

Emerald Tablet Spagyric Tincture Instructions

Note: Participation in the Emerald Tablet experiments is purely voluntary. You do not have to participate in these experiments to be a member of the forum. The Emerald Tablet conducts experiments quarterly.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/EmeraldTablet/>

DISCLAIMER: This information is provided as historical commentary and for use by those interested in the ancient methods of alchemy and spagyrics. None of the information provided here is meant to be construed as medical advice. If you have any medical or nutritional questions on any of these herbs and tinctures, please consult with your physician or nutritionist. None of these preparations or procedures is intended to diagnose, prevent, treat or cure any disease. Consequences of injury, destruction of property, or ill health caused by applying these methods are the sole responsibility of the reader.

When first looking at all the instructions, it can be almost overwhelming, but its not really hard if you take it step by step.. On the start date, you grind the herb and introduce it to the menstruum. After that, it is a matter of just shaking the jar once or twice everyday and returning it to the Tincture Incubator or a warm dark place.. On the ending weekend date, you can do your separation of filtering the menstruum on Friday or Saturday Night, separate the herb from it, and bake the herb in the oven at ~200 deg F overnight (shorter is better than longer). Saturday or Sunday after you have baked your herb in the oven, you can then take a torch to it outside. There will be a lot of smoke. When the herb has been reduced to ashes, place the remains in the oven and bake at 500+ deg F (260+deg C) until you see the herb starting to turn into a light grey/white color. After that, all you need to do is filter out the precious salts and add them back into the menstruum.

The purpose of these instructions is to provide a frugal approach for beginning alchemists; making the process affordable so that the work can be enjoyed by many people.

Material Requirements

It will take you sometime between 4-5 weeks to acquire these materials. Some members can get everything they need in 1-3 weeks, and for some it will take about 6 weeks. If you're having difficulty acquiring an item, ask the forum for recommendations. The herbs can be bought at the Crucible and they also offer other equipment as well, but it pays to shop around a little on the Internet for some of the items. Some of your local retailers may have what you're looking for. A nice thing about most of the equipment is that once you buy it, your subsequent tinctures will be much less expensive to make.

<http://www.crucible.org/Herbs.htm>

You will need:

- Dried Herb (usually sold in a one pound bag at the Crucible) Beginners are urged to first start with Melissa (Lemon Balm) as a tincture. This herb has many tonic effects and is not overly sensitive to changes in a beginners first tincture.
- Brandy (enough to fill a quart canning jar to 1/2- 3/4 of a quart) This is part of the menstruum. Brandy tastes better than other alternatives and it is just as good for being a preservative.
- At least 2 one quart canning jars (wide mouth) with airtight lids and rims (most popular brands for canning jars are Mason, Ball, and Kerr)

- Food wrap such as Wax Paper.
- Roll of aluminum foil if you are not using an incubator (see below)
- Coffee paper filters
- Cheese cloth
- Stainless steel bowl (try a mixing bowl, even better a mixing bowl from a restaurant supply business)
- Glass rod used for stirring (recommended) available at the Crucible at a very low price. An inexpensive alternative is to use a branch of green wood for calcination, and a twig for stirring in the filtration stage although you may encounter difficulties stirring
- A Pyrex, Corning Ware, Visionware, or other heat resistant baking tray
- Dropper bottle(s)
- Distilled water
- A very small glass funnel, optional, used for filling up the dropper bottle(s). Available at the Crucible
- A small or regular size torch. Radio Shack carries the small ones, hardware stores sell the regular size. Either will do fine and last you a very long time.
- A single edge razor blade

For a heating pad incubator (optional) you will need:

- a large Styrofoam cooler
- a heating pad that does not automatically shut off after 2 hours.
- sand (check your nursery or other store that sells garden supplies)
 - From John H. Reid III: (slightly revised) The way that I use is to place some sand (about 1 inch) in a Styrofoam container, then I place a heating pad on top of this and another layer of sand on top of that. Cut a notch in the corner of the box so the cord can fit into it and the lid will close snugly.
 - To figure out the temps of the different heating pad settings, place a glass of water inside the homemade incubator and heat for 24 hours, then open the lid and stick a thermometer into the glass of water and record the temp for that setting." (approximately 39 C = 102 F is ideal)
 - It is recommended that you know all your setting's temperatures before performing any experiments.
 - [Do not purchase a heating pad that has a 2 hour feature which automatically shuts off. You need your heating pad 24/7!]

