

Hops (*Humulus lupulus*) Jo Francks, M.H.

The International Herb Association has chosen hops as the herb of the year for 2018. Hops are on The School of Natural Healing's 100 herb list as a nervine. Dr. Christopher considered hops both a stimulating and a relaxing nerve tonic, in that it increases heart action and capillary circulation, yet will produce soothing slumber in nervous and excited mental conditions. Hops are relaxing to the liver and gall ducts and reduces inflammation and relieves accompanying pain.



Before Dr. Christopher knew about nervine herbs he knew about hops. He had a patient in Olympia, Washington, USA, who had the worst case of insomnia he had ever seen. She walked the floor at night and could not relax in the daytime, either. Dr. Christopher made up an old English formula: he filled a pillow with hop flowers and told her to sleep on it. She tried it and slept like a baby! In England in 1787, when King George III was suffering from what his physicians thought to be lunacy, he slept on a Hops pillow instead of taking opiate drugs. Hops was considered official in the 17th U.S. Dispensatory to be used in a pillow for insomnia. Hops can also be used as a tea for insomnia. It is very bitter and may be easier taken as a capsule or extract.

Hops pillows can be made very easily by putting hops flowers into a drawstring muslin bag used for making herbal tea. Lavender and chamomile flowers can be added as well. This can be put near your pillow or under your pillow when you go to bed.