

Making Herbal Preparations

by Jadwiga Zajaczkowa for a class in the Society for Creative Anachronism

[Oils](#) * [Ointments](#) * [Infusions](#) * [Decoctions](#) * [Syrups](#) * [Lohocs](#) * [Tinctures](#) * [Wines](#) * [Vinegars](#) * [Poultices & Plasters](#) * [Compresses or Fomentations](#) * [Troches](#)

Oils

Oils can be made in several manners. Essential oils are made by various types of extraction; we won't consider them here. Infused oils, in which the 'essence' of the botanical is extracted into a carrier oil by infusion, are most commonly used in period medicine. One can also add the extracted essential oils to a carrier oil.

The most common carrier oil used in period appears to have been olive oil. Other kinds of carrier oils, such as sweet almond, canola, linseed, hempseed, poppyseed, were probably also used in period depending on availability and budget. Modern oils such as soy can also be used: consult a good book on herbal preparations or cosmetics to pick an oil. Additives such as lanolin, glycerin and vitamin E are not period but can help the oil keep and improve the properties.

NOTE: due to problems with botulism in garlic/oil mixtures, the US Dept. of Agriculture recommends that herbal oils *for internal consumption* be made fresh (via heat infusion) and any leftovers refrigerated immediately, and used or discarded within 24 hours.

Infused Oils can be either hot-infused or cold-infused. Cold-infused oils take much longer to produce than hot-infused oils, but retain better quality.

Cold infusion:

1. Fill a jar with the botanicals you want to use. You may want to grind or crush spices and cut up or bruise herbs in a mortar & pestle first. It should be full but not too tightly packed, as you don't want it to get air bubbles.
2. Pour over it as much oil as will cover completely. Use a stainless steel knife or chopstick to poke the mixture for bubbles. Close it up tightly. Set it on a sunny windowsill, on top of a radiator, or in another warm place, for several weeks.
3. It should steep for between 2 and 3 weeks, or until the oil has acquired a pronounced taste and smell of the herb. At that point, strain it through a piece of muslin, jellybag, or muslin 'cheesecloth' bag (don't use coffee filters; they break!). Squeeze the oil through the cloth to get most of it.
4. Refill the jar with more of the botanicals, add the oil back in, and steep again. At the end of several weeks, strain again.

5. You can repeat the process multiple times as necessary to get the right strength of oil
6. Adding a drop of preservative resin, such as tincture of benzoin, liquid benzoin resin, or tincture of myrrh, will help it keep its savor.

Hot Infusion:

1. Mix about the botanicals and the oil (between 1 part botanical to 2 parts oil, and 1:1) either in the top of a double boiler (enamel or stainless steel), or in a ceramic bowl floating shallowly in a Crockpot.
2. Heat on medium (for a stove) or high (in a crockpot) for 3 to 4 hours, until the herbs become burnt and crispy looking.
3. Strain into another container (you can cool it first, if you can't get the bowl out of the crockpot!) through muslin, or a jellybag. You can repeat the heating process with more botanicals if the oil doesn't seem strong enough.

Essential Oils in a Base Oil

1. Fill a clean jar or bottle with the base oil you are using.
2. Add the essential oils drop by drop. (I use up to 15 drops of essential oil to 2 oz of base; Colleen Dodt in *The Essential Oils Book* suggests 2 to 5 drops essential oil to 1 tsp carrier oil, but that's a bit strong for me.)
3. Close the jar or bottle tightly and shake to distribute the oils
4. Allow to sit overnight to let the oils blend. Shake before using.

Store all oils in a cool dark place, in clean, closely-sealed bottles or jars.

Gervase Markham's *English Housewife* gives a number of recipes for infused oils in his chapter "Of Physical Surgery" in *The English Housewife*. Here are two examples:

"To make oil of camomile, take a quart of sallat oil and put it into a glass, then take a handful of camomile and bruise it, and put it into the oil, and let them stand in the same twelve days, only you must shift it every three days, that is to straight it from the old camomile and put in as much of the new. . . "

"To make an oil which shall make the skin of the hands very smooth, take almonds and beat them to oil, then take whole cloves and put them both together into a glass, and set it in the sun five or six days; then strain it, and with the same anoint your hands every night when you go to bed, and otherwise as you have convenient leisure."