Introductory Remarks

Alchemy is concerned with taking something of a lesser valued nature, and by removing impurities, raising it to a more potent and more valuable nature. This being said, alchemists have taught that all living matter can be separated into three main substances- sulphur, mercury, and salt. These substances are not the normal, mundane substances by the same name, but rather these are symbolic names used to describe their nature.

The sulphur is the oil of an herb. It was believed that oils give the signature of a thing and make it unique. The salt of an herb was composed of two parts: one soluble and one insoluble. The soluble salt absorbs into liquids while the insoluble salt is not. Together these compose the body, or corpus of

the herb in its purest aspect. The mercury was believed to be the "life force" within the herb, which is particularly attracted to the oils and to liquids in general.

In alchemy, an herb is destroyed and these three principles need to be separated, then all impurities are removed, and finally the three components are put back together again in a new and perfect form. This transmutation is symbolic of our own spiritual transmutation as we progress in the work. We are symbolically separating ourselves into the alchemical sulphur (soul), salts (physical body), and mercury (life force), removing impurities, raising our consciousness, and recombining to form a more refined and valuable whole.

Instructions

Menstruum

- 1) Crumble (grind or lightly blend) part of the dried herb using either a mortar and pestle, coffee grinder, or food blender until you get the amount of herb to fill the canning jar 1/3 full.. Blending or grinding the herb too much will turn it into a powder which will later on cause mud on your coffee filter and will not drain, which will ruin the experiment. Personal experience alone will teach you how much you should blend your herb. Save the rest of the remaining dried herb by sealing the bag with clips of some sort and set it aside for a future tincture in a cool dark place. At this point and onwards it is best to avoid metals. As you grind your herb, try to "attune with it". Smell it, taste it, and get a feel for it. You really want to connect with it, since it will be your alchemical child that you will be creating during the coming weeks.
- 2) You will want to energize your alcohol. To energize your alcohol, place your index and middle finger and thumb of both hands on either side of the vessel. These fingers are connected to your radial nerve that goes to the same ganglia that connects with your third eye, and this is why Saints are depicted in murals holding these three fingers out. While holding the container, close your eyes, take some deep breaths, and then visualize energy going from your head-down your arms, and into the vessel of alcohol. This is about moving consciousness and, by extension, energy in a way to magnetize your liquid with a spiritual energy. This is no different than when a Priest symbolically blesses a sacrament prior to communion, only you are actively directing energy into your alcohol.
- 3) Fill the canning jar until the brandy (or other menstruum) measures 1/2 -3/4 of the jar. Alchemical texts encourage you to pray at this first stage, and ask for blessings in your undertaking. Visualize the energy going into the vessel until you feel satisfied.
- 4) Spiritually, one should concentrate on what trait they wish to enhance or build up spiritually with the use of the tincture. They should see this growing more intense as the tincture gets darker. Your herb has now been taken from the earth, baptized in a symbolic water (which is the alcohol), and charged with your life force. Meditate on the significance of these associations and how they relate to you personally.
- 5) Put some wax paper on the mouth of the canning jar then put on the airtight lid and the rim. The tincture must not directly touch any metal during the duration.
- 6) Wrap the bottle with aluminum foil to prevent light from getting to the solution and then put the bottle in a warm dark place. If you have a tincture incubator, now is the time to use it, in which case aluminum foil is not necessary.
- 7) There are some processes that should be done out of the light, especially strong sunlight (mostly UV) but it is enough to place the jar out of direct light in a warm place; wrapping the jar with aluminum foil greatly helps. Care must be taken since the alcohol is highly flammable and people should not place the jar in a warm place that is near a gas-burning furnace or water heater. It is better to make sure the temperature is warm, on or about 39 C = 102 F. If this

warmth is not possible, the temperature will only have a slight effect on the solubility of the plant oils (the SULFUR), if it is heated less than this, consider the back top of your refrigerator.

