

Jamaican Bush Medicine

I remember when I had measles as a child and mi granny bathe mi in tambran (tamarind) bush water. In {mosmodule phpinc=ttpopup.php,Jamaica} there is a bush remedy fi everything!

The use of bush medicine, the original 'traditional' medicine, should not necessarily replace what has been prescribed by your medical practitioner (these days referred to as traditional medicine).

FEVER GRASS (Lemon grass)

Every bona fide Jamaican or Jamaica-phile who has not used fever grass to make tea or to bathe is missing something. Fever grass also called lemon grass is one of the large leafed oil grasses, with branching stem and aromatic leaves around the base.

Since the devil was a bway fever grass has been used to treat all types of ailments, mild and serious. Remember when yuh granny used to 'draw' tea, by pouring boiling water on top of some leaves, and leaving it to soak. Well, nowadays we talk about 'creating an infusion' … same thing. Well, draw some fever grass tea and drink it to bring down a fever, deal with your cough and cold, and add some fresh ginger and a little sugar to check your diarrhea. The tea, or the oil extracted from the leaves can be taken daily to relieve congestion, coughing, bladder disorders, headaches, gas and vomiting. Externally, fever grass (lemon grass) oil can be used to treat athlete's foot, and with its antiseptic properties, can be applied to cuts, and scrapes, and used to help clear up acne and other skin problems. People who suffer from back pain, sprains, rheumatism and circulatory problems will find relief from rubbing on fever grass (lemon grass) oil.

Fever grass is also a mild sedative, and helps you to relax if you drink it or use it as part of your bath. Keep a little mesh sac with fever grass leaves and rootstalk in your clothing and linen drawers, to add fragrance.

GARLIC Most of us use it in the preparation of our meals, because on its rich flavor but Garlic is something every household should have because of its myriad medicinal properties. Garlic has antiseptic and antibacterial properties and can be used to treat the following: Athlete's foot: Peel and dice fresh garlic, then rub on the itchy areas High Blood Pressure: Take one or two cloves daily to stabilize blood pressure Nasal congestion: Pour boiling water over diced garlic. Add a teaspoon of vinegar. Inhale the steam Ringworm: Peel and crush one clove of fresh garlic. Immediately after bathing, rub the affected area twice daily Sore throat: Slowly chew a clove of fresh garlic, or drink garlic tea (steep crushed garlic in boiling water and let stand overnight) Toothache: A few drops of garlic oil will offer some relief, or if there is an actual cavity, insert a tiny piece of fresh garlic, changing it twice daily. Corns and calluses: Soften the calloused tissue by applying a hot garlic poultice repeatedly for two days. This makes the tissue easy to remove Scabies: Apply garlic oil or garlic extract to the area. Yeast infection: Boil a few cloves of garlic, cool and use to wash the area. **ALOE VERA** Aloe Vera or Sinkle Bible grows wild in some places in Jamaica, and is also cultivated in small garden plots and pots. It is not the most pleasant smelling or tasting plant that you will encounter but this is easily outweighed by the numerous medicinal values. Aloe is said to prevent decreased blood flow e.g. in the case of frostbite ad is said to have immune system stimulating properties, making it a promising product in the fight against HIV and AIDS. Aloe vera is also said to lower blood sugar levels in diabetics. The plant is also used in the treatment of : Dandruff: Massage fresh aloe vera juice into the scalp. Leave for an hour then rinse. Eczema, psoriasis, athlete's foot etc: Remove the skin and rub the aloe vera gel on the affected areas, allowing it to dry. In addition drink some aloe vera juice to boost the effect Gastritis: Cut aloe vera leaves into small chunks and soak for about four hours. Take one teaspoon every six hours. Sores, burns, and wounds: Apply the fresh aloe vera sap to the affected area Falling Hair: Cut a piece of aloe vera leaf and remove the skin. Rub it on the scalp to prevent hair loss Acne: After washing face with warm water, remove the skin and rug aloe vera on the face. Leave for at least 30 minutes, preferably overnight. **BREADFRUIT LEAVES** Mention breadfruit (called Bresheh) to any Jamaican or Jamaica-phile and they begin to conjure up images of sliced of breadfruit on a plate with ackee and saltfish or callaloo. Breadfruit can also be used to make a milk based drink. But the breadfruit has several medicinal properties and is used to treat: Headaches: Slightly crush breadfruit leaves and put on the forehead, securing with a cloth Thrush: Rub crushed leaves on the tongue to treat and prevent thrush. Tumours/Boils: A breadfruit leaf poultice is applied to tumours to ripen them. Liver spots: Apply the sap from the leaves to the affected areas to control liver spots. Skin infections: The ashes of the leaves are used to control skin infections. Toothache: The toasted flowers are rubbed on the gum around the aching tooth to provide relief. **CUSTARD APPLE** The custard apple or 'custy' is found all over Jamaica. It is a great tasting fruit which can be eaten straight from the tree or chilled. The pulp is also used to make a juice. The custard apple has a number of medicinal properties. Fever: Tie leaves to di soles of di feet to lower fever. The leaves are cooling. Headache: Apply leaves to di temples and

forehead to reduce headaches and fevers Mouth sores: Wash wid leaf tea. Sprains and Tumors: Crushed leaves are used as a poultice on sprains to ease di pain and applied to tumors to reduce swelling. Lice and Dandruff: Powered seeds are rubbed on di head to kill head lice Skin conditions: A bath of di boiled leaves cleans up a number of dermatological conditions Ulcers, Boils and Abscess: Put di ripe pulp of di fruit on di abscess to ripen dem. **LEAF OF LIFE** Leaf of Life is a versatile herb that provides relief from bronchial and urinary problems. It is also helpful in treating high blood pressure, skin ailments and various aches and pains such as headaches, earaches, and arthritis. The tea is taken to relieve colds, asthma and shortness of breath, sometimes with the addition of salt. It has been used to remove harmful bacteria from the intestines and to clean the bladder and thus the urine. The tea can also be used to bath swellings, sprains and bruises and crushed leaves are applied externally to soothe skin maladies, such as, ulcers and insect bites. Also, when applied to boils and abscesses, it helps them to ripen. Mosquito bites: Pound leaves and extract juice. Apply juice to di infected bites 3 times a day. Toothache: Crush young leaves and apply directly on swollen face. Sprain ankle or wrist: Crush leaves and apply as poultice for 30 minutes, 3 times a day. Asthma: To alleviate wheezing associated wid asthma, heat di leaves and extract di juice and mix it wid honey; dis is given to di patient by di spoonfull. Sore or swollen breasts: Leaves are mashed wid castor oil and applied to di breasts to treat mastitis in nursing mothers.

Cold or fever: Boil 5 yam leaves with one Leaf of Life and drink as tea.

Source : Mama Use To Seh by Andrea Blake leveldavibes@yahoo.com