

# NERVINES

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS FOR  
SEDATIVE & NON-SEDATIVE  
HERBS TO SUPPORT  
THE NERVOUS SYSTEM



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# NON-SEDATIVE NERVINES

GREAT FOR LOW ENERGY,  
STAGNATION, DEPRESSION,  
ANXIETY

Lavender (*Lavendula officinale*): A virgo plant - a plant for people who are hard on themselves and everybody else. This is a great plant if you have a lot of tension, headaches, or GI upset accompanies anxiety or stress. The essential oil is also effectively calming. Lavender is also great in depression because it is bitter and aromatic, two of the main actions needed for depression.

Tea: leaf and flower. best as a small amount with other herbs (mint, lemon balm, chamomile)

Tincture: ¼ - 2mL / day\*

Motherwort (*Leonurus cardiaca*): This common bitter weed has an affinity to the heart and generative system. It is cooling and soothing to those hot, irritable, angry, or broken hearted people. It's good for anxiety that feels kind of fluttery or with heart palpitations. This is also used to regulate menstrual cycles so can be helpful for rageful PMS.

Tea: Very bitter, but help yourself.

Tincture: 1-5mL / day.

# NON-SEDATIVE NERVINES

Tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*). Also called Holy Basil or Sacred Basil. Different subspecies of this are used all over African and the Indian subcontinent, I know about its uses from Aruyvedic medicine traditions. Tulsi moves stagnant, low energy. It has a pleasant taste for most people. I like it because it's an adaptogen, useful for long term support, but the aromatic qualities lend themselves to an immediate nervine quality. Tulsi can be great in depression because of it's uplifting and moving quality. It's also calming, but not sedative.

tea: 2-5gm / day

tincture: 1-3mL 3x / day

Mimosa (*Albizia julibrissin*): Mimosa is called Happiness Tree or tree of Collective Joy. The flowers and bark are used as an antidepressant for people who have angry, frustrated, or irritable depression. Mimosa can also be helpful for a broken heart. It can be used for empty feeling depression or for a Marge Simpson type picture.

tincture: 2-3mL 2x /day

St. John's Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*): St. John's Wort is a warming, stimulating flower that blooms just about at summer solstice. It is indicated in seasonal depression and also depression where the liver is stuck and stagnant (you might see headaches, nausea, poor fat digestion, irritability). A 2002 study found it as effective as Prozac without the side effects of Prozac. St. John's Wort is known to interact with many pharmaceutical drugs, so avoid St. John's Wort if you're taking any prescription medications. It can also induce mania in folks who tend towards mania, to use with care.

tincture: 3mL 2-3x / day

# NON-SEDATIVE NERVINES

Lemon Balm (*Melissa officinalis*) Lemon Balm is a sunny, stimulating herb. It is gentle enough for everyone and can be a great place to start when addressing mild depression. It is calming to the nervous system and can be part of a long term strategy for anxious depression. I think of lemon balm for the busy bee type person who needs to sit and rest a bit more.

tea: 2-5gm / day. very tasty.

tincture: 2-3mL 3x/day

Rose (*Rosa* spp., *Rosa rugosa*): Rose is a beautiful, gentle but strong remedy that especially acts on the emotional heart. It can be great for shy people, loners. It can help people with boundaries, being a sweet plant with serious thorns. Very supportive for fostering self-love and self-confidence.

tea: a pinch of rose petals in a cup of tea is enough in a blend of other herbs.

tincture: 1-2mL 3x/day

Mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*): Mugwort is a bitter, warming and moving plant named in honor of Artemis, goddess of the moon, the forest, the hunt. She is a badass. I use mugwort when I feel like I need to remember my strength comes from within me. Mugwort has a strong association with the moon and is often used to help people build connections with their dreams.

