

# Healing the liver

From French tradition  
to modern practice

June 2019

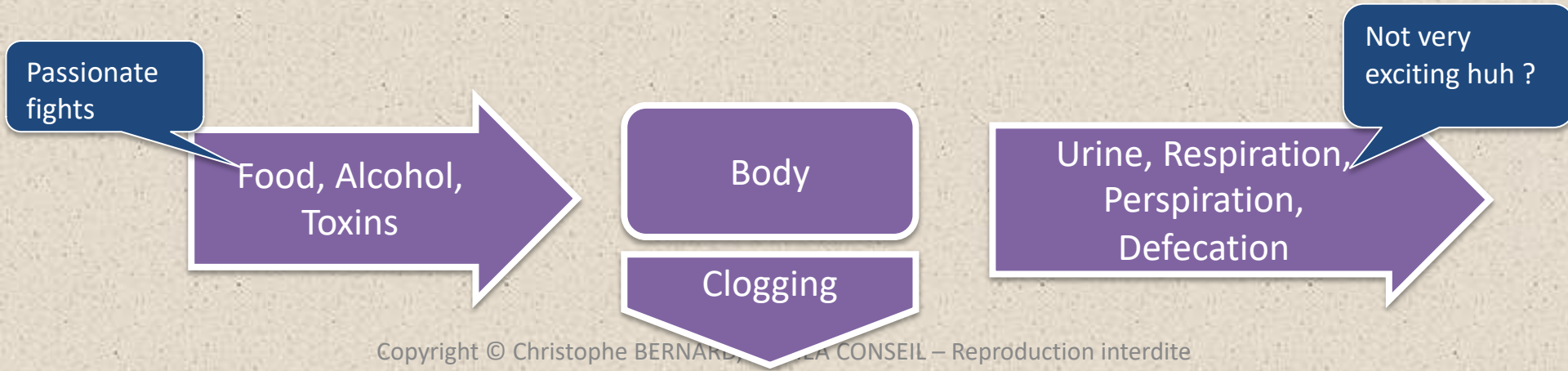
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# Agenda

- Understand the French « depurative » tradition (taking care of the elimination organs)
- Review plants that stimulate liver functions that you may not know
- Understand how to integrate them in our way of life TODAY

# Depuration : a very ancient concept

- **Based on a simple observation**
  - What comes in can create excesses (food and toxins)
  - What comes out must be encouraged, optimized
  - Otherwise : body gets “dirty”, diseases start to show up



# Depuration : an ancient concept

- **Greek and Roman doctors**
  - Used powerful emetics and purgatives to cleanse the body
- **Middle-ages and renaissance:**
  - Emetics + blood letting (oh yeah, and heavy metals)
- **1800's**
  - From tube cleansing to system cleansing
  - Depurative cures at the change of seasons
- **1900's**
  - Periods of excess
  - “Bad blood”
- **1970 – forward**
  - Gone
  - Advent of modern medicine

# 1800's : Change of seasons

- **SPRING : get the blood moving**
  - Association liver  $\leftrightarrow$  blood
  - Winter food (smoked meats, cereals, a few root vegetables)
  - Lack of physical activity (lack of work), lack of circulation
  - Prepare for hard work in the fields, association liver/vitality
- **FALL : Prepare for downtime/slow season**
  - Cleaning the equipment when you are done using it

# 1900's : Excess and Bad Blood

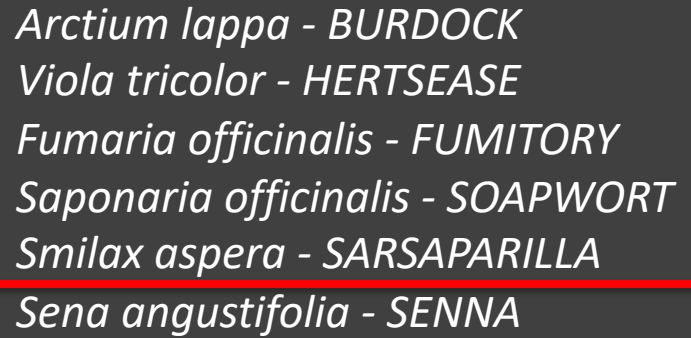
- **Periods of food excess**
  - After feasting, there needs to be fasting...
  - And the depurative cure
- **“Bad blood” conditions**
  - Chronic or occasional skin issues
  - Chronic or occasional joint pain
  - Migraine headaches

# Depurative products in pharmacies

## (circa 1960's - plant based)

Tea blends	Tea blends	Syrups
Afinex	Tisane du Lys	Dépuratif Parnel
Dépuratif des Alpes	Tisane Franklin	Dépuratif Richelet
Dépuratif anglais	Tisane La Montagne	Dépuratif Saint-Léonard
Dépuratum Lehning	Tisane Laxans	Elixir Spark
Tisane Bonnard	Tisane Médiflor 9	Pilules Spark
Tisane Borribel	Tisane Médiflor 13	Pro-Laxil
Tisane Centauria	Tisane Provençale	Reinette Duval
Tisane d'Ars	Tisane Orientale Soker	Vermifuge Lune
Tisane de santé Lehning	Tisane Saint-Luc	Weleda Elixir Bouleau
Tisane des Célestins	Tisane Vitalyne	

**Dépuratif  
PARNEL  
(syrup)**



*Arctium lappa* - BURDOCK  
*Viola tricolor* - HERTSEASE  
*Fumaria officinalis* - FUMITORY  
*Saponaria officinalis* - SOAPWORT  
*Smilax aspera* - SARSAPARILLA  
*Sena angustifolia* - SENNA



# Interview on burdock (1980's)

## ***You know burdock ?***

- *Yep, when it's dry, it will get stuck on your jacket. The root is good, you have to boil it.*

## ***You told me it was to purge the blood and that you have to take it for several days***

- *Yeah, my sister forced my brother-in-law to drink a lot of it*

## ***In the spring ?***

- *Of course, you have to take it in the spring !*

## ***Why in the spring ?***

- *It's the moment when the blood is the strongest. In winter, it's the dead season. Now, we do like the plants, it's like a rebirth. Blood gets younger, it flows, but you need to purify it. So yes, absolutely, you have to take it now.*

# What do depurative plants do ?

- They activate the different elimination channels
- **Strong action on the liver**
  - Choleric = stimulate the production of bile
    - Therefore stimulate the action of the hepatocytes
    - Metabolism of all toxins, drugs, hormones, etc.
  - Cholagogue = stimulate contraction of the gallbladder
    - Therefore stimulate evacuation of bile in digestive tract
- **Diuretic action on the kidney**
  - Elimination of uric acid and other inflammatory waste
- Action at the cellular level ? Endoplasmic reticulum ?

# Each depurative has its force

<b>Pellitory of the wall</b>	<b>Rosemary</b>	<b>Linden bark</b> <b>Dandelion</b> <b>Burdock</b>	<b>Fumitory</b>	<b>Horehound</b>
<i>Parietaria officinalis</i>	<i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i>	<i>Tilia cordata</i>	<i>Fumaria officinalis</i>	<i>Marrubium vulgare</i>

From less to more powerful

# Each age has its depuratives

<b>Babies and young kids</b>	<b>Teenagers</b>	<b>Young and strong</b>	<b>Old and feeble</b>
<i>Pellitory</i>	<i>Dandelion Burdock Rosemary</i>	<i>Rosemary Dandelion Burdock Linden bark Fumitory Horehound</i>	<i>Rosemary Pellitory Couch grass</i>

# Each constitution has its depuratives

<p><b>Cold</b></p> <p><i>Rosemary</i> <i>Linden bark</i></p> <p><i>(add ginger)</i></p>	<p><b>Hot</b></p> <p><i>Fumitory</i></p>
<p><b>Dry</b></p> <p><i>Lack of oil :</i> <i>Rosemary</i> <i>Lack of water :</i> <i>add licorice</i></p>	<p><b>Moist</b></p> <p><i>Fumitory</i> <i>Horehound</i></p>

# A few typical depurative plants

# Pellitory of the wall (*Parietaria officinalis*)

- **Family** : Urticaceae
- **Type** : Perennial
- **Parts used** : Aerial parts
- **Constituents** : minerals, mucilage, tannins

# Pellitory of the wall (*Parietaria officinalis*)

- **Preparations :**

- Short decoction : 30 g/L, decoct 2 minutes then infuse 30 minutes.  
Drink liter during the day.

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**30 grams**

=

*1 ounce*

**1 liter**

=

*1 quart*

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# Pellitory of the wall (*Parietaria officinalis*)

- **Indications :**

- Depurative for kids, even babies:  
skin problems, cradle cap (added to  
bottle or by the spoon)
- Helps eliminate kidney stones  
(tannins & mucilage)
- As a mineral tea (like nettles)

# Depurative cure with kids

*« When I was 12, I had a skin rash. Folks talked about humors back then. I had to drink a cup of a depurative tea every morning till the problem was gone »*

Mme E, 70 y.o. (in the 1980's)

# Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)

- **Family** : Lamiaceae
- **Type** : Perennial
- Grows in the wild in the south of France
- Poor and rocky soil, rich in limestone, good drainage
- Has to suffer

# Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)

