is that you are not your thoughts, emotions, or physical symptoms; instead, you are the context in which they occur. ”

~ Sabrina Romanoff

 When I reflect over the Gregorian calendar year of 2025, this is what I've learned about myself...

 This year I am grateful for...

 These were my greatest challenges / growth points this year...

 This is what the festive season means to me...

 These are my self-care intentions over the festive season...

 This is how I would like to connect in with my family/circle/community over the festive season...



 Over the years, I've witnessed these changes within me about my relationship to the festive season,,,

 These are my intentions for a thriving 2026...

However we each choose to celebrate this time of year, may it be a time of whole hearted connection within our selves while branching this connection out into the world.

With love,

Astara

www.auroraschool.com.au/astara

Founder of The Passion Project Co,
Co-Founder of Aurora School of Natural
Living, Meditation Facilitation,
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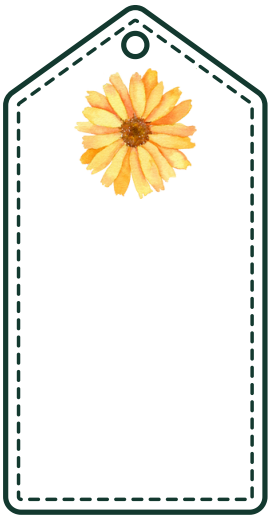
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Summer in Chinese Medicine

Nourish Your Heart, Cool Your Spirit

written by Dr Erin Horne



Summer is associated with the Fire element, which governs the Heart and Small Intestine. It's the season of growth, warmth, joy, and communication — nature in full bloom, mirroring our own potential to open, connect, and express.



Have you noticed that Summer can make you feel both energised and a little agitated?

Maybe you wake earlier, crave connection, and feel inspired — yet at the same time find yourself more easily overstimulated, restless, or worn out by the heat.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), these changes aren't random. **Summer is associated with the Fire element, which governs the Heart and Small Intestine.** It's the season of growth, warmth, joy, and communication — nature in full bloom, mirroring our own potential to open, connect, and express.

When the Fire element is balanced, we feel vital, clear, and emotionally open. But when it's excessive or depleted, we may experience headaches, reflux, insomnia, anxiety, agitation, or fatigue. **The same energy that brings light and expansion can also lead to burnout if we don't balance it with moments of stillness and rest.**

The Heart and the Shen

In TCM, the Heart is more than just a physical organ — it's the home of the Shen, or spirit.

When the Heart is at ease, the Shen is calm, and we experience joy, clarity, and connection. When the Heart is out of balance, the Shen can become unsettled — leading to emotional sensitivity, sleep issues, anxiety or feelings of disconnection.

Acupuncture during the Summer months helps to harmonise the Fire element, regulate the Heart, and calm the Shen.

Treatments can cool internal heat, improve sleep, and help the nervous system shift out of overdrive. Many people describe feeling lighter, clearer, and more grounded after treatment — as though their energy has softened back into alignment.

Living in Tune with the Season

Summer invites us to embrace the world with open hearts while remembering to stay centred.

It's a season to rise early, enjoy the warmth and brightness of the day, and make time for laughter and connection.

But it's also a reminder to balance outward activity with moments of rest, to find calm within the heat and stillness within the movement.

Cooling Foods for Summer

This is the time to eat light, fresh, and hydrating foods that help your body stay cool. Nature gives us exactly what we need:

- ~ Watermelon and cucumber
- ~ Lettuce, celery, and zucchini
- ~ Berries, citrus, and kiwi
- ~ Mung beans, tofu, and sprouts

Try to limit heavy, greasy, or very spicy foods during the hotter months — they tend to create internal heat and sluggish digestion.

Cooling Herbs for Summer

Nature provides exactly what we need to balance the warmth of the season. These gentle herbs help **cool the body, calm the mind, and support digestion, harmonising the Fire element so you can feel grounded and at ease**. They can be prepared as tea in combination or on their own.

Bo He (Chinese Mint / Mentha haplocalyx) – light, cooling, and aromatic. Helps release Wind-Heat, clear the head, and refresh the mind. Wonderful for mild headaches, irritability, or that “stuck” feeling when heat builds up internally.

Ju Hua (Chrysanthemum Flower / Chrysanthemum morifolium) – clears Heat, supports the Liver, and benefits the eyes. It has a calming, soothing quality that helps ease tension and stress.

Luo Shen Hua (Hibiscus / Hibiscus sabdariffa) – cooling, slightly sour, and refreshing. Helps clear Heat, generate body fluids, and quench thirst — perfect for hot weather or after physical activity.

Lu Cha (Green Tea / Camellia sinensis) – gently cooling and slightly bitter. Green tea clears Heat, dispels Dampness, and supports alertness without overstimulating. It's also rich in antioxidants and helps the body feel light and clear.

Though not traditionally Chinese - **peppermint, lemon balm, rose, and chamomile** are also all lovely cooling allies for the nervous system and heart.

Clinic Days

Living in harmony with the Fire element means allowing yourself to experience joy without depletion — to shine without burning out.

If you've been feeling the effects of the season — restlessness, heat, poor sleep, or simply the sense of being “overextended” — **acupuncture can help restore balance and calm.**

Dr Erin Horne (Acupuncture) offers soothing summer sessions Mondays & Fridays in Yandina at Luna Wellness Collective.

Learn more or book online at www.fluxwellness.com.au.

Wishing you a peaceful, heart-centred Summer.



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with Erin Horne

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Herbal Medicine for the Holiday Season

written by Carmen Lizasoain

“

As the year winds down, it's the perfect time to pause and nurture yourself. Mineral-rich herbs like nettle and oat straw help replenish your energy and nourish the nervous system.”

The holiday season is a time of celebration, connection, and joy — but it can also bring a little chaos. **Late nights, rich food, travel, and emotional ups and downs can all leave our bodies feeling out of balance.** Thankfully, herbal medicine offers gentle, natural support to help us stay calm, healthy, and grounded through it all.

Big festive meals can leave us feeling bloated or sluggish. **Herbs like peppermint, fennel, ginger, and chamomile are perfect for post-meal comfort.**

Peppermint and fennel relax the digestive tract and reduce bloating, ginger warms and stimulates digestion, and chamomile soothes both the stomach and the mind. **Keep a jar of dried herbs on hand and make yourself a comforting tea after dinner to ease digestion and overindulgence.**

The holidays can be joyful but also overwhelming. Between busy schedules and social commitments, our nervous system can use some extra nurturing.

Choose herbs to soothe stress like Lemon balm, Passionflower, and Withania (ashwagandha).

These are wonderful herbs to help restore calm and balance. Lemon balm lifts the mood, Passionflower helps quiet a racing mind, and Withania rebuilds energy reserves after periods of stress.

More social gatherings and less rest can leave our immune system more vulnerable. **Strengthen your immune system with echinacea, elderberry, and olive leaf.** A homemade elderberry syrup with raw honey is a simple way to keep the whole family's immunity strong — and it tastes delicious too.

As the year winds down, it's the perfect time to pause and nurture yourself. **Mineral-rich herbs like nettle and oat straw help replenish your energy and nourish the nervous system. Try a nightly ritual — a mug of calming tea, a few slow breaths, and a moment of gratitude.** Small daily practices like this create space for renewal and clarity heading into the new year and an opportunity to rest, reflect and restore.

If this gentle wisdom of healing herbs inspires you, perhaps it's time to learn more. Switch on Health the only natural health Australian college owned and run by a naturopath, offers fully accredited, flexible online courses in Herbal Medicine, Homoeopathy, Naturopathy, and Nutrition — designed to fit around your lifestyle. We also have short courses starting from \$27.50.

Whether you want to deepen your personal understanding of natural health or begin a professional journey to help others, you'll be guided by experienced practitioners who teach from both knowledge and heart. Studying with Switch on Health connects you to a vibrant community of students, mentors, and natural health advocates — people who, like you, believe in the body's innate ability to heal. Make this holiday season the start of something new: invest in yourself, follow your curiosity, and let nature be your teacher.

Carmen Lizasoain, Naturopath at [Eclectic Earth](#), and Clinic Co-Ordinator at [Switch on Health](#).





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CARMEN LIZASOAIN NATUROPATH

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As a naturopath, I'm passionate about art and craft activities because they provide a powerful way to support holistic health. Creative activities encourage mindfulness, reduce stress, and promote emotional well-being, acting as a form of active meditation. They help people slow down, be present, and reconnect with themselves, which is essential for overall wellness. I love incorporating creativity into my practice because it fosters self-expression, relaxation, and connection—all key elements of a balanced, healthy life.

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-original author unknown

