

Rubus, Herb of the Year

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The International Herb Association has chosen the genus of Rubus as the 2020 herb of the year. This is a very valuable selection. The Rubus genus includes one of the best medicinal herbs that Dr. Christopher used and recommended as an herbalist. Red raspberry leaf (*Rubus idaeus*) is on the School of Natural Healings 100 herb list and is highly regarded as an herb to help many ailments. There are 9 pages dedicated to raspberry in Dr. Christopher's Herb Syllabus book. I think it was one of his favorites.

Red raspberry leaves are in the classification of astringents which tone and tighten up loose unhealthy tissue and help in conditions of excessive discharge. Some conditions that are benefited by astringent herbs are diarrhea, runny nose, spongy gums, canker sores, sore throat and burns.

One of the most common uses of red raspberry leaf tea is during pregnancy to help with nausea, to strengthen the female organs involved in pregnancy and delivery, and to assist in a healthy delivery. The leaves are high in iron and many other beneficial nutrients needed for a healthy pregnancy and to help the fetus grow properly.

Dr. Christopher recommended using red raspberry leaf tea in cases of stomach flu, colds, sore throat, cold sores, canker sores, thrush, diarrhea and many other acute conditions because of its ability to enhance immune function. He suggested using the tea at early stages of illness to avoid having to use the Anti-Plague formula which he admitted tastes nasty.

There are other herbs in the Rubus family including black raspberry (*Rubus occidentalis*) which has many of the same medicinal qualities as red raspberry, and thimbleberry (*Rubus parviflorus*) which has been used to treat stomach disorders, dysentery and diarrhea. The berries of all these plants are delicious and very nutritious. They are high in vitamin C and abundant in antioxidants.

Raspberries are not hard to grow. They like rich soil and need to be watered frequently. Once established they will propagate from the roots and stick around for a long time. Try to pick some leaves just before they flower and early in the season before the grasshoppers start eating them, but if you don't get them then, pick them when needed. Harvest as many leaves as you can at the end of summer and dry them.

This year we honor the wonderful medicinal qualities of the Rubus family and are grateful for the fruit it offers.

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