John French's *Art of Distillation* (1651) says:

"OIL OF JASMINE IS MADE THUS

Take of flowers of jasmine as many as you please, and put them into as much sweet mature oil as you please. Put them into a glass close stopped, and set them into the sun to

be infused for the space of 20 days. Then take them out and strain the oil from the flowers and, if you would have the oil yet stronger, put in new flowers and do as before. This is a pleasant perfume and being mixed with oils and ointments gives them a grateful smell. It is also used in the perfuming of leather. After this manner may be made oil of any flowers. "

Ointments

Ointments can either be made by adding a fats/waxes to infused oils, or by heating the botanicals in certain fats. Essential oils can also be added to fats or combinations of oils and fats/waxes.

Fats

Lard, Vegetable shortening, cocoa butter, or commercial ointment bases can be used to make ointments. The most common ointment bases in period would have been animal fats, such as lard. Certain kinds of vegetable fats that are solid at room temperature might also have been used. Petroelum jelly, while not period, is sometimes used by modern herbalists. The choice of a base should depend on the purpose: items with petroleum products will be absorbed less well into the skin than those with vegetable or animal fats.

1. Measure the amount of fat you wish to use into a pan, preferably in a double boiler; or use a bowl in a crockpot as described for oils.
2. Heat the fat on medium-low or low until liquified.
3. Add the botanicals. (Ody suggests 500 g of ointment base to 60 g. dried herb; I suggest 1 part dried herb to 3-4 parts base, and 1 part fresh herb to 1 to 2 parts base). Stir them in completely.
4. Heat on medium low for 2 to 3 hours or until the herbs are crisp.
5. Strain out through a piece of muslin or a jellybag-- one you can dispose of! (Coffee filters will NOT work).
6. Pour quickly into suitable containers and allow to cool.

Note: you can also melt the ointment and whisk in essential oils.

The Herbal Body Book, by Stephanie Tourles, suggests a recipe for scented cold cream which is 1 part fluid oil to 4 parts shortening, with 1 drop each of tincture of benzoin and an essential oil.

Oil & Beeswax

Though paraffin wax is much cheaper than beeswax, it is not absorbed as well into the skin. (Paraffin was discovered in 1830.) The proportion of oil to wax can vary depending on how thick and waxy you want the result. (In cold climates, use less wax; in warm climates, use more wax.)

I have found that any more than 1 part wax to 4 parts oil makes something along the lines of hard lip salve. Suzanna the Herbalist of the Steppes suggests one part wax to 5 parts oil.

Iasmin de Cordoba provided this helpful chart for quantities that she has worked out for a medium-hard balm. She notes that additives can drastically change the quality of your ointment.

How Much Oil You Have				How Much Wax You Add	
cups	ounces	teaspoons	tblspns	teaspoons	ounces
1/8	1	6	2	1/2	0.1
1/4	2	12	4	1	0.2
3/8	3	18	6	1 1/2	0.3
1/2	4	24	8	2	0.4
5/8	5	30	10	2 1/2	0.5
3/4	6	36	12	3	0.6
7/8	7	42	14	3 1/2	0.7
1	8	48	16	4	0.8
1 1/8	9	54	18	4 1/2	0.9
1 1/4	10	60	20	5	1.0
1 3/8	11	66	22	5 1/2	1.1
1 1/2	12	72	24	6*	1.2
1 5/8	13	78	26	6 1/2	1.3
1 3/4	14	84	28	7	1.4
1 7/8	15	90	30	7 1/2	1.5
2	16	96	32	8	1.6

(According to Iasmin, 6 tsp of melted wax just about fills a standard ice cube tray compartment)

1. Melt the wax in a double boiler or a can or jar in a pan of water (don't expect to be able to use the top pan, jar or can for anything but wax!)
2. When the wax is melted, remove from heat and slowly pour in the oil, stirring continuously with a cheap whisk
3. If it starts to separate, move it back into the hot water bath and whisk vigorously until incorporated.
4. Remove from heat, cover and let set.
5. If the ointment turns out to be too squishy or too hard when cool, you can remelt it in a water bath and add more wax or oil.

All ointments last longer when kept in a cool dry place. Fat-based ointments should generally be kept under refrigeration. Generally, use within 6 months to a year. Over time, development of 'bloom' or discoloration make indicate contamination: discard

immediately!

