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Botanical Support for Menopause



A Few Minor Disclosures

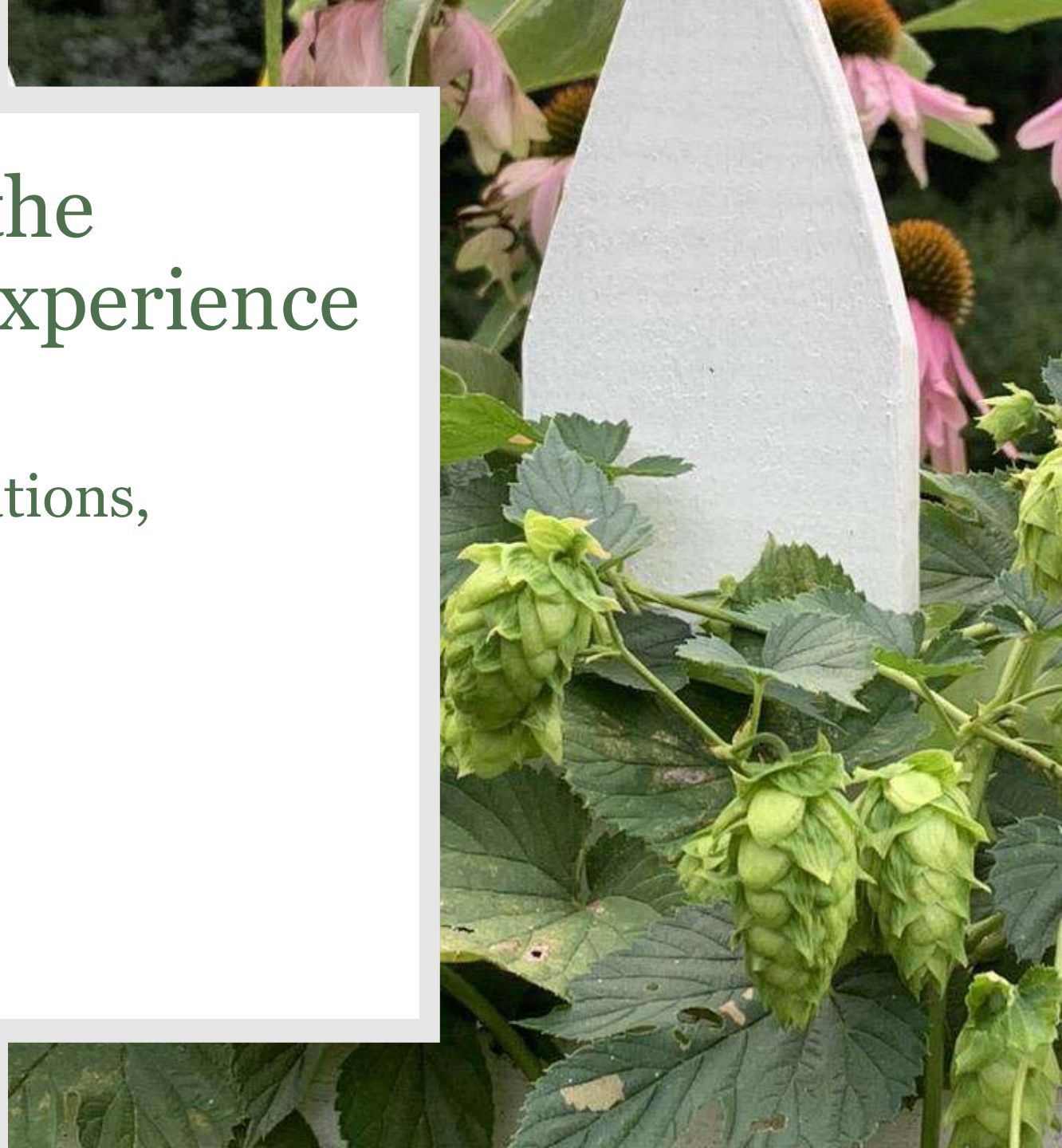
No company employs me nor sponsors this teaching spot, but...

