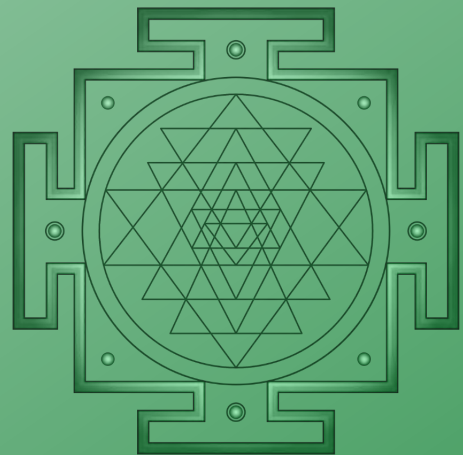


NEWSLETTER



JANUARY 2023

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Letter from the Editor

Happy New Year, wishing you all well from the APA!

After a long hiatus, the APA magazine returns! A big thank you to all the contributors who supplied their articles for this first 2023 edition. It is not always easy to find material to fill these pages, and so with this in mind I have put out a call below, please try and send something - if you can.

For those discovering the newsletter for the first time, the APA website allows members to access back issues, please visit: <https://apa.uk.com/>

If you would like to submit material for the March edition please make sure it reaches us by March 10th 2023.

Andrew

Please note: The information contained in this newsletter are for informational purposes only and is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. The views and opinions expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views or official policy of the Ayurvedic Professionals Association.

YOUR ADVERTISEMENT COULD GO HERE!



An urgent call for contributions to this magazine.

The APA Magazine aims to reach you every 2 months and this requires a lot of work and more importantly - articles. If you think you have an interesting case study, book review, research paper or recipes that others would enjoy, please send it to us.

Other topics of interest include: favourite Ayurvedic herbs and why you like them, book promotion, jokes and amusing stories.

Please send your articles to: info@apa.uk.com

THE ALCHEMY OF SACRED CACAO

Tomaz Mueller

During my many visits into the depths of the Peruvian jungle, I have learned immense respect for the spirits of the plants, their potency, their innate intelligence to help us grow, navigate through the challenges that life may present to us, their calling to help us see the unseen and hear that which can't be heard. My heart swells with gratitude just reconnecting to their compassionate willingness to share their wisdom with us; the only thing that is required of you is the openness to communicate with them, the ability to surrender to their whisper of silence emerging from the depth of your being.

Like with any other plant medicine, the Spirit of Cacao will call you, draw you into its magic, ask you to connect, invites you to explore its alchemical powers. This calling can be described as a deep longing and curiosity to align with nature, a silent whisper in your heart that grows stronger, a voice that calls out to reconnect with Mother Nature.

Sacred Cacao is much more than just chocolate. The natural plant medicine has been used for thousands of years in the ancient Mayan culture of South America for medicinal, spiritual, and ceremonial purposes. Let's get this straight, I am talking here about raw Cacao, the unprocessed version of cocoa. Sacred ceremonial Cacao tastes quite different from the purple packaged Cadbury chocolate that you find on the shelves, and which makes you want more and more, and its processing and high sugar content ingredients make you feel sluggish and tired. Whereas raw Cacao, unprocessed, when consumed in a ceremonial setting can open the doorway to a spiritual dimension, an intelligence and knowing that we cannot perceive with the mind, but with the heart, our intuition and through your feelings. Ceremonial Cacao is a powerful tool that allows you to dive deeper into your inner soul. When consumed in a ceremonial setting, with full awareness, it leaves you with a heart-warming energy in your chest. It helps you to



Raw Cacao beans

connect to your emotional body, leaving you with a sense of gentleness, softness, presence, and love.

In the Mayan tradition, the word 'Cacao' literally can be translated as 'heart blood' – the name itself reveals what it is traditionally used for; to open the heart, to connect to the heart energy. The botanical name of raw Cacao 'Theobroma Cacao' – translates as the 'Food of the Gods'. Ayurveda has also been using Theobroma Cacao for thousands of years as a medicine to help to reduce fever, improve digestion and in support of cardiovascular health.

SACRED CACAO CEREMONY

The Spirit of Cacao is considered the keeper of ancient, sacred wisdom. It can assist you in finding your higher purpose, support you to clear your energy body, help you to heal any wounds around love, foster your intuition and enhance your personal growth. In most indigenous cultures, the Cacao Spirit is embodied as a feminine energy and therefore linked to the emotional body, the voice of the divine. Cacao's energy is extremely soothing and healing, motherly and caring, carrying the frequency of compassion, unconditional love and kindness, a joyful connection to self and others. Mama Cacao speaks to the heart, allows the voice of peace, deeper intelligence, and higher vibration to come through.

THE ALCHEMY OF SACRED CACAO

Tomaz Mueller



All over the globe the sacred Cacao circle is growing. Ceremonies are being conducted widely and have become a way to re-connect everyone

through sacred rituals to honour the elements and the spirits of Nature, to create harmony and peace for humanity and to express gratitude for Life itself. A ceremony is a way to connect to the divine, to source and its manifestation that can be seen all around us, including that which remains unseen by the visible eye. It doesn't matter where you are, if you are living surrounded by the beauty of nature or in an urban environment, whenever you attend or conduct a sacred Cacao ceremony, all labels drop, time and space cease to exist and you can tap into a space of joy, harmony, and gratitude, connect to a place of love for live itself as a child of the divine.

PREPARE YOUR SPACE

Find a peaceful and cosy place in your home. Make yourself comfortable, perhaps with a blanket and a few extra cushions. You may choose to create an altar to support your journey. Choose things that raise your vibrations, help you feel more connected to your higher self. I strongly suggest you clear the space with sage before the ceremony and perhaps burn some of your favourite natural incense or a piece of Peruvian Palo Santo. I always love to have my crystals around me and a lit white candle to invite the element of fire into your sacred space. Also, it might be useful for you to grab a book to write in any thoughts or inspirations that might come up during the ceremony.

