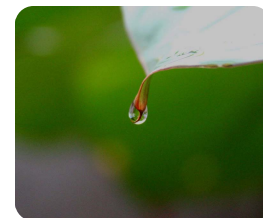


Essential Oils Then & Now Newsletter

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HYSSOP - FOR PROTECTION

Some botanists think *Hyssopus officinalis* is not the Hyssop that grew in Israel during Biblical times. However they cannot agree on what herb it could have been - a variety of Marjoram? Oregano? Or Savory? It's considered native to Europe, not the Middle East. But since Hyssop does grow in the Mediterranean area, preferring full sun and well-drained soil, I believe this variety of Hyssop has as much chance of being the Scriptural Hyssop as any other plant.

A long history of medicinal use and highly esteemed as a virtual cure-all, Hyssop was abundant enough in Egypt for the Hebrew's use prior to their Exodus. Egyptians and Israelites apparently knew what science now knows of Hyssop's cleansing, purifying, penicillin qualities perfect for disinfecting the temple after animal sacrifices and for antibiotic cleansing of lepers. King David, repenting, prayed "Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean..." Fourth century B.C. Greeks visited Egypt and learned a great deal about Egyptian perfumery and use of aromatic medicines. Historical writings show that the Greeks were concerned about where to apply the aromatic oils. Diogenes anointed his feet so the aroma would then "envelope his whole body and gratefully ascend to his nose." Another Greek writer felt it was important to anoint the breast since it was the seat of the heart. Others thought it best to anoint the head. The name Hyssop was used by Hippocrates derived from the Hebrew word *ezob*, which means Holy Herb. Hippocrates, considered the father of medicine said, "The best way to health is to have an aromatic bath and scented massage every day." Hippocrates, Galen and Diosrides praised its healing effects for many ailments. In 372-285 B.C. the Greek Theophrastus wrote *Concerning Odors*, discussing the effect of fragrance on the mind. The Romans used Hyssop to protect against plague and to disinfect their homes. In the Middle Ages, it was used in remedies and as a strewing herb to ward off lice. Tenth century Benedictine monks introduced Hyssop to Europe as an ingredient in liquors.

Hyssop's healing virtues are due to its volatile oil. This mild diuretic is useful for fluid retention, and removal of uric acid that can aggravate rheumatic conditions and gout. It increases circulation and decreases blood pressure. It's anti-viral properties combats Herpes Simplex and since it's antispasmodic, anti-inflammatory, mucolytic, a decongestant, and expectorant it's effective for ALL respiratory ailments. Has an impressive effect on the stomach and intestinal mucous lining, and expels worms. Kidney, liver, spleen, pancreas, nervous system (MS), skin, immune system and eye problems, all benefit from Hyssop making it an excellent tonic. Beneficial for amenorrhea so inadvisable during pregnancy.

Hyssop distinctly invigorates the mind - wonderful for poor concentration, mental fatigue, and chronic nervous conditions. Uplifts the pessimistic and melancholy and helps us face the world, counteracting the urge to withdraw. It promotes acceptance, fulfillment, encouragement, direction, balance, harmony, clarity and creativity. Chosen for me to help release swallowed emotions thus helping me speak out and say the things I would like to say, but haven't been able to express because of fears and uncertainties. Particularly effective when applied to the throat and larynx area.

Now you know,

Joanna