- 8) Thoroughly shake the mixture once or twice a day for about 4 weeks. (This process is known as macerating) During the 3rd week, check the tincture to see if it needs more menstruum.
- 9) To strain the liquid from the herb, use an empty canning jar by first placing a single cheese cloth layer and then a coffee filter in the mouth of the wide-mouthed jar, folding the edge of the coffee filter over the mouth and then screwing on the outer rim of the lid without the actual lid. Start pouring the liquid through an empty funnel to avoid contact with the rim. When you are through filtering, unscrew the lid and lift out the filters and herb. Squeeze out the remainder of the liquid using the coffee filter and cheese cloth for support. Leave the menstruum you now have in the glass jar, putting back the wax paper, lid, and rim. (This is the MERCURY of your tincture)

Calcination

The next part of our alchemical process is to extract the salt of the herb. We have to transform the state of our herb in order to get it prepared to liberate these salts before anything else. This whole last process was said to symbolically "kill the herb", so that we can eventually "raise the last salt essence from it", so that we can bring it back to life in a new and glorious form. With that being said, the next step to do in the alchemical process is the operation of fire. We need to extract our first salt essence-which in this case, will be the soluble salts. These salts are of a mineral and vitamin value, and are in many ways related directly to the purified body of the herb we are working with. It is only by recombining the three parts of an herb (sulphur, salt, and mercury) that we can raise this herb to a new life. The only way to raise the herb is after having calcinated it by fire and extracted the salt essences out of the ash.

- 10) Take the digested herb and put it in your heat-resistant glassware, and bake in your oven overnight at about 200 degrees F. Stir occasionally with the glass rod until the herb is dry. Allow to cool. Some ovens are gas-fired with an open flame. Using alcohol in such an environment is not recommended. Allow it to air-dry instead.
- 11) You are now at a stopping point if it is windy outside. The wind can blow away your ashes. When there is little wind or you have found a sheltered place away from the wind, put the dried herb into the stainless steel bowl and take the torch and bowl outside and start the herb to begin to smolder. Once the herb has started smoldering, you do not use the torch anymore; just stir the herb occasionally with the glass rod. Results will vary depending on the moisture that is present after you have dried your herb. One member reports "I did use a torch on the herb after drying in an oven. I had to lightly touch the surface of the herb to get it started, since too direct of a flame would simply blow it out of the dish. Once the herb is started well, it will continue to burn itself up with some gentle stirring to bring unburned herb to the surface. The result is a grey ash, to be further calcined and filtered." Sometimes, however, you may need to encourage the herb with the torch if the herb stops smoldering.
- 12) Since there will be a considerable amount of smoke, etc. it's better to burn the herb outdoors. Daytime or nighttime does not matter. Spiritually, as the herb smolders, you should see yourself within the "fire" and the unwanted trait(s) you wish to replace being consumed in the fire.
- 13) Whether the herb actually bursts into flames may possibly vary according to what herb is being used and how much alcohol is in the menstruum. For example Melissa smolders and requires occasional stirring. (The ashes at this point have our precious SALTS in alchemical terms). After the burned herb has cooled, take the ashes out of the stainless steel bowl and place them back into your heat resistant baking container. Heat it in the oven at 500 deg F or higher if you can, until it has turned to a grey white. What you have started to do is separate the last bit of dross matter from the pure salt body contained within the herb. You may even say that the skin

has fallen away from the bone, or salts, which we need to capture. We can clearly see how raising the dead herb to a new life applies in alchemy, and is related to our own spiritual progression.

Filtration

- 14) You are now at a point where you can choose your own method of filtration: Please pick one of the three below: a, b, or c.
- a. Mix the cooled ash with about 6 times its volume of distilled water. Heat gently in the heat resistant until it steams or simmers, stirring with a glass rod. Carefully pour off the hot liquid into a waiting filtering setup: Use one layer of cheese cloth then one coffee filter, a clean canning jar, and the jar's rim. If the jar's rim will not screw on wrap a rubber band around the top of the jar. After the ashes are through filtering once, extract the ashes again using more fresh distilled water. Combine both extracts and re-filter and until clear. Be careful as you re-extract as the coffee filters and cheesecloth are somewhat fragile. Now you have your salts in the jar as a solution called the lixivium. Lixivium is from the Latin Lixivius, meaning made into lye (an alkaline solution). Lixivium is any solution extracted or leached from ashes, typically by water. The "filtrate" means the water extract of the calcined ashes that has been filtered and is the same thing as the filtered lixivium. It's better to gently dry the lixivium where it can be watched. It is very difficult to scrape the salt out once it is completely dried, so it should just be dried until damp. Then it can be easily scraped into the extract. There is no need in this process to remove all the water since it is going to be mixed with a menstruum that is already 60% water (using brandy).
 - b. Heating the water ash mixture to boiling or steaming is not a good practice as it pulls out more material from the ash that will not remain soluble at room temperature. Allow the water ash mixture to sit in the incubator for two weeks and shaking it every day, then allowing it to settle for at least a week undisturbed. Use a plastic tube to siphon off the liquid keeping the tube at least one inch above the sediment. Repeat the process until pH paper –dipped in the ash / water mixture- shows the same pH as the original distilled water that is used. After you finish siphoning off the liquid add more distilled water. Let it set another two weeks shaking it every day, then let it sit a week for everything to settle, then siphon again. Repeat all the steps until pH paper shows same pH as distilled water before it is poured over the ash.
 - c. For the water, put some distilled water into a sealed canning jar and store in the incubator 24 hours. You will need two clean canning jars. Put the ashes and salts into a prepared jar (or funnel) that has a layer of cheesecloth and a coffee filter on top of that. (the funnel does not need the cheesecloth). Use the warmed fresh distilled water that is about 6 times the volume of ashes. Add more warmed water and continue re-filtering these two extracts (do not add anymore water) together until the water comes out clear. This is your salt solution.

- 15) Now that you have your salt solution, pour it into your heat resistant baking tray. Put into your oven and once again dry at about 200 degrees F (93.3C) overnight or slightly less. Take the tray and scrape as much salt as is possible using a single edge razor blade or similar. You can very lightly add a small amount of distilled water and absorb the salts that would not scrape off. Return all salts, plus the small amount you dissolved with water back into the menstruum.

Consumption

A general rule of thumb to start with is 10-20 drops (or a teaspoon) a day with a small glass of water. Some alchemists prefer to place 5-10 drops of the tincture under their tongue. This provides a faster absorption and avoids the gastric juices and stomach acid. Some people take it 2 or 3 times a day; and others take their doses using the corresponding planetary hours. People's internal

chemistries are unique and it may take a few days for you to determine the time and the amount of the tincture that is best for you. Some notice a remarked difference with only a few drops, while others need more to have any noticeable effect. Also, some people prefer taking the tincture in the morning while others may prefer it in the evening and some at night time. You will find that a dropper bottle is handy if you want to administer the tincture under the tongue; your small glass funnel will come in handy.

Conclusory Remarks

If, in your experimenting, you run into stumbling blocks, remember what Paracelsus had his students write over their labs:

PATIENCE!

Nothing in this work comes fast, but it is all of great value in the end. Also, never forget that even though we are discussing how to perform chemical operations, ultimately they all apply, as does the ritual, to internal aspects of your self. Always meditate on how it relates to your own personal transmutation.

Questions & Answers

Question: Where can I store my dried herbs and tinctures?

Answer: The refrigerator is the ideal place if you have room. The Crucible is quite generous with their herbs, and it is very doubtful you would use a pound of herb in one tincture-making process. Your herbs and tinctures can be stored in the refrigerator with no harm - when you close the door to the refrigerator, the light goes off and they are in total darkness. The tinctures should last indefinitely due to alcohol being a preservative.

Question: What are the principles of salt, sulfur, and mercury in this experiment?

Answer: In the vegetable realm sulfur is contained in the plant's essential oils, mercury can be extracted in the plant's alcohol, and the salt is obtained through calcination or by leaching it out of the plant's ashes. The sulphur is the 'soul' which animates the body (salt) through the Mercury (bond between body and soul).

Question: Could you please explain the importance of salts in a tincture?

Answer: Salts are the key to the spagyric and alchemical work. While much attention is placed on wither the spirit or soul, the salts are usually looked at with second thought. After all how hard can it be to obtain something which only needs to be combusted and then leached to get the desired result? Yet proper calcination is the labor of labors in both arts it requires much more time and skill to get a usable item, if one is after more than just dregs.