HOW TO PREPARE YOUR CACAO FOR CEREMONY

Setting the right intention for your ceremony is as important as finding the best quality raw Cacao. Questions you may ask yourself: Why

am I sitting in ceremony? What aspect do I wish to explore? In what area do I wish to receive clarity, ease, joy?



Begin preparing the drink by activating your Cacao with your intention. What qualities would you like to evoke in you?

- Here are some examples:
- I receive joy.
- I let go of ... to create more space for ...
- I open to connect with the Spirit.
- I open to receive clarity on this topic.
- I open to explore creativity.
- My intention is to create a space for dreaming.
- My intention is get in touch with my heart.

Put the energy of the intention into the preparation process so that its vibrational effect can be felt throughout the ceremony. Personally, I find Cacao is a sensual experience. I love a more creamy, frothy consistency of the drink, therefore you can either use a blender or a molinillo, which is still used in Mexico to froth the Cacao.

RECIPE:

- 1-4 heaped tablespoons of Cacao (10-40gms)
- 200ml – 250ml good quality water
- 1 pinch of cayenne pepper (optional)
- Coconut palm nectar or natural sweetener if desired
- You can also add other spices and flavours such as cinnamon, vanilla, nutmeg, cardamom

THE ALCHEMY OF SACRED CACAO

Tomaz Mueller



THERE ARE TWO WAYS OF PREPARING THE DRINK:

1. Boil the water and let it cool down. Add the ingredients and blend into a smooth consistency. Important not to heat up the Cacao over 48 degrees Celsius to preserve its benefits. Overheating would change its molecular structure, damaging its nutrients.
2. Put the Cacao into a pot and add the desired amount of water. Add your spices and natural sweetener to taste. Keep stirring until the Cacao is melted and then froth for a more silky and rich consistency. Avoid overheating. Serve warm, not hot.

NOTES: Spices that go well with Cacao are cardamom, cinnamon, nutmeg, vanilla, and chilli. Chilli increases the absorption of Cacao into the bloodstream and activates the fire element. Nutmeg in combination with Cacao seems to have an aphrodisiac effect. Vanilla and Cacao can be considered as 'cosmic lovers'. Their combination in Cacao has a long history. Vanilla is the only orchid plant that produces fruits, it is a great companion plant that can grow on Cacao trees.

AYURVEDA AND RAW CACAO

In Ayurveda Cacao has also been recognised for its health benefits for thousands of years.

Again, we are talking about the raw, unprocessed version of cocoa. Like coffee and tea, Cacao has over 300 powerful antioxidant and nutrients that can help improving your health and wellbeing, but only when consumed without milk and sugar. Raw Cacao tastes actually very bitter and is high in iron, magnesium, antioxidants and B-vitamins. In addition to being packed full of vitamins and minerals, Cacao increases blood flow to the brain which helps to strengthen awareness and focus. It helps the body to heal, detoxify and to give your immune system a good boost.

Please keep in mind though, after harvesting when the Cacao bean undergoes a fermentation process at a temperature higher than 48 degrees Celsius, this process is known to damage some of the delicate antioxidants and thus reducing the bioavailability. If you choose to use sacred Cacao, then it is important to use non-fermented Cacao beans, so you have access to the full spectrum of the Cacao's active nutrients.

THE QUALITIES OF RAW CACAO AS IDENTIFIED IN AYURVEDA ARE:

- Taste (rasa): bitter
- Aftertaste (vipaka): pungent
- Other qualities (gunas): light, dry
- Energy (virya): hot
- Other effects: (karmas): stimulant, hard to digest

EFFECTS OF CACAO ON YOUR AYURVEDIC TYPE

To be clear, any discussion surrounding the benefits of chocolate is referring to 100% pure Cacao, and not chocolate with added fats and sugars. According to Dr. John Douillard, the benefits of chocolate are generally noticeable in chocolate with a minimum of 70% Cacao content, with higher percentages offering more

THE ALCHEMY OF SACRED CACAO

Tomaz Mueller

benefits. Please keep in mind that any chocolate, less is more.

A medicinal dose is generally a maximum of 2 squares daily. Larger amounts will imbalance your constitution (doshas) and can cause a blockage (sanga) in the srotas, thus weaken the benefits of the chocolate. Also as mentioned earlier, when using Cacao in a ceremonial setting, a high dosage of raw Cacao is considered 40gms, medium dosage 30gms, low dosage 10 to 20gms.

A VATA DOMINANT CONSTITUTION

If you are Vata dominant, the bitterness, lightness and dryness of chocolate is very likely to further aggravate Vata, considering that Chocolate is a stimulant and contains caffeine. This can have a similar effect than coffee, especially if you have an overly sensitive nervous system. One of Vata's characteristic is its tendency towards an irregular digestive system, therefore consuming too much chocolate can cause constipation and may lead to nausea. So, as a Vata person, I would suggest limiting your consumption of Cacao.

A PITTA DOMINANT CONSTITUTION

Pitta in general is known to have a stronger Agni, therefore it is often much easier for a Pitta metabolic type to digest raw Cacao. However, because of the pungent aftertaste and hot virya this can lead to an over stimulation of the fire principle, leaving you more susceptible to imbalances such as heart burn, skin problems and inflammation.

A KAPHA DOMINANT CONSTITUTION

The bitter taste and hot energy of Cacao will balance Kapha, and its stimulating properties will counteract Kapha's lethargy or laziness. In saying that, in the presence of excess ama and a sluggish digestive system, a Kapha metabolic type may find it more challenging to digest raw Cacao, so less is more in this instance.