Tea: yuk

Tincture: 5 - 15 drops 3x / day

# NON-SEDATIVE NERVINES

Oats (*Avena sativa*): Oats are considered a trophorestorative: long term rehabilitation for the nervous system. Full of minerals, they offer a grounding, stabilizing feeling. Both the oatstraw, and milky oats (oat tops) are used as medicinal herbs. Some say the milky tops are stronger, but I find them both equally useful. Oats are one of the best nerve tonics, ideally used daily for a few months at a time. not as effective as an immediate calming agent. Because of their high mineral content, they work well in tea, but need to be steeped for a long time (at least 2 hours, up to 10 hours) to extract all the minerals. The specific indication for oats is someone whose nerves are frazzled or fried, and someone who is not getting solid mineral nutrition from food (like someone with a low vegetable diet).

Tea: 1 tbsp / 1 cup water, steeped 2 hours minimum

Tincture: 2 droppers, 3x / day. Look for tincture made from fresh milky oats.

Hawthorn (*Crataegus* spp.): Hawthorn is a small tree with tasty red berries, aromatic flowers, and big thorns. It has a long history of use for the physical and emotional heart. I think about using hawthorn for people who run hot (emotionally and physically). It's cooling and calming, while offering support and protection to the heart. It's deeply nourishing as well, so good for folks who are run down and having trouble sleeping.

Linden (*Tilia europaea*): Ah, sweet linden. Linden flowers, from Linden trees, offer a soft sweet gently aromatic friend. Linden is great for dry, hot people because it's slightly cooling, and moistening. I use it for people who might be sensitive to other more powerfully aromatic herbs and people who are easily stimulated by the external environment. It can be used to shift from day to night, or for people who have insomnia and are tired during the day from lack of sleep.

# SEDATIVE NERVINES

GREAT FOR ANXIETY,  
INSOMNIA, MUSCLE TENSION,  
SHIFTING INTO  
PARASYMPATHETIC / REST AND  
DIGEST

Chamomile (*Matricaria recutita*): Great when indigestion or loss of appetite accompanies anxiety. It's anti-spasmodic to the GI tract. Chamomile is great when you're feeling like a whiny baby. May not be the best plant if you have allergies to other aster flowers (ragweed esp). Easy to grow!

Tea: flowers. delicious with milk and honey

Tincture: 1-5mL / day, 3x/ day

Skullcap (*Scutellaria lateriflora*): Useful if you feel ungrounded and like your thoughts are taking you out of your body or reality. Skullcap flowers look like a helmet, indicating their use for protecting against over stimulation. Great for musculoskeletal tension. For "the nervous picker." In the long term builds our nervous system up to be able to handle more stress.

Tea: leaf and flower.

Tincture: 1-5mL / day, 3x/ day

# SEDATIVE NERVINES

Passionflower (*Passiflora incarnata*): the specific indication of Passionflower is for circular thinking. You just go over and over and over the same situation in your head. This can be taken in small amounts over a long period of time to help calm the nervous system. Passionflower has been shown to be as effective as oxazepam (a benzodiazepine) in a 2001 clinical trial - the dose was 45 drops / day (1.5mL).

Tea: leaf and flower

Tincture 1-3mL / day

California Poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*) This is related to another well known sedative - opium poppy. I would choose Cal Poppy for someone who has a history or current relationship with substance use or addiction. It can be really helpful if someone is trying to stop using drugs or alcohol. Nice sedative when pain is keeping people from getting proper sleep.

Tea: of the leaves and flowers

Tincture: whole plant including root. 1-4mL / day

Anenome (*Anenome pulsatilla*): Anenome is one of the main herbs of choice for panic and anxiety attacks, characterized by feelings of dread, fear, feeling of being incapacitated, racing heart, sweating. This is a powerful, low dose plant. Start with 1-3 drops of tincture, and if that helps use 3 drops every 15 minutes until the panic attack passes. If you experience panic attacks, carrying a bottle in your pocket can be helpful. This is a VERY POWERFUL (will make you sick if you take too much) plant, so respect it.

Tincture: 1-5 drops every 15 minutes, up to 30 drops