



## Classification of herbs

Herbs according to the active constituents present in them, the herbs are divided into five major categories: Aromatic (volatile oils), Astringents (tannins), Bitter (phenolic compounds, saponins, and alkaloids), Mucilaginous (polysaccharides), and Nutritive (food stuffs).

## Aromatic Herbs

Aromatic Herbs, the name is a reflection of the pleasant odour that many of these herbs have. They are used extensively both therapeutically and as flavourings and perfumes. Aromatic herbs are divided into two subcategories: stimulants and nerviness. Example: Rosemary.

### **Stimulant Herbs**

Stimulant Herbs increase energy and activities of the body, or its parts or organs, and most often affect the respiratory, digestive, and circulatory systems. Example: Lemon Grass.

### **Nervine Herbs**

Nervine Herbs are often used to heal and soothe the nervous system, and often affect the respiratory, digestive, and circulatory systems as well. They are often used in teas or in encapsulated form. Example: Lavender.

### **Astringent Herbs**

Astringent Herbs have tannins, which have the ability to precipitate proteins, and this “tightens,” contracts, or tones living tissue, and helps to halt discharges. They affect the digestive, urinary, and circulatory systems, and large doses are toxic to the liver. They are analgesic, antiseptic, antiabortive, astringent, emmenagogue, homostatic, and styptic. Example: Oregano.

### **Bitter Herbs**

Bitter Herbs are named because of the presence of phenols and phenolic glycosides, alkaloids, or saponins, and are divided into four subcategories: laxative herbs, diuretic herbs, saponin-containing herbs, and aloaloid-containing herbs. Example: Fennel Seeds.

### **Laxative Bitter**

Laxative Bitter herbs include alterative, anticatarrhal, antipyretic, cholagogue, purgative, hepatonic, sialagogue, vermifuge, and blood purifier. Examples: Root, Licorice Root, and barberry Root.

### **Diuretic Herbs**

Diuretic Herbs induce loss of fluid from the body through the urinary system. The fluids released help cleanse the vascular system, kidneys, and liver. They are alterative, antibiotic, anticatarrhal, antipyretic, antiseptic, lithotriptic, and blood purifier in nature. Examples: Burdock, Dandelion, and Parsley.

### **Saponin-containing Herbs**

Saponin-containing Herbs are known for their ability to produce frothing or foaming in solution with water. The name “saponin” comes from the Latin word for soap. They emulsify fat soluble molecules in the digestive tract, and their most important property is to enhance the body’s ability to absorb other active compounds. Saponins have the ability to effectively dissolve the cell membranes of red blood cells and disrupt them. They are alterative, anticatarrhal, antispasmodic, aphrodisiac, emmenagogue, cardiac stimulant, and increased longevity in nature. Examples: Fenugreek, and Licorice Root.

### **Mucilaginous herbs**

Mucilaginous herbs derive their properties from the polysaccharides they contain, which give these herbs a slippery, mild taste that is sweet in water. All plants product mucilage in some form to store water and hydrates as a food reserve. Since most mucilages are not broken down by the human digestive system, but absorb toxins from the bowel and give bulk to the stool, these herbs are most effective topically as poultices and knitting agents, and are also used topically in the digestive tract. When used as lozenges or extracts, they have a demulcent action on the throat. They eliminate the toxins from the intestinal system, help in regulating it and reduce the bowel transit time. They are antibiotic, antacid, demulcent, emollient, culnerary, and detoxifier in nature. Examples: Marshmallow, and Slippery Elm.

### **Nutritive Herbs**

These herbs derive both their name and their classification from the nutritive value they provide to the diet. They are true foods and provide some medicinal effects as fiber, mucilage, and diuretic action. But most importantly they provide the nutrition of protein, carbohydrates, and fats, plus the vitamins and minerals that are necessary for adequate nutrition. Examples: Roman Lettuce, Bok Choy, Leeks, Alfalfa Sprouts, Arugula, Watercress, Microgreens, Mushrooms, and Onions.

**Stay focused, it’s time to place your health back into your control.**

**Psalm 104:14**

**14 He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth;**

**Proverbs 15:17**

**17 Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.**

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