- **Wintergreen Botanicals** is my small business, which is devoted to education and clinical work, not products (beyond my books)
- **Mountain Rose Herbs** – school member annual credit, small stipends for guest blog/teaching work
- **Climbing Vines Herbarry** – custom apothecary provides remedies for my clients and students with minimal/no financial kick back to me
- **Misty Meadows Herbal Center & Shop** – occasionally pays for me to speak for their school and events
- **These and other local and national herbal product businesses** pass on discounts for my series students without any financial kick back for me
- **Fullscript** provides remedies for my clients with minimal kick back
- **Storey Publishing/Hachette Book Group** is publishes my books, from which I receive royalties



Core Aspects of the Peri/Post Menopause Experience

- Hot Flashes, Night Sweats
which can include heart palpitations,
migraines
- Sleep Disturbances
- Vaginal Dryness
- Reduced Libido
- Cycle Irregularity



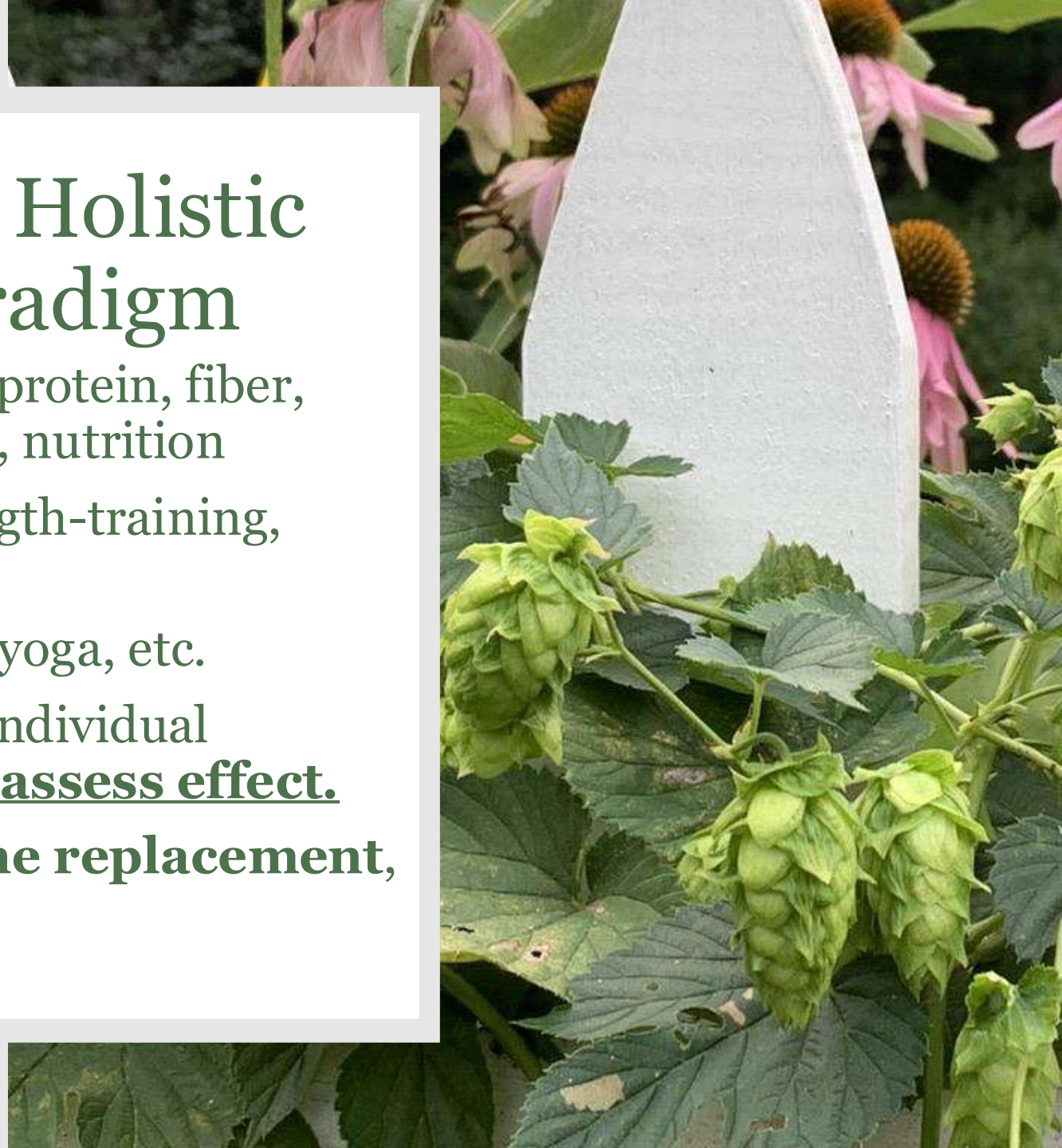
Many Additional Connections

- Increased **Stress** and **Mood** Variability, **Brain Fog**
- **Cardiometabolic** Shift including insulin resistance, changing body composition, increased risk for cardiovascular disease
- **Bone Loss**
- Increased Risk of **Autoimmune** and **Inflammatory** states, including thyroid, long COVID, etc.
- **Connective Tissue** Integrity Reduction: skin, joints, urinary/pelvic floor...
- **Heavy Bleeding, Endo/Adenomyosis, Fibroids, Cysts, Pain** exacerbated in perimenopause years



Botanicals as Part of a Holistic Menopause Care Paradigm

- **Diet:** glