

Intro into Herbal Energetics and Formulas

Lesson 1 Homework

Taste of Herbs, Medicine Making, and Studying Herbs

For this homework activity, you will put what you learned about tasting herbs into action (this is for your use only and does not need to be submitted). The best way to learn about how herbs will affect your body is to taste them. Learning to distinguish tastes is almost a foreign language to our salty/sugary culture, so be patient with yourself. And don't forget to have fun!

I tried to include both "herby" options and options that might be easier to find just lying around your house or a grocery store. Feel free to choose the most convenient option, the most fun option, or every option!

As you taste these herbs, make note of all three energetic scales: heating vs. cooling, moistening vs. drying, relaxing vs. stimulating. An herb may affect you on all three scales, or just one. Also make note of where the herb affects you: does it increase heart rate, clear the sinuses, make you cough, uplift you, make you urinate (this won't happen immediately, of course), etc. This affect won't be immediate for every herb but pay attention just in case.

Don't get down on yourself if you don't sense anything at first. We will spend this entire course honing this skill. The most important thing is that you are tasting these herbs and starting to pay attention. <3

Homework: Taste Test

Aromatic: dried vs. fresh ginger/turmeric/thyme tea

Taste the fresh vs. dried version of the same aromatic herb. What differences did you notice? Was one version stronger than the other? What energetics of your aromatic herb did you notice? Did you notice an effect on any organ systems?

Bitter: dandelion root/leaves, lemon peel

Taste a bitter herb. Then taste a sour herb. Repeat. Sour and bitter are often confused. What differences do you notice between the taste of the two flavors? What differences do you notice between the energetics of the two flavors?

Sour: lemon, sumac berries, goldenberries

Taste a sour herb. Then taste an astringent herb. Repeat. Were there any similarities or differences between your sour vs. astringent herb?

Astringent: green banana, rose petal tea

Taste an astringent herb. What energetics of your astringent herb did you notice?

Sweet: mushroom broth, astragalus tea, licorice tea

Taste these sweet flavor profile herbs in this order: mushroom (leave dried shitake mushrooms soaking in water over night, then drink the water), then astragalus (boil astragalus in water for 20 minutes, strain, then drink the water), then licorice root (you can just taste the powder, make a tea of the

powder, or boil the root for 20 minutes). Note any “sweetness” you notice in each tea. Now go backwards from licorice root, to astragalus, to mushroom. How did starting with licorice affect your ability to sense any “sweetness” in the astragalus and mushroom teas? How has the term “sweet” changed for you?

Salty: seaweed, nettles/oatstraw or kale

Compare the taste of seaweed to nettles, oatstraw, or dried kale. All these herbs are in the salty flavor profile. What similarities and differences do you sense between these plants? What energetics did you notice about these plants? How has the term “salty” changed for you?

Acrid: Echinacea root/seed/prickly ash, valerian root/passionvine

Taste an acrid/tingly plant like Echinacea root, prickly ash leaves, or spilanthus (you can also taste tinctures of these) and compare it to the acrid/putrid/sickly-sweet tasting plant like valerian root or passionvine leaves (you might want to do this at night if you are having a whole cup/dose of these). What similarities and differences did you notice between these plants? What energetics did you notice for these plants?

Demulcent: marshmallow root, aloe gel, hibiscus leaves

Make a hot vs. cold water tea with a demulcent herb for 30 minutes. Do you notice a difference?

Bonus: Schisandra berries, five flavor herb

Now that you have practiced noticing all 7 flavors/sensations, suck on a schisandra berry or sample some schisandra berry powder. If you leave it in your mouth, can you sense the aromatic, bitter, sour/astringent, sweet, and salty flavor profiles? Do you think you would have sensed these distinctions before you did the above exercises?