SUMMARY

In the presence of any major Doshic imbalance, it is crucial that you may follow a more strict nutritional regime, this means, taking solace in a bar of chocolate might not be the right approach. In saying that, let's assume you are generally healthy and you live a balanced lifestyle, you don't feel particularly wound up and or stressed then certainly a small piece of good quality, pure chocolate will not do any harm. A slice of spicy, chilly flavoured chocolate may do wonders for Kapha, a rose flavoured piece for Pitta and a salty slice for Vata can do wonders at times. In essence, it all comes down to 'balance' and please leave the cheaper version of most supermarket chocolates on the shelves.

Heartfelt Greetings

Tomaz

You may feel called to join us for our monthly online 'sacred Cacao ceremony'; we would love to see you there. Here is the link for more information:

<https://tinyurl.com/454y9u6z>



Cacao beans in seed pod

HONEY - PRECIOUS FOOD FOR HUMANS AND ANIMALS

Atsuko Mason

For more than 4000 years ago, honey has been used as a medicine in Ayurveda, useful for cold symptoms such as sore throat and cough, tooth decay, insomnia, skin disease, arrhythmia, anaemia, and the improvement of vision (when dropped into the eyes).

Honey contains something like 200 plus ingredients. The main constituent is carbohydrates, such as glucose and fructose, the remaining 90-95% sugars. The remaining components are water, amino acids, vitamins, minerals (such as calcium, copper, iron, magnesium and potassium), citric acid and other acids.

Honey is the best food to increase the production of Adenosine triphosphate (ATP), which provides a boost to our metabolism.

Average honey constituents

Fructose - 38.2%

Glucose - 31.3%

Maltose - 7.1%

Sucrose - 1.3%

Water - 17.2%

Minerals - 1.5%

Ash - 0.2%

Others - 3.2%

Overall, honey has a somewhat complicated chemical composition, and this can differ, depending on what plant the honey bee has visited to collect nectar. The variety of plants largely account for its differences in both colour and texture. It is considered desirable for honey to contain less than 20% Water, as it prevents microorganisms from multiplying and clouding it.

Its slightly high acidic PH level (and sugars) present in honey help prevent bacterial growth, enabling it to be stored for extended periods without the use of preservatives.



Monosaccharaides in honey, which are its main components, actually aid in sugar metabolism, promoting the increase of energy production, this also helps to raise body temperature, and maintain health.

Varieties of Honey

There are different types of honey;

- Pure white honey
- Black (dark) honey
- Regular (known golden honey)
- Cloudy honey
- Transparent honey

Also there are Monoflorals - they are characterised by having a greater amount of nectar from a single type of flower.

Flower honey - in this honey, no one type of flower dominates, and it contains a great variety of nectar's collected from a wide variety of flowers. Generally, it is recommended to use Monofloral honey for therapeutic purposes. For example, honey from the thyme flowers (a plant already having good antibacterial properties), is popular to treat colds. It should also be noted these highly medicated honeys are not recommended to be eaten regularly, as their highly antibacterial effect may begin to kill normal digestive flora.

Buying honey

Because honey is vulnerable to heat (it is not recommended to heat above 50 degrees), its nutrient value can be lost. It is a good idea to avoid heated honey and look for a domestic

HONEY - PRECIOUS FOOD FOR HUMANS AND ANIMALS

Atsuko Mason

pure honey variety, preferably sold in a glass container. Pure honey means nothing added and it's non-heated. There should also be no antibiotics present.

Note; it is not recommended that consuming honey for under one year old. Infants may suffer from botulinum disease.

Effects of honey

1. Recovery from fatigue: The glucose and sucrose in honey make it easy to digest; therefore it can be easily assimilated from the intestine. Quick recovery from fatigue can also be expected.
2. Prevention of colds: Honey naturally reduces the growth of bacteria by sterilisation and antibacterial action. It is also effective for mouth ulcers and sore throats. When the child's cough becomes more frequent at night, a spoonful of honey (dissolved in lukewarm water) can be an effective cough remedy. Do not use hot water!
3. To aid weight loss: Some of the amino acids contained in honey promote fat burning. Eating amino acids can increase metabolism and help burn fat more efficiently.
4. Faster wound healing: According to a study by Dr. Elia Ranzato, at the University of Eastern Piemonte - matured honey aids the healing of damaged skin. Amongst the different types of honey, Acacia and Buckwheat honey show the most effective healing results.
5. Improves memory: Some research into menopause suggested that eating 3 teaspoons of honey a day (in this case Tualang honey from Malaysia), memory loss was reduced. After 16 weeks of continuous intake, the patient's memory improved as much as that receiving hormone replacement therapy. Tuaran honey is collected from giant bees in Malaysia. It is known to have a particularly high nutritional content.

How to make a honey face toner

- A fingertip of honey
- A few drops of water (for example rosewater) or in some cases aloe vera gel.

See: <https://tinyurl.com/2p3scpnc>

I usually drop both of them onto the palm and mix well with my fingertips. I do not allocate a container for this toner; instead I just prepare an application when needed. Honey does not require any preservatives, so as much as your floral water is not out-of-date, you will have freshly prepared face toner every time. Also, you can vary the amount of honey according to your skin condition, on the day!

The final amount will be less than 2 ml, enough to cover your face and hands efficiently. Rosewater can be easily prepared yourself at home, see my short video on how to make rosewater here: <https://tinyurl.com/juc5r33j>.

Currently, my favourite addition is grapefruit skin water; I have felt excellent benefit from this toner and hope it will work for you, especially if you are at the post-menopausal age.

Appendix:

How to take honey for medicinal benefits by Yoko Arima, Therapist at Holistétique Singapore

If you don't have a serious health problem, dark coloured (blackish) honey is recommended for the morning, yellow honey for daytime and Whitish honey for the evening. Take a spoonful of each at these times.