An example of a wax-hardened ointment:

From the *Widowes Treasure*, printed by Edward Alde for Edward White 1588 at London.

To make the Oyntment of Roses

Take oyle of roses foure ounces, white waxe one ounce, melte them together over seething water, then chafe them together with Rosewater and a little whitevinegar.

Infusions

Infusions are created by soaking the botanicals in a liquid. Generally the term is used to indicate steeping the botanicals in hot water, i.e., what we call a tea or tisane.

1. In a teapot, glass jar, or glass or ceramic bowl, place 1-2 tsp of botanical to each cup of water. (More for weak herbs, less for strong).
2. Heat the correct quantity of water to boiling.
3. Pour the water over the herbs.
4. Leave to steep 3-5 minutes for a tea, 15-30 minutes for a bath or wash.
5. Strain.
6. Use hot or cool.

Store unused portion in the refrigerator.

Decoctions

A decoction is a tea-like liquid made by boiling your herbs/spices/botanicals in water (rather than steeping them in water that has already boiled). Modernly, decoctions are primarily made with 'tough' substances such as barks or roots.

1. In a ceramic or stainless steel pot, combine water with an appropriate amount of the herbs/spices (Ody suggests 30 g dried or 60 g fresh botanical to 750 ml). Using the same proportions as if you were making a tea (6 or 8 parts of water to 1 of botanical) seems to work best for me.
2. Bring the water to a boil, and boil 15 minutes (for fresh or every aromatic ingredients) to half an hour (dried ingredients).
3. Strain the liquid through a strainer or cloth; add sweetener if desired for internal consumption.
4. Pour into a clean, hot jar and close tightly.
5. Some decoctions are used hot; others are cooled and used cold. Decoctions will keep, refrigerated, about 3-6 days.

Syrups

Syrups are made by boiling infusions, decoctions, or juices with sugar or honey. They can be taken alone by the teaspoonful, added to food, or mixed with water as a julep.

Sugar syrup.

1. In a glass, ceramic, enamel or stainless steel pot, mix the juice, decoction, or infusion with honey or sugar: 1 part juice/infusion to 1 part honey, or 1 part juice infusion to 1 to 1.5 parts sugar. (For a light syrup, you can use as little as 1 part sugar to 2 parts liquid.)
2. Heat to a simmer. Strong syrups can be simmered to reduce by 1/3 to 1/2, but oils will be lost.
3. Pour into a clean bottle and cap tightly.
4. Strong sugar/honey syrups (reduced by 1/2) can often be stored in the cupboard; but others should be stored under refrigeration or canned.

Simple syrup of sekanjabin

1. Mix 4 cups of sugar with 2.5 cups of water in a ceramic, glass, enamel or stainless steel pan.
2. Bring to a boil.
3. When it has boiled, add 1 cup vinegar.
4. Boil until reduced by 1/3 to 1/2.
5. At this point you can add mint or other food botanicals.
6. Remove from heat. If you have added botanicals, leave to steep overnight, then strain in the morning.
7. Place in a tightly capped jar. Fruit sekanjabins must be refrigerated; plain ones are generally safe to store in a cupboard.

Two period recipes for syrups, from Plat's *Delightes for Ladies*, printed 1602:

A most excellent sirup of Violets, both in taste and tincture.

Expresse the juyce of clipt Violets, and to three parts of juyce take one fourth part of conduit water: put the same into an Alabaster mortar, with the leaues which you have stamped, and wring the same out thorow a cloth, as you did at first, into the other juyce: put thereto a sufficient proportion of the finest sugar and brought also into a most fine powder: let the same stand 10 or 12 hours in a cleane glased earthen pan: then drain away the cleerest, and put it into a glasse, and put thereto a few drops of the iuice of Lemmons, and it wil become cleer, transparent, and of the violet colour. Then you may expresse more iuyce into the sugar, which will settle in the bottome, with some of the thickest part of the iuyce: and beating the same up a gentle fire, it will also become a good sirup of violets, but not comparable to the first. By this manner of work you gaine one quarter of sirup, more than diuerse Apothecaries doe.

A Singular manner of making the sirup of Roses.