Proper calcination can take days or even weeks to achieve and even after this is done the leaching process is another few weeks. Many people like to speed the process up by using a soxhlet extractor, but the higher temps used by this apparatus actually pull out more materials, that when then process of crystallization is begun will show themselves, not as our crystalline salts but rather a white precipitate. This precipitate in most cases is not needed in the work and so, the soxhlet actually causes you more work on the back end of the process. Slow extraction of the soluble salts at body temperature is more desirable I have found, as is the allowing the liquid to evaporate over many

weeks time, so that beautiful crystals have time to take shape rather than the nasty clumps one gets with a quick drying in the oven.

The salts are the key, from them one is enabled to make circulata, the various alkahest, for the salt and the mercury are one.

Question: What are the important salts composed of?

Answer: The primary salt is potassium carbonate, but sodium carbonate is often present. There are a number of other salts that form, but in general only the sodium and potassium salts are water-soluble. Plants from the ocean often produce a greater quantity of sodium salts because of the large amount of sodium in their environment. It is interesting to note that our blood contains a mixture of sodium and potassium salts. The sodium represents our early evolution in the ocean and the potassium is related to our later evolution on the land.

All the water-soluble salts will sublime at sufficiently high temperature. At about 800-900 deg. C significant sublimation may be seen. Above 1000 degrees, the sublimation is fairly rapid. There are no easily volatilized salts left since they would have been lost during the initial burning and calcination. These may only be captured by a destructive distillation in a nearly closed system. Some students add ammonium chloride (sal ammoniac) to the potassium salts, which react to form ammonium carbonate and ammonium carbonate, and chlorides of the original sodium or potassium. Both these ammonium salts sublime at very low temperature - so low they will "distill" over with alcohol, giving the illusion the salts have been volatilized and combined with the alcohol.

Usually the water-soluble salts are very little soluble in anhydrous (water free) alcohol. It is the water present in the alcohol that makes them soluble. The pH of the salt solution in nearly pure alcohol will generally be higher (more alkaline), and the salt may alter the alcohol so it will react more easily with certain plant oils, which are organic acids.

Question: Why does the tincture need to be protected from strong light?

Answer: Photons of ultraviolet light have enough energy to cause most colored materials to decompose over time like being bleached with an oxidizing chemical. Tinted materials or "tinctures" are more sensitive to this decomposition because they tend to absorb more UV light than clear or colorless materials.

Fluorescent lights do put out some ultraviolet light (it is the UV light produced by ionized mercury vapor that causes their coating of phosphors to "fluoresce") but not as much as contained in direct sunlight. Incandescent lights produce a small but not entirely negligible UV component which can affect some chemicals that are particularly labile (reactive or changeable) under UV.

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Herbs from the Crucible Sorted by Planetary Rulership

Sun

ASHWAGANDHA
BILBERRIES
CARDAMOM PODS
CHAMOMILE FLOWERS
CINNAMON BARK STICKS
ROSEMARY LEAF
SAFFRON
ST. JOHN'S WORT LEAF
YERBA MATE

Moon

BLESSED THISTLE
CHASTE TREE BERRIES
KAVA KAVA ROOT
HOPS FLOWERS
MACA ROOT
PASSION FLOWER LEAF
POPPY SEEDS

Mercury

GINGKO LEAF
GOTU KOLA
LAVENDER FLOWERS
MANDRAKE ROOT
MARJORAM LEAF
PEPPERMINT LEAF
VALERIAN ROOT
WORMWOOD

Venus

BURDOCK ROOT
CATNIP LEAF & FLOWER
DAMIANA
HIBISCUS FLOWER
MOTHERWORT

Mars

BASIL LEAF
HAWTHORNE BERRIES
NETTLE LEAF

Jupiter

ANGELICA ROOT
BAY LEAF
DANDELION ROOT
ECHINACEA LEAF
EUCALYPTUS LEAF
HYSSOP LEAF
LEMON BALM LEAF
MILK THISTLE SEED
ROSE BUDS
SAGE LEAF

Saturn

COMFREY LEAF
LEMONGRASS
SAGE LEAF
SHAVEGRASS (HORSETAIL)
SLIPPERY ELM BARK
UVA URSI LEAF