

HERBAL ETHICS...

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First and foremost is **humility**, there is always more to learn about an herb and herbal healing.

Consider why you need an herb?

- Is this the best herb to use?
- Have you used this herb before?
 - ❖ Is there a local or regional herb with similar properties?
- What quantities of an herb do you need?
- Is the herb widely available, or is it threatened or endangered? [United Plant Savers Species At Risk](#)
- What is the best form of the herb to use?
 - ❖ Internally
 - Infused tea or decoction
 - Tincture
 - Capsules, lozenge or powder
 - Extract
 - Juice
 - Herbal vinegar
 - Glycerite
 - Syrup
 - Infused oil
 - Flower Essence
 - ❖ Externally
 - Infused oil
 - Liniment
 - Compress or Fomentation
 - Bath
 - Cream or lotion
 - Bolus or suppository
 - Plaster
 - Essential oil

Considerations when buying herbs:

- Can you verify the identification of the herb you are buying?
- Do you trust the source?
- What is the source of the herb, including origin? Many times herbs are sourced from around the globe. Chinese herbal formulas have been documented as adulterated with heavy metals, pesticides, and pharmaceuticals. China's health system integrates allopathic medicine and herbs thus the appearance of herbs and pharmaceuticals together. Some manufacturers are more reputable than others. Sources of Chinese herbs grown in the US are slowly increasing.
- Does it look and smell vibrant?
- Overharvesting and habitat loss is threatening some species. For these species organically grown is a better ecological choice than wildharvested. [United Plant Savers Species At Risk](#)
- Herbs from abroad that become sensationalized may have harmful effects for those residing where it is harvested. In the case of [cordyceps sinensis](#) massive violence has erupted due to its fame.

Considerations when wild harvesting:

- Proper identification of plant to be harvested.
 - Are there any potentially toxic plants for which it can be mistaken?
- Take only what you need.
 - Excessive enthusiasm can lead to waste. Experiment with preparations first so you are not wasting valuable plant material.
- Explore the area before harvesting, how much of the species is around? Never take more than 1/3 from a given species within a local plant community.
 - Leave plenty for re-growth or re-seeding.
 - Leave plenty for birds and animals.
- Nutrients are taken away from a plant community when we harvest from an area, can you give something back to support plant growth for the future?
- Re-visit areas from you have harvested and become familiar with the effects of your harvesting and changes occurring in the area.
- Harvest plants that look healthy and are not affected by pollutants

- Heavy metals and other pollutants accumulate along roadsides making these poor choices of harvesting sites.
 - Agricultural runoff, mining, dump sites or other industrial activities can cause toxins to accumulate in plants, harvest far away from such places.
 - Harvesting herbs that clean the air, such as lichens, may not be advisable in areas of poor air quality or where there have been recent wildfires.
 - Might power lines affect medicinal value?
- Harvest each part of a plant in its peak.
 - Harvest roots and barks in spring before new growth occurs or in fall after the plant has seeded or finished its vegetative growth for the year.
 - Harvest leaves before the plant puts out flower buds.
 - Harvest flowers in their prime, either as buds or newly opened flowers.