- **Properties**

- Brain tonic (cognitive dysfunction)
- Brain protector (Alzheimer prevention)
- Very rich in antioxidants (our « green tea »)
- Liver functions :
  - Stimulate metabolism without kicking it too hard
  - Protects hepatocytes (if no milk thistle around)
  - Calm spasm of the biliary tract (when passing gallstones)

# Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)

- **Parts used**

- Leaves without the branches (tannins)

- **Preparations**

- Tea

- 1 small branch of fresh rosemary per cup, 2 cups a day, cover well during infusion
- If dry : enough to impart agreeable but also strong aromatic taste

- Tincture

- Fresh or recently dried leaves, 40 to 80 drops in a little water 3 times a day

# Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)

- **Precautions**

- Can excite sensitive people

- Sleep troubles

- Take in the morning

- Heart palpitations (rare)

- Take another plant

**Note** : in herb stores,  
rosemary is sometimes  
pathetic  
(not aromatic = dead)

# Linden inner bark (*Tilia cordata*, *T. sylvestris*)

- **Family** : Tiliaceae
- **Type** : Perennial
- **Parts used** : inner bark
- Very common tree in gardens and villages
- Cultivated for inner bark production
- Can order from Canada

# Linden inner bark (*Tilia cordata*, *T. sylvestris*)

- **Preparation :**
  - Decoction 30 g of dried bark / L
  - 2 to 3 cups a day



# Linden inner bark (*Tilia cordata*, *T. sylvestris*)

- **Indications**

- Chronic nausea
- Hepatic migraines
- Biliary insufficiency (difficulty digesting fats, chronic constipation)
- Cramps : digestive, uterus
- Stimulate elimination of uric acid

# Fumitory (*Fumaria officinalis*)

- **Family** : Papaveraceae
- **Type** : Annual (2 flowering – February/march and September/October)
- **Parts used** : aerial part
- **Taste** : very bitter

# Fumitory (*Fumaria officinalis*)

- **Preparations:**

- Tea, 50 g/L, 2 cups a day (classical

- French authors) 🙄

- Tea, 20 g/L, 2 cups a day (yours truly)

- Tincture, 60 to 90 drops twice a day

# Fumitory (*Fumaria officinalis*)

- French tradition : never alone, integrate in formulation with plants soothing for the digestive tract
  - Example formulation « liver detox »
    - 20% fumitory aerial parts
    - 20% peppermint leaves
    - 30% German chamomile flowers
    - 30% lemon balm leaves
- 1 tablespoon in a cup of water, infuse 10 minutes, drink two cups a day

# Fumitory (*Fumaria officinalis*)

- **Indications:**
  - Biliary insufficiency (trouble digesting fats, chronic constipation)
  - Chronic headaches
  - Excellent for any spasmodic condition of the biliary tract
  - Specific for Oddi sphincter cramps
  - Anti-histaminic
  - Sedative (prolonged use)

# Fumitory (*Fumaria officinalis*)

*Tonic at the beginning, then depresses the system. I could observe this over several patients who took fumitory juice. During the first 8 days, the blood showed increase of red blood cells. Then it showed a decrease.*

**Quote from doctor Henri Leclerc**

# Horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*)

- **Family** : Lamiaceae
- **Type** : Perennial
- **Pars used** : leaves and flowers
- Loves rich soil amended with manure (follows sheep herds)

# Horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*)

- **Preparations**

- Tea : 15 g per liter, 2 to 3 cups a day  
(hard to drink)
- Tincture : 30 to 60 drops 2 to 3 times  
a day
- Syrup
  - Concentrated tea 30 to 50 g/L
  - 100 g liquid honey for 100 g tea



# Horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*)

- French tradition : never alone, integrate in formulation with soothing digestive plants
  - Example formulation
    - 20% horehound leaves
    - 20% licorice roots powder
    - 20% mallow flowers
    - 20% German chamomile
    - 20% fennel seeds
- 1 tablespoon per cup, 2 cups a day for 10 days

# Horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*)

- **Properties**

- Bitter tonic (lack of appetite)
- Powerful choleric
- Remarkable expectorant
- Regulates heart rhythm (with hawthorn, motherwort)

# Horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*)

- Traditional observation : makes pimples come out
  - Used to be seen as a sign of a good cleansing
- Mme S., 75 y.o. (back in the 1980's):
  - *“It’s a horse remedy. Take it for 2 days maximum. I know a woman who took it for too long, she was covered with bad stuff”*

**Who benefits from the depurative cure  
on a regular basis ?**

# Constitutional weaknesses

- **Trouble digesting lipids**
  - Bile necessary to emulsify fats
  - Lack of bile = sluggish liver
- **Tendency toward constipation**
  - Bile digestive liquid
  - Slightly irritant → peristaltic movement

# Constitutional weaknesses

- **Chronic skin issues**

- When the liver cannot cleanse the blood, the skin takes over
- Inflammatory conditions (eczema, psoriasis)
  - Help liver eliminate irritants
  - Watch out for aggravations
- Acne
  - Androgenic excess
  - Liver responsible for eliminating hormones in excess

# Metabolic issues

- **Hyperlipidemia**

- Liver makes cholesterol, LDL and HDL
- Liver makes triglycerides from sugar

- **Glycemic issues**

- Liver implicated in regulation of storage and release of glucose

# Allergies

- **Lower inflammatory load**
  - By recycling immune complexes
- **Watch for this vicious circle :**
  - “I was allergic to cypress pollen, now I react to dust mites and strawberries”
  - Inflammatory load increasing – immune complexes not eliminated in an efficient manner by the liver



# Hormonal issues

- Testosterone excess in the teenage boy or girl
- Premenstrual syndrome (balance estrogens/progesterone)
- Estrogenic excess
  - Uterine fibroids
  - Fibrocystic breasts
  - Endometriosis
  - Risk of hormonodependent cancers

# Occasionally

- **After a period of excess**
  - Christmas vacation with family
  - Summer vacation : BBQ + Beer (ok, rosé)
  - Business trip with numerous hotels/restaurants
- **After a period of medication**
  - Anesthesia, anti-inflammatory drugs, antibiotics, chemotherapy, etc.
  - Focus on plants that help the liver regenerate as well (rosemary, burdock, dandelion)

# Occasionally

- **To get ready for...**
  - Spring for those working outside (growers, forestry workers, etc.)
  - Autumn for those in education
  - A tournament

# And mostly when...

- Tongue : thick white or yellow coating
- Breath : bad (explain)
- Slow digestion even when meal relatively light
- Feeling of constant food stagnation, bloating and heaviness in the belly
  - Typical of the person chronically overeating (feast & fast)
- Liver sometimes slightly painful to palpation
- Sometimes skin color or white of the eyes with a slight yellow tint

# When not to do it

- If period of deficiency
  - After a period of convalescence
  - When physically exhausted
  - When mentally exhausted

**Do not drain a person who is already drained !**

# A typical depurative cure

# Depurative program

- **Duration : 10 days**
- **Nutrition**
  - Mostly seasonal veggies, steamed, fish or lean meats
  - Evening meal as light as possible (soup + salad)
  - Great time for green juices
  - Intermittent fasting highly recommended
    - Skip breakfast
    - Skip breakfast and dinner
    - Fast 1 day, eat 2 days
    - Fast 2 days, eat 1 day
- **Rest**
  - Sleep at least 8 hours
  - To bed before 10h30 pm

« **Feast and Fast** »

# Depurative program

- **Plants**

- Choose the depurative plant that fits the person best
- Always prefer water-based preparation (infusions or decoctions)
- Formulations with digestive soothing plants often judicious



# Choosing the right depurative

- **If cold constitution**
  - Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)
  - May add ginger (*Zingiber officinalis*)
- **If dry constitution or if hypotension**
  - Rosemary is “oily”, less drying than the others
  - Burdock is “oily” as well
  - May add licorice root (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*)
- **If hot and strong constitution**
  - Use fumitory or horehound
  - Counterbalance force and taste with soothing digestives: German chamomile, fennel seeds, lemon balm, peppermint, licorice
- **Otherwise : can't go wrong with rosemary or dandelion root !**

# Formulation example

- **Hypotension with bad circulation (cold constitution)**
  - Rosemary, leaves, 15 g/L
  - Licorice, rhizomes, 10 g/L
  - Ginger, rhizomes, 5 g/L

## Instructions :

- Simmer ginger and licorice (5 minutes)
- Remove cover
- Add rosemary
- Infuse for another 10 minutes
- Filter and drink hot or cold throughout the day

# Formulation example

- **Generic mix**
  - Dandelion, roots, 10 g/L
  - Rosemary, leaves, 5 g/L
  - Bitter orange, peels, 5 g/L
  - Fennel, seeds, 5 g/L
  - German chamomile, flowers, 5 g/L

## Instructions :

- Simmer dandelion roots and orange peels (5 minutes)
- Remove cover
- Add rosemary, fennel and chamomile
- Infuse for another 10 minutes
- Filter and drink hot or cold throughout the day

# Clinical observations

- The depurative cure can aggravate fatigue if person is weak
- Can irritate an sensitive intestinal tract (diarrhea)
- Can aggravate chronic issues : skin (eczema, psoriasis, acne), migraines, sometimes joint pain
  - Similar to fasting. First times can be a bit... complicated.

## Options

Pause	Lower dosage	Use softer plants	Make better, more balanced formulation	Postpone
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