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HERBOLOGY

*The Essence of all beings is Earth
The Essence of the Earth is Water
the Essence of the Water is Plants
The Essence of Plants is the human
being.*

Upanishads, I.1.2





Photo by Quaritsch Photography

While current science continues to try to break down plant remedies into their active constituents—looking at plants as potential drugs—a more holistic perspective is to look at the plant remedies in a whole plant way—taking into consideration the plant’s habitat, growing habits, morphology, history and energetics. Plant remedies work not because of individual constituents, but because of the synergy and completeness of all of the different phyto-chemicals and qualities. Plants have an intelligence that matches our human needs precisely.

Herbs have been used in every culture throughout history for food, medicine, ceremony, pleasure and beauty. Each culture has developed herbal therapies that are specific to its region, and the unique needs of each region are always met by what naturally grows there.

An example of this is found in the Northeast woodland plant American Cranesbill. American Cranesbill – or *Geranium maculatum* – is a perennial herb that grows in moist woods throughout much of the Eastern United States. It flowers in the springtime between April and June, and the flower is a lovely soft pink color. Its leaves are characteristic with divisions and clefts in a shape that will not be mistaken for any other plant. It is called Cranesbill because its seed-pod is long, narrow and pointed, reminiscent of a crane’s bill.



Photo by Marina Yalanska

American Cranesbill is a useful plant for treating diarrhea, cholera and dysentery. It grows in regions where the waters are often in shallow streams and ponds—places where there is likely to be amoebic activity—places where people could get sick from water-borne bacteria.

This is how the earth gives forth its medicines. What is necessary for healing will grow where it is needed.

Plants grow not only for us, but also in order to heal the planet. One plant that people love to hate is the dandelion, which proliferates in areas that are polluted with toxic petrochemicals and heavy metals. The purpose of the dandelion is to keep the soil loose and receptive to water and to also pull toxins out of the soil and restore it to health, the same way that dandelion root tea can help to detoxify our livers. Likewise burdock, another common weed, sends down a long taproot in areas where the nutrients have been stripped from the topsoil. It draws nutrients from deep under the surface soil and brings them up into the large green leaves. At the end of the growing season, these leaves die back and release their minerals into the topsoil.

No one plants the seeds for this to happen; it is an example of the self-healing intelligence of the earth—and we can learn a great deal about our own healing by watching what happens naturally in our local areas.



Photo by Jason Leung

AUTHOR

"If we listen with all of who we are and allow a deeper connection with nature, creation, and purpose we could continue the powerful work of integrating ecology, theology, and collective healing as a sacred path to gentle, effective restoration and wholeness for ourselves and for the earth."



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Over the last few decades, Peeka has worked with thousands of students and clients worldwide.



BIOREGIONALISM



HOMEOPATHY

—Peeka Trenkle