Fill a siluer Bason three quarters full of rain-water or Rose-water: put therein a conuenient proportion of Rose-leaues: couer the bason and set it upon a pot of hot water (as we usually bake a custard) in 3 quarters of an houre, or one whole houre at the most, you shal purchase the whole strength and tincture of the rose: then take out those leaues, wringing out all their liquor gently, and steepe more fresh leaues in the same water: continue this iteration seuen times., and then make it vp in a sirup: and this sirup worketh more kinly than that which is made meerly of the iuice of the Rose. You may make sundry other sirups in this manner.

Lohocs

A lohoc aka linctus is something to be licked up, esp. for coughs and chest complaints. Generally they are thick sugar or honey syrups. Culpepper suggests using a liquorice stick to administer lohocs.

Directions:

Make an infusion or decoction of the herb(s) in water. Mix it 2 to 1 with sugar. Heat until sugar dissolves. Bring to a boil. Boil until reduced by 1/2 to 2/3, or to a thick syrup. Store in the proverbial cool dark place.

Tinctures

Tinctures are made by soaking the botanicals/herbs/spices in some cold liquid, generally alcohol. What you are doing is extracting the essential oils of the botanical into the liquid.

Generally, modern tinctures are made by soaking the botanicals in **vodka, brandy** or '**grain alcohol**'. (Rubbing Alcohol, Denatured Alcohol and Industrial Alcohols are poisonous. Do not use these for internal consumption. Vodka is cheap and has little odor - it's best to use a potable alcohol for all preparations if you can. For EXTERNAL USE ONLY, some places sell a perfume diluent that has denatured alcohol and glycerin and is legal for under-21s to use for perfumes, etc.) Spices may need to be broken, bruised or macerated before tincturing.

Making of an alcoholic tincture is the first step to making a cordial or liqueur.

1. Place the botanicals to be tinctured in a jar with a tight-fitting lid. Ody suggests tincturing in a mixture of 3 parts water to 1 part alcohol and mixing 1 liter of this with 200 g dried or 600 g fresh herb. I generally use enough of fresh herbs to fill the jar loosely to the desired level, or about 1/4 that much of the dried stuff, or of fruit.
2. Pour the alcohol over it the botanicals to cover and/or fill the jar. Close the lid tightly.
3. For optimum color and flavor, place the jar in a cool (but not damp) dark place.
4. Let the tincture sit for at least a week. Ody suggests 2 weeks, but some spices take longer and some herbs take less. Note that if you are making a compound tincture mixing herbs and spices, or dried and fresh botanicals, you may want to add the different botanicals over time so that the strongest (such as cloves, cassia, pepper) go in last, and the more delicate go in first and have more time to soak. (Caution: undiluted vodka will eat away corks if left in constant contact with it.)
5. When it has steeped long enough to be strong, strain it carefully (you can use coffee filters for this), cork or seal tightly, and store in a cool dark place.

To make a cordial, add sugar syrup, honey or liquid sweetener to taste.

To make a liniment/rub, you may want to add glycerine to avoid skin irritation.

Mix 1 part tincture to 3 parts water to make a perfume or sweet water.

Tonic or Spiced Wines, etc.

Tonic wines, such as rose wine, and spiced wines, such as hypocras, are made by steeping herbs and spices in the wine, straining and removing. Mulled ciders, wines and ales are made by heating the beverage with the spices added and serving it hot, either strained or not. For spices you want 1 part spice to 3 parts wine or more; for herbs 1 part herb to 2 parts wine. Infuse for 2 weeks or more.

Vinegars

Fleeting mentions of flavored or medicinal vinegars show up in a few period references. Herbal vinegars, either for cosmetic application (mix with water!) or for cooking, are easy to make, by infusing or hot steeping botanicals in vinegar.

Many sorts of base vinegars are available.

- Distilled White Vinegar is actually merely acetic acid diluted with water, not vinegar at all. Most cooks don't care for it, but it can be used for applications where you want to emphasize the herb without any other flavor
- Cider vinegar is made from apple cider. It's inexpensive, light brown in color and has an apple-y taste to it. It was probably less often used than Wine Vinegar
- Wine Vinegar comes in two main kinds, red and white. White wine vinegar (not the same as distilled) is harder to find. Both have a wine-ish flavor. Other kinds of wine vinegars are available at speciality stores.
- Balsamic vinegar has a strong 'dark' flavor and smell of its own. It's not recommended for making flavored vinegars.
- Rice wine vinegar is available at Oriental groceries. It's somewhere between white wine vinegar and distilled vinegar, but it is distinctive.

There are two methods, hot and cold infusion, for flavored vinegars:

Hot

1. In a glass, enamel, ceramic or stainless steel pan, heat the vinegar to boiling.
2. In a bowl or jar, place a quantity of botanicals with the vinegar of your choice. (1 part dried herb/spice to 3-4 part vinegar, or 1 part fresh to 2-3 parts vinegar).
3. Pour the hot vinegar over the botanicals.
4. Cover and leave to steep overnight.
5. You can remove the old botanicals and strain into a jar and cover. For a stronger vinegar, put fresh botanicals in the jar to steep until used.

Cold

1. Fill a jar with fresh botanicals or 1/4 to 1/2 full with dried botanicals. Do not pack tightly.

2. Pour in vinegar to cover. Close the jar
3. Allow to steep in a cool dark place at least 4-6 weeks.
4. You can strain before using if you wish.

Flavored vinegars should be stored in a cool dark place but will keep for at least a year, generally longer.

Markham suggests rue vinegar for headaches:

"Take Rue, and steep it in vinegar a day and a night, the rue being first well bruised, then with the same anoint the head twice or thrice a day."

Poultices & Plasters

Poultices and plasters are generally the same thing: mashed and/or heated botanical applied to the skin as a dressing. The major difference between modern poultices and plasters is that plasters tend to have a layer of cloth between them and the skin, but the terms are often used interchangeably. Period plasters appear to have had non-botanical ingredients (i.e. chymical/alchemical 'metals') and been pre-prepared. The term Cataplasm is a synonym for poultice.

Cold poultices

Cold poultices, such as plantain, provide cool moist heat. Soothing mucilaginous herbs and botanicals such as plantain and oatmeal are supposed to soothe the heat of a wound or injury, and ease skin irritation.

1. collect a goodly quantity of the fresh herb
2. mash/bruise/macerate it with a mortar and pestle, or grind it to a paste in a food processor (for small hurts, chew a leaf of plantain to serve as a poultice)
If you must use dry herb, reconstitute it by soaking in water, or better, make an infusion and use as a compress. Powders can be mixed with water to form a paste.
3. spread it on the affected part
4. For tidiness, you may want to cover the poulticed area with a wrapped cloth or gauze bandaging.

Hot poultices

Hot poultices provide moist heat. Hot grain poultices used to be used simply for this purpose in veterinary practice. Hot poultices and compresses can be used to 'draw' things like wound infections, pimples and boils to the surface. Hot applications to the face, neck, and chest have been used to combat congestion.

1. Gather a goodly quantity of the fresh herb. (Use dried herb only when absolutely necessary.)
2. Bruise or macerate and cook with a little water until hot, or mix powder with a little hot water to form a paste.

3. Apply to the affected part
4. Cover with a cloth/towel/bandage so it doesn't drip all over the place, and to keep the heat in.

Generally, the stronger the action of the botanicals, the shorter the time it should stay in contact with the skin. Mucilaginous poultices such as plantain and marshmallow root can stay on longer than those with active ingredients!

Culpeper's directions for Poultices:

"They are made of Herbs and Roots fitted to the Disease and Member afflicted, being chopped small and boyled in Water almost to a Jelly, then by adding a little Barley Meal or Meal of Lupines, and a little Oyl or rough Sheep Suet, which I hold to be better, spread upon a cloath and applied to the grieved place."

Of Plaisters, Culpeper says:

"1. The Greeks made their Plaisters of diverse Simples and put Mettals in most of them if not in all, for having reduced their Mettals into Pouder they mixed them with that fatty substance, whereof the rest of the Plaister consisted. whilst it was yet hot, continually stirring it up and down lest it should sink to the bottom, so they continually stirred it till it was stiff, then they made it up in rolls, which when they need for use they could melt by the fire again.

2. The Arabians made up theirs wih Meals, Oyl, and Fat, which needed not so long boyling.

3. The Greeks Emplasters consisted of these Ingredients, Mettals, Stones, diverse sorts of Earths, Feces, Juyces, Liquoiris, Seeds, Roots, Herbs, Excrements of Creatures, Wax, Rozin, Gums. "

Compresses or Fomentations

A compress or a fomentation is made by soaking a cloth in an strained infusion or decoction of the botanical, and applying it to the affected part, either hot or cold as indicated. Compresses are especially indicated where you don't want the actual botanical touching the skin, such as the eye region.

