

DR. CHRISTOPHER'S Herbal Legacy Newsletter

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How to Use Your Echinacea - Jo Francks MH

Echinacea is a wonderful herb used to stimulate the immune system which helps the body overcome illnesses like the common cold or the flu. As we turn the corner from summer and head into autumn it is a good time to get out and harvest herbs. Echinacea purpurea or Purple Coneflower has become a popular flower growing in many landscapes. When the flowers die and the cones turn brown the flower head can be cut and the seeds carefully removed. The seeds, when chewed, have that familiar numbing effect typical of Echinacea root. A tincture can be made with the seeds alone or combined with other parts of the plant. The roots are the most medicinal part of the plant and can also be harvested this time of year when the flowers die back. E. purpurea has a fibrous root. Other species such as E. angustifolia and E. pallida, have a taproot.



I was afraid to use the first tincture of Echinacea root I made thinking it could not possibly be any good. I finally tried it because there was nothing else available except my own home made tincture. I was coming down with the symptoms of a cold. I felt congestion in my lungs and pressure in my head and sinuses and there, in my cupboard, was my bottle of Echinacea tincture. So I put a dropperful in some water and drank it. Not long after that I felt the symptoms start to go away, so I took another dropperful in some water and by the end of

the day I felt great. Who knew that something I made myself could actually make me well. I became a believer in homemade remedies and began making more and more extracts for myself and my family to use.

To make a tincture of Echinacea you will need some Echinacea root. This can be from a plant you have dug up either fresh or dried or you can purchase cut Echinacea root. If you have dug your own root make sure the root is cleaned very carefully. After cleaning the root it can be

chopped up and used fresh or dried for later use. Fill a canning jar about 2/3 full with the dried root. Fill the jar the rest of the way with vodka or a mixture of 50% vegetable glycerin and 50% distilled water. Cap the jar tightly and shake every day for 2 weeks. Strain the tincture and discard the herb and save the liquid. It's best to keep some in an amber glass dropper bottle and use a dropperful at a time when needed. Treat illness at first sign of symptoms and use every hour or two. Echinacea can be used for up to 10 days then take a break for a few days before using again.

Making your own herbal medicine can be very rewarding and economical. Echinacea is a good herb to always have on hand for the whole family.

***Jo Francks** is a Master Herbalist graduate of The School of Natural Healing. She is also a Holistic Iridologist and Quantum Touch practitioner.*