If you are feeling cold, getting tired easily, anaemic or have signs of chronic fatigue syndrome, eat dark brown honey in the morning, yellow honey during the day whenever you get tired, and eat yellow or whitish honey after dinner/ before going to bed, along with a herbal tea suited to your condition.

At some point, you may suddenly feel the honey you are eating tastes really good, or appears to lose its taste. When this is the case, follow your heart or inner voice to continue or stop consuming.

Dr. Arima currently offers a course on how to use honey for medicinal purposes. You can find the information here: <https://tinyurl.com/y2s6t7f7>

AYURVEDIC PROFESSIONALS ASSOCIATION: EVENTS PAGE

Whats coming up this month and Dairy Dates for March



APA WEBINAR

A deeply integrative approach
to Women's Health &
Hormones in Ayurveda
by Dr Claudia Welch

Saturday, 28th January 2023
3 pm - 4.30 pm (GMT)



<https://apa.uk.com/articles/womens-health-in-ayurveda>



APA WORKSHOP

Understanding Srotas &
their clinical application
by Dr Aakash Kembhavi
Saturday, 11th March 2023
11.30 am - 3.30 pm (GMT)



<https://UnderstandingSrotas.eventbrite.co.uk>

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Sometimes it feels I was assigned a mission, like Star Trek, to deep space without contact back to civilisation, people or community. Andrew as editor, and the contributors of the newsletter work on articles, thoughts, ideas, editing, with deadlines for webinars...the list goes on and eventually we launch the rocket back towards home. Sometimes I am surprised, someone reaches out but mostly I wonder (and ask Karolina over and over) did the rocket (email) land, did anyone read or notice?

As we start the New Year let us together consider doing so with enthusiasm and action for the seed of transformation we all hold within. After all even gardeners need to open the packet, plant seeds in the soil to enjoy summer flowers.

Let us together imagine a future of health and transformation where we learn from the past, visualise and work towards a bright harvest and future but remain planted in the moment of now and action.

As many of you are aware, last year was a painful experience showing the reality of what can happen when things go wrong and a young life ends.

This year together we will take the lessons learned (and still evolving), asking questions to ensure future understanding and safe growth.

Currently underway is the process of writing to the Indian High Commission and AYUSH to help develop future CPD programs and better labelling of all herbal products.

The process of growth is slow and mostly unseen but does not happen without tending to the soil, water and sunlight.

To grow Ayurveda, or any of the healing Traditions, and to realise potential a lot goes unseen behind the scenes, which is why I asked Andrew to add the "We Need You" advert for articles, case studies, research even jokes to help us on the journey.

I know in my heart you all have things that have inspired you, a book you would like to pass on, a herb you have worked with for many years and would not do without, Please, please share this knowledge without fear of what others will think. The writers in this issue, many of you will have seen again and again, they give their time willingly and freely and for this our thanks is offered but they would like a break if others would be prepared to also share.

At the APA we also need to grow the pool of people willing to give their time to help the committee and to this end Val, who writes so eloquently in this issue, is preparing a simple process for those interested to apply and understand the time and commitment needed.

Together all the healing traditions have the potential to become a strong force for good. Alone we are like the dandelions pulled as weeds with no understanding of potential.

This newsletter is because of the editor, being shared with all the Herbal traditions, I ask you all, in whatever tradition let's talk, break bread, have a conference, share a joke and start a discussion on where we may work and learn together. If any of this resonates with you please contact me.

Sue Clark (President APA)

If anyone would like to discuss or share any thoughts and you would prefer to come directly to me rather than the office, as always please email. sueayurveda@gmail.com



<https://tinyurl.com/4bjcr4nd>

TREATING ECZEMA WITH AYURVEDA

Colette Park



Eczema is an inflammatory skin condition that affects 2-10% of adults in the UK¹, with symptoms including itching, dryness, redness and soreness of the skin. There may also be a rash present, small raised bumps, swollen or thickened skin and in more severe cases, oozing of the skin.

In Ayurveda, the skin disorder 'Vicharchika' closely correlates with eczema. It is generally considered as a condition that involves an imbalance of all three Doshas (Vata, Pitta and Kapha). Interestingly, two of the main early patriarchs of Ayurveda have different opinions on which of the 3 Doshas predominates in this condition – Charaka states that Kapha predominates, whilst Sushruta opines that Pitta predominates. This difference in opinion does not really matter though, as in practice each person is treated as an individual and the presenting Dosha(s) will thus be worked on.



Involvement of the Doshas

The presence of all 3 Doshas can be observed by the following symptoms of eczema:

- Kapha (with its moist and heavy qualities) is responsible for itchiness and raised or swollen skin.
- Pitta (with its hot and sharp qualities) is responsible for inflammation, redness and burning sensation.

- When Pitta combines with Kapha, it leads to discharge or weeping eczema.
- Vata (with its light and dry qualities) is responsible for dryness, cracks, pain and discolouration or pigmentation.²

Involvement of the Dhatus

- The Dhatus are the seven tissues that make up the body. These Dhatus include plasma and lymph, blood, muscle, adipose (fat), bone, bone marrow and reproductive tissues. In diseased states, the imbalanced Doshas impair one or more of the Dhatus.
- Eczema involves the impairment of:
- 'Rakta' (blood tissue), leading to symptoms such as burning, itching, inflammation and redness.
- 'Mamsa' (muscle tissue), leading to symptoms such as inflammation, redness and pain.
- 'Rasa' (plasma, lymph and interstitial fluid), leading to discharge or weeping of the eczema.
- In addition to these 'Dhatus', there is also a vitiation of the skin ('tvak'), which leads to dryness, cracking and discolouration.²



Ayurvedic treatments for Eczema: Correction of Digestion

According to Ayurveda, all diseases start with an imbalanced digestive system. Strengthening Agni (the digestive fire) to reduce Ama (immature or undigested food substances in the body due to impaired digestion that clogs the subtle channels and spreads into deeper tissues of the body) and balancing issues such as constipation or loose bowel movements help to address some of the causes of eczema.

TREATING ECZEMA WITH AYURVEDA

Colette Park

Food and Eczema

Eczema sufferers find that certain foods such as dairy, gluten, sugar, alcohol and nightshades can exacerbate their symptoms due to intolerances or by causing inflammation.³

Ayurveda utilises food therapeutically, focusing on flavours that will help balance a specific Dosha. A Pitta pacifying diet is often very helpful in reducing eczema. This diet focuses on counteracting the hot and sharp qualities of Pitta (which is responsible for inflammation and redness) by introducing foods that are cooling and soothing in potency. The tastes that pacify Pitta are Bitter and Astringent (think leafy greens and cruciferous vegetables), and Sweet (think naturally sweet fruits and vegetables). Tastes that increase Pitta and should thus be reduced are Pungent, Salty and Sour.



Pungent Taste and Eczema

In the Ayurvedic model, the Pungent taste (which is present in spicy foods such as chillies, paprika, cayenne etc.) is made up of Fire and Air elements, which aggravate Pitta (because Pitta is already hot) and Vata (because Vata is already light and airy). Another way of understanding this is that spicy food can irritate the stomach lining, leading to inflammation that can inflame the skin.



Salty Taste and Eczema

A recent study proved that high salt intake can lead to the formation of Th2 cells which are involved in eczema conditions. Additionally, it was found that areas of skin affected by eczema

contained sodium levels up to 30 times higher than the healthy skin.⁴

Ayurveda views the salty taste as containing the elements Fire and Water. Fire being hot in nature aggravates Pitta; whereas the Water element aggravates Kapha, thus worsening the symptoms of eczema.



Sour Taste and Eczema

The Sour taste, made up of Fire and Earth elements, aggravates Pitta with its heat and Kapha with its oily heaviness respectively. Sour tastes include alcohol, vinegar, cheese, fermented foods and citrus fruits.

A Citrus allergy, although quite rare, can create skin reactions such as hives, redness, swelling and itching.⁵ It is no wonder that Ayurveda views citrus fruits as having a heating effect and sees them as inflammatory and Pitta-increasing in nature.

Healing Herbs for Eczema

To treat eczema, Ayurveda focuses on herbs that are 'Raktashodhaka' (blood purifying), 'Kushthaghna' (skin disease curing) and 'Varnya' (complexion enhancing). The herbs befitting these categories are generally Bitter in taste. Bitterness, being made up by the elements of Ether and Air cleanses the subtle channels of the body and is thus purifying and detoxifying in action. In addition, herbs that cleanse blood ('Raktashodhaka') are also cleansing on the liver, as the 'Raktavahasrotas' (or channels of blood) are said in Ayurveda to originate from the liver and spleen.

Herbs that are used for healing eczema include Bitters like Neem, Guduchi, Manjishtha and Turmeric. Guggulu, a gum resin from a small tree, is also a great anti-inflammatory and is combined with different herbs to form Guggulu formulas for specific actions. In

TREATING ECZEMA WITH AYURVEDA

Colette Park

treating eczema, the formula 'Kaishore Guggulu' is helpful in drawing out excess Pitta from the skin.



Virechana for skin diseases

Ayurveda also employs deeper Panchakarma (bodily purification processes) to clear toxins and remove excess Doshas. Virechana (purgation therapy) is the treatment of choice for skin diseases with increased Pitta and vitiated Rakta (blood tissue). In this treatment, ghee medicated with bitter herbs are taken in increasing quantities to soften and move toxins, before taking a strong purgative to eliminate the toxins through the digestive tract.

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REFLECTIONS ON 2022

Val McKie

What an interesting year 2022 has been, so much has changed and it can seem like a greater darkness has descended upon us. Opticians refer to 20/20 as being a sign of good vision but who could have envisioned what life would be like back at the beginning of 2020 and that now three years later the impact of the fear and trauma that stalked our lives then still haunts so many today. 2022 was the year when the impact of the Pandemic rippled through many lives as we processed the trauma first visited upon us two years earlier.

At the beginning of 2022 the desire to return to 'normal' was great by the end of the year the term 'new normal' seemed to disappear out of our lives much like the daily Covid 19 statistics.

This subconscious desire to forget about the trauma and return to a safer familiar past is quite natural. The more we fear the future the more comfortable the past looks, as at least we have survived it. The past has a certainty the future lacks. However as I often say if we survive a life changing event it is nearly always good to let it change our lives for the better and view what has happened as an opportunity for growth. Often easier said than done but supported by others we can use the past to create a better future.

2022 brought the term Covid Amnesia into our vocabularies. Anyone familiar with the Kubler-Ross grief curve will know that denial is a key stage in the grieving process and it feels for

REFLECTIONS ON 2022

Val McKie

many as if we have been in a year of mourning. The death of Queen Elizabeth II led to a public outpouring of grief which might actually have been quite cathartic as we used 2022 to start the journey out of trauma and into a brighter world.

The need for healing both individually and collectively is high. We, in the Ayurveda community, have an opportunity to come together in greater unity to bring healing and fill a void that so many traumatised people are still feeling.

As we travel along the Kubler-Ross curve moving through the stages of denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance, we at

the APA are looking for ways to bring together more people so that we can share the amazing benefits that Ayurveda brings and play our part in the collective healing process.

Val McKie MA has been a lay member of the APA committee almost since its inception. She is a behavioural analyst specialising in conflict resolution and committed to the work of the APA.

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LAKSHA (LACCIFER LACCA) IN AYURVEDA

Andrew Mason



Laccifer lacca Kerr., lac 'crawler' graphic

Laksha (Sanskrit) or Lac is an important medicinal substance in Ayurveda, its use goes back many centuries. So what is Lac?

Lac is literally the resinous substance secreted by *Laccifer lacca*, 'scale insects' (super-family Coccoidea) that reside on a large number of trees in India. Their secretions eventually form a non-water soluble, almost impenetrable cocoon about its body. These grown shells protect them for life while they feed upon the host plant.

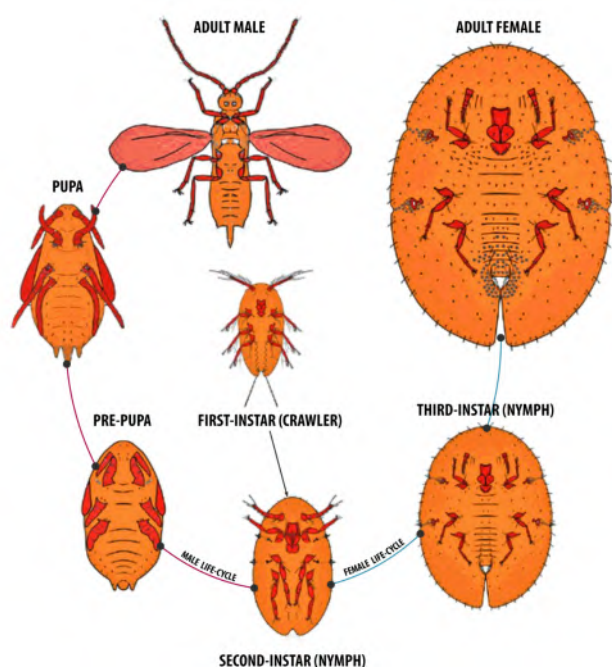
Popular trees grown specifically attract and cultivate these insects are: *Ziziphus marutiana* (Indian Jujube), *Butea monosperma* (flame of the forest), *Schleichera oleosa* (gum lac tree) and *Ficus religiosa* (Holy Fig tree). Principally, the best host trees are 8-10 years in age and adequately pruned, to stimulate the production of new branches. We will take a look at the properties of these trees later on, but for now, let us take a closer look at the benefits of lac products and their inclusion in the pharmacopoeia of Ayurvedic medicine.

Location

The main centre for world lac production remains India, although it is also produced in Thailand, Myanmar, Malaya, Lao and some parts of China. Much of the Indian lac production is to be found in West Bengal, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra and Orissa. Lac has, over the centuries, become a favoured drug in a number of traditional medicine systems. These include: Classical Chinese Medicine, Tibetan medicine, Unani, Siddha and Ayurveda. The Chinese know it as Zi Cao Rong, in Tibetan its Rgya-

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Laccifer lacca - life-cycle

skyegs in Unani its Luk-maghsool. In the Siddha tradition it is known as Komburrki and of course, in Ayurveda, Laksha.

It takes around 300,000 harvested insects to produce 1kg of purified lac. In India the word Lac typically denotes 100,000, hence the name lak-sha denotes a product requiring a huge sacrifice of life to procure a small amount of finished product.

Collection

During the intensive and manual process of collection, lac deposits on branches and twigs are firstly selected for healthy looking deposits. These are then cut from the tree, roughly standardised in length and fed into a descaling machine, which strips the branches clean. Mixed into this initial extract is of course lac, but also the remnants of the lac insect, tree sap, insect excrement, dust, bird droppings, leaves and twig shards.

From this mix will be extracted refined resin, lac wax and dye. Shellac (obtained at the end of the purification process) is more of a commercial crop, being favoured by commercial food and chemical industries. Here, Lac finds various applications as glaze

for sweets, nail polish, furniture polish, and in medicine (pill coatings) as well as a number of paints and varnishes available in the marketplace.

The resin, wax and dye are favoured by Ayurveda for medicinal application.

Laccifer lacca - Life-cycle

Both male and female insects are essential in the production of Lac, however it is the female that produces the bulk of the harvest. Female insects have an almost sedentary life, living inside cocooned chambers. They are about 4-5mm in length, with a large abdomen and swollen body. They lack eyes and wings, but their lower abdomen bears a pair of caudal setae, from which they secrete waxy resin threads, similar to that of a spider. Upon settling, an adult female never relocates.

After incubation, mature males (1-2mm) emerge from their chambers and fly or crawl in search of female chambers. After fertilisation, the male dies. Male lac have no mouths and so are incapable of feeding. Each male can fertilising several females.

The life-cycle of the insect is basically in three stages (see graphic), these are: first-instar (crawler stage), second-instar (nymph) common to male and female and third-instar (adult) final stage. In the months of October/November, a female produces about 250-500 eggs. The emerging crawlers quickly swarm and infest the host plant, sucking its sap. Upon feeding they begin to secrete a resinous substance around their bodies until fully covered by a metamorphic lac cell, inside which the process of metamorphosis commences.

Types of lac in the market place

Most of the lac purchased from a pharmacy has already undergone purification, however it can be purchased as Stick-lac i.e.: hollow pieces of lac on or off the branch (un-purified). Button-lac (Lac-chakra) is sold in darker smooth

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Stick-lac pieces



Stick-lac in situ

rounded discs (purified) and Lac-dana, usually sold as 'grains' of purified lac, semi-transparent and golden/reddish in colour.



Shell-lac (highly purified)

Shell-lac (for non-medicinal purposes) is sold in purified sheets or flakes, these are usually a deep golden or reddish colouration. The 'flakes' are then dissolved into mediums such as alcohol or water/sodium bicarbonate, to prepare a brushable lacquer.

Trees favoured for lac production

Ziziphus marutiana (Indian Jujube) tree

Butea monosperma (Flame of the forest)

Schleichera oleosa (Gum-lac) tree

Ficus religiosa (Peepal) tree

Constituents:

Typically lac is comprised of 70-90% resin, 2-10% dye, 5% wax, 5-7% mineral matter, 5-10% protein and 2-3% water. Un-purified lac is known to have a slightly disagreeable odour, not dissimilar to that of propolis, another resinous substance.

Lac Purification methods

While some of the traditional principles are still used, modern industrial methods of lac purification are very efficient and yield much higher returns. Let's take a brief look at a couple of traditional methods used to purify lac.

Method 1: Once free from the branch/twig, lac is placed in an earthen vessel and heated over a flame to liquefy. A second vessel of boiling water is prepared and the molten resin is poured into the heated water. The purified resin will quickly sink, whereas any debris/contaminants will float and can be quickly removed. This process is to be repeated 2-3 times to ensure purity.

Method 2: Lac is collected and carefully sifted to remove dirt, twigs, leaves etc. It is then ground into a fine powder. A decoction of *Cymbopogon citrates* (lemon grass) and *Rheum emodi* (Indian rhubarb) is prepared in water in a ratio of 1:16 and reduced to one forth their volume. The powdered lac is triturated with these decoctions for about 6 hours and sieved through calico or muslin cloth. The liquid is allowed to stand for a day and carefully decanted off, leaving the purified lac in the bottom of the vessel. This finished dried lac powder is known as *Kaud*.

Ayurvedic Properties:

Laksha (a drug of animal origin) has the following Ayurvedic energetics:

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Taste = astringent

Potency = cooling

Post Digestive Effect = pungent

Balances Pitta and Kapha, promotes strength and vitality

The following are commonly agreed properties of lac in Ayurveda: Anti-inflammatory, anti-bilious, stomatic, haemostatic, aphrodisiac, anti-obesity, expectorant, kidney tonic, liver tonic, destroys parasites, reduces asthma, jaundice, epilepsy, jaundice, anti-viral properties, soothes ulcers, reduces palpitations, builds bone, reduces lower back pain.

Properties of associated plants

As touched upon, a number of important (and medicinal) plants are associated with the production of lac, the energetics of which impress themselves upon the final product. That is to say, lac insects feeding upon a certain type of tree naturally take on the qualities of that tree. The following energetics might also be considered when purchasing particular grades of lac. Note: Peepal variety of lac is perhaps the most common.

Ficus religiosa (Peepal) tree: Reduces infection, heals wounds, improves fertility and counteracts poison. Its bark is astringent, its fruits laxative, its seeds are cooling.

Schleichera oleosa (Gum-lac) tree: Anti-oxidant, reduces headaches, soothes ulcers, kills intestinal parasites, and counteracts arthritis. It



Jujube fruit from Ziziphus marutiana

is energetically heavy, pungent and heating, its fruits are sour.

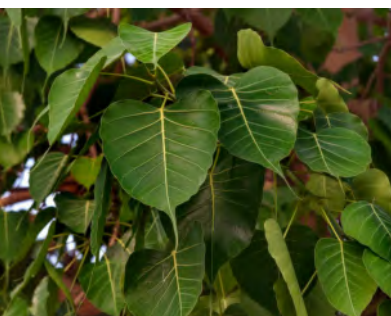
Butea monosperma (Flame of the forest): Relieves all three dosha, energetically it is bitter, pungent and astringent. It is used to treat fever, skin diseases, gout, epilepsy and diabetes.

Ziziphus marutiana (Indian Jujube) tree: It is heavy, oily, sweet and sour, it has a cooling property. It reduces both Kapha and Vata, It promotes digestion, imparts taste and is generally a wholesome plant. It has a slight tendency to aggravate bleeding disorders.

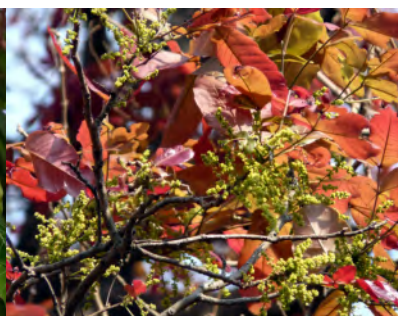
Decoctions used in the purification of lac (powdered)

Cymbopogon citrates (lemon grass): Stimulates digestion, it has a light and drying property, it is an expectorant and reduces Kapha. Its cooling nature reduces high temperature.

Rheum emodi (Indian rhubarb): Heals wounds, purifies blood (jaundice), improves digestion and absorption, general tonic. It is pungent and bitter, light and drying.



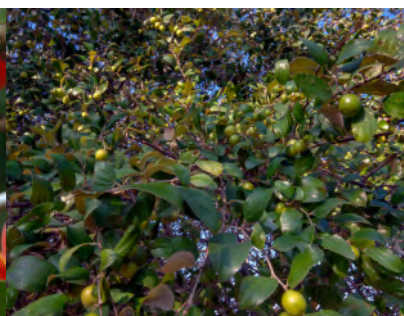
Ficus religiosa (Peepal)



Schleichera oleosa (Gum-lac)



Butea monosperma (Forest flame)



Ziziphus marutiana (Jujube)

SEASONAL ROAST JERUSALEM ARTICHOKES, CELERIAC AND KALE SALADS

Laura Bridge



Jerusalem artichokes have a rich, deep earthy, almost 'pheromone' flavour when roasted and marry well with the cleansing kale and unctuous celeriac & artichoke purée. Although BEWARE, their sweetness comes from high levels of inulin, (a soluble fibre that passes intact through the digestive system until it reaches the colon, where gut bacteria break it down then releases, gas)

You will literally be running away from yourself, with these 'fartichokes' so it's vital to include some wonderful spices that relieve the potential hazard: Hing/Asafoetida, cumin and coriander seeds

Ingredients x4

- 1 kg of Jerusalem artichokes scrubbed
- 8 garlic cloves, unpeeled
- A small bunch of fresh thyme
- 6 bay leaves
- 20g of ghee or olive oil
- Pinch of Hing
- Pinch of ground cumin
- Pinch of ground coriander seeds
- A couple of handfuls of young tender kale leaves

- 3 Tbs. of Extra virgin olive oil
- Juice of half a lemon
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- Olive oil for frying
- Garnish: Dill fronds

Method

Pre-heat the oven to 180.c

Peel the artichokes but reserve their skins.

Cut the peeled artichokes into 2cm sq and place them into a large roasting tin along with the cloves of garlic, bay leaves, thyme, hing, cumin and ground coriander seeds and a generous trickle of olive oil or ghee. Season the artichokes with salt and pepper then place in the oven to roast. Gently turn the artichokes a couple of times during the roasting process, for 1 - 1 1/4 hours or until tender and caramelised.

Meanwhile prepare the celeriac & Jerusalem artichoke purée then set aside and keep warm with a lid. Reserving 3-5 pieces of large peelings to gently fry for a crispy garnish.

Celeriac & artichoke Purée

Celeriac has a subtle sweetness and comforting nutty taste. It's a mild diuretic and slightly warming so good for balancing sluggishness at this time of year. It also supports healthy digestion and fires up your metabolism.

Ingredients

- 200g Celeriac, cut into 2cm sq. pieces
- The Jerusalem artichoke peelings - reserving 3-5 big pieces per person to fry for garnish!
- 10g ghee
- Pinch of ground coriander seeds
- Pinch of hing/Asafoetida
- Pinch tarragon leaves

SEASONAL ROAST JERUSALEM ARTICHOKES, CELERIAC AND KALE SALADS

- 100ml Whole milk or milk alternative
- 1 Pinch Mineral salt
- A pinch of freshly ground black pepper
- Squeeze of Lemon juice to taste

Method

In a large saucepan on a medium heat, heat the ghee, add the salt, black pepper, coriander and pinch of hing to release their aromas and soften the celeriac and Jerusalem artichoke peelings for 5 minutes covered with a lid.

Add the milk, tarragon leaves and cook on a low heat for 10 minutes until the celeriac and peelings are completely soft.

Remove from the heat and allow to cool slightly, then with a slotted spoon, place all the celeriac and peelings into a food blender with a little of the warm milk and blend to a smooth puree being careful to avoid filling your blender with too much hot liquid! I always put a tea towel over the lid!

Once the puree is smooth, add a little squeeze of lemon juice and put to one side with the lid on to keep warm.

Next, thoroughly wash the reserved artichoke skins to make the crispy garnish, in fresh water,

drain and pat dry on clean absorbent kitchen paper, to avoid oil splashes whilst frying.

Gently heat 2 cm of olive oil in a medium sized saucepan when hot, but not smoking, carefully fry the artichoke skins in batches. They take about 3 mins. Don't allow them to get too dark or they will be bitter!

Remove each batch of crispy artichoke skins and drain on absorbent kitchen paper.

Blanch the kale leaves in salted boiling water for 2 minutes, then drain in a sieve, transfer to a bowl and dress lightly with a squeeze of lemon juice, a tsp of olive oil.

To serve divide the purée between 4 warm plates. Dot around the roasted artichoke pieces, giving each person a couple of cloves of garlic as well.

Scatter over the lemony kale leaves. Finish with a sprinkling of crispy artichoke skins. Garnish with dill fronds.

Enjoy in a calm atmosphere, without the distractions of electronics or negative Media. Place your cutlery down between mouthfuls and chew, to mix the food with your saliva, as this aids the digestive process.

INTRODUCTION TO AYURVEDA CHEF LAURA



Hi I'm Laura, a qualified Ayurvedic Chef and full-time Ayurveda Adventuress!

I teach Ayurveda in 'simple bites' so that you can benefit without feeling overwhelmed by complicated Sanskrit terms or philosophy.

My background has always been cooking, I use it as an expression of love. I've cooked professionally for many famous clients and became a celebrity chef in Moscow, cooking for the oligarchs over the past 30+ years.

Although I then knew how to create beautiful, tasty food, I had no idea how to nourish myself and slowly but surely completely lost my vitality. The long working hours exasperated the situation and I ended up quitting in search of answers. The journey took me from the Amazon jungle in Peru to a plantation in Sri Lanka, from Ayahuasca to Ayurveda.

I aim to inspire and motivate you to try out my recipes, learn more about Ayurveda wisdom and ultimately learn more about yourself and support you on your own journey. Please follow me on Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/ayurvedaadventuress/>



"It's good that you're eating more fresh fruit and vegetables, but be careful to chew more thoroughly."



"Your X-ray showed a broken rib, but we fixed it with Photoshop."



"You have a rare condition called 'good health'. Frankly, I'm not sure how to treat it."

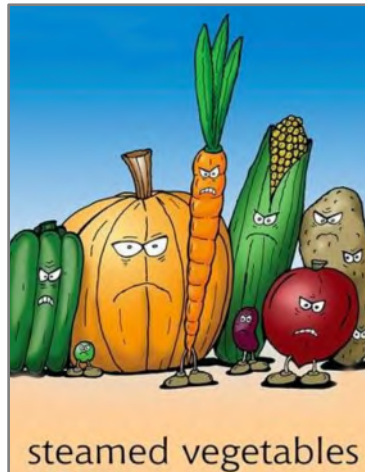


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