Troches

A troche is a little cake, a way of keeping and transporting powdered herbs for internal consumption. They can be made with Gum Tragacanth paste, or flour and water paste.

The most famous are the 'cookies' mentioned by Hildegard of Bingen in her *Physica*:

"Take some nutmeg and an equal weight of cinnamon and a bit of cloves, and pulverize them. Then make small cakes with this and fine whole wheat flour and water. Eat them often. It will calm all bitterness of the heart and mind, open your heart and impaired senses, and make your mind cheerful."

Culpeper says:

"They are thus made, At night when you go to bed, take two drams of fine Gum Tragacanth, put it into a Gally-pot, and put half a quarter of a pint of any distilled Water fitting the purpose you would make your Troches for, to it, cover it, and the next morning you shall find it in such a Jelly as Physitians call

Mussilage, with this you may (with a little pains taking) make any Pouder into Past, and that Past into little Cakes called Troches. Having made them, dry them well in the shadow and keep them in a Pot for your use. "

Resources:

More on scents and other things:

Scents of the Middle Ages: <http://www.lehigh.edu/~jahb/herbs/scents.html>

Making Medieval-Style Scented Oils & Waters:

<http://www.lehigh.edu/~jahb/herbs/oil&water.html>

Method Sources

Note: Books from Storey Publishing have excellent information on making herbal health products for beginners. If you want pictures, the Dorling Kindersley publications on herbalism are great.

Booth, Nancy M. *Perfumes, Splashes and Colognes*. (Pownal, VT: Storey Publishing, 1997) ISBN: 0-88266-985-0

An excellent book on making scented products, though it has no period recipes or real references. Great directions for making your own, recipes (unfortunately postperiod) for familiar scents, wonderful reference on fragrances in general, good instruction and theory on blending scents.

Chevallier, Andrew. *The Encyclopedia of Medicinal Plants: A Practical Reference Guide to More Than 550 Key Medical Plants & Their Uses*. (NY: Dorling Kindersley, 1996).

Good illustrations of techniques-- same as the books by Penelope Ody. Reference manual with safety information.

Clarkson, Rosetta. *The Magic of Herbs: A modern chronicle of herbs, and savory seeds, especially Chapters XIV - XVI*. (New York: Macmillan, 1939). ISBN: 0-02-030976-7.

Covering to a wonderful extent the medicinal, food, and scent uses of herbs, with a definite emphasis on history-- especially early printed books. The sections on Pomanders and on Sachets have the best documentation I have found on such things, though more original recipes are included in Rohde's *_Scented Garden_*. The information is clearly referenced. Some chapters are divided by herb or vegetable; others are groupings by type of material. Illustrations are very useful and apposite, and period references are included.

Dotd, Colleen K. *The Essential Oils Book: Creating Personal Blends for Mind &*

Body. (Pownal, VT: Storey, 1996) ISBN 0-88266-913-3.

A good beginning resource on aromatherapy applications and on modern medicinal uses of scent.

Ody, Penelope. *The Complete Medicinal Herbal*. (NY: Dorling Kindersley, 1993)

The major safety book I use when dealing with whole herbs. Very easy to use, and also gives directions-- with clear photographic illustrations-- for making various preparations.

Lawless, Julia. *The illustrated encyclopedia of essential oils: the complete guide to the use of oils in aromatherapy and herbalism*. (NY: Barnes & Noble, 1995)

Includes safety information not found elsewhere; especially for essential oils. Also gives background on, uses of, and types of extraction for each oil covered. Check oils here before using.

Ody, Penelope. *Home Herbal: A practical family guide to making herbal remedies for common ailments*. (NY: Dorling Kindersley, 1995).

Useful primarily for the small section on making herbal remedies. Duplicates information from *The Complete Medicinal Herbal*.

Telesco, Patricia. *The Herbal Arts: A handbook of Gardening, Recipes, Healing, Crafts and Spirituality*. (Secaucus, NJ: Citadel Press, 1998).

Gives an overview of making a wide variety of herbal preparations, as well as a 'Multipedia' of information on various herbs including uses, history and sometimes recipes. Some new age spirituality included.

Tourles, Stephanie. *The Herbal Body Book : A Natural Approach to Healthier Skin, Hair, and Nails*. (Pownal, VT: Storey, 1994)

A good beginner's book on how to make various body/cosmetic preparations.

Unfortunately, the recipes are not period but it's a good place to look for ideas and applications.

Period or near period sources

(I am indebted to Iasmin de Cordoba for some of the annotations.)

****An Herbal [1525] Also known as Banckes' Herbal*. Author unknown, published 1525. Facsimile/transcribed edition, ed. by Larkey & Pyles. (NY: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1941)**

Banckes includes some recipes for poultices, wine washes and drinks, as well as vinegars (look for the word 'eisell')

Culpepper, Nicholas. *The English Physician. 1652, et seq.* (most popular reproduction is from the 1800s. The Complete Herbal editions often do not reproduce the recipes/suggestions.) Available online in the Peter Cole published original at: <http://www.med.yale.edu/library/historical/culpeper/culpeper.htm>

Iasmin says: "Culpepper's book of medicine was first published in 1652. Included with the descriptions of herbs and their uses is a section on the temperaments of herbs and the directions for making various substances, but especially ointments."

Gerard, John.*Gerard's Herball* (Thomas Johnson, Ed.). Publisher: Dover. c.1597/1633.

Iasmin says: "Gerard's Herball was first published in 1597. I used the 1633 facsimile edition which was corrected and added to by Thomas Johnson (he added nearly 800 plants and descriptive information as well as roughly 700 new illustrations). An excellent and complete edition for any researcher to own, though the cost is prohibitive. Readers would be well-advised to remember Johnson's additions to the work and read the text accordingly, looking specifically for Gerard's originals."

An edited selection of the items from the Herball was published as:

Gerard, John. *Leaves from Gerard's Herball: arranged for garden lovers*. edited by Marcus Woodward (Peter Smith, 1990). also available from Dover in paperback.

Hildegarde of Bingen. *Hildegard von Bingen's Physica: the complete English translation of her classic work on Health and Healing*. Trans. from the Latin by Patricia Throop. (Rochester, VT: Healing Arts, 1998).

Though the authorship (and inspiration) of the Physica is sometimes disputed, it does include section on herbs and plants with not only humoral notations but recipes. Hildegarde was apparently fond of recommending sauna baths, hot plasters, ointments and troches (little cakes of

Markham, Gervase. *The English Housewife*. (Michael R. Best, Ed.) Publisher: McGill-Queen's University Press. 1615/1986.

Iasmin: "The English Housewife was published in 1615 as book two of the two-part Country Contentments, with the first book being called The Husbandmans Recreations. Best's edition was based on the 1633 edition with corrections for the 1615, 1623, 1638, and 1658 editions as appropriate. Markham's work is that of a copyist. His text is based on Bancke's Herball, A Treasury of Healthe, A Book of Sovereigne Approved Medicines and Remedies, and Arcana Fair faxiana, among others. Excellent edition for the price, with thorough and scholarly editing. Unfortunately, this is not a facsimile copy and the text and spelling has been normalized throughout the work."

Plat, Hugh. *Delightes for Ladies*. edited by Violet and Hall Trovillion from the 1627 edition. (Herrin, IL: Trovillion Private Press, 1939)

Includes a number of scent, water and sachet recipes. The earliest printed edition of this item is 1602, but it was based on a publication from 1594.

della Porta, Giambattista. *Magiae naturalis* [Natural Magick]. 1558/1584. Available on the World Wide Web from <http://www2.tscnet.com/pages/omard1/jportat5.html>

Iasmin says: " This work edition is a translation done by Porta himself and placed online by Major Scott L. Davis (US Army, Retired). Of specific interest to the researcher will be

Porta's eighth and ninth books of this 20-book compilation, which are labeled "Of Physical Experiments" and "Of Beautifying Women." Printed facsimile copies are extremely expensive.

copyright 2001, Jennifer Heise; portions copyright Gaylin Walli. For permission to reprint, email jahb@lehigh.edu

Last updated, November 2, 2001. [Jadwiga's Herb pages: <http://www.lehigh.edu/~jahb/herbs/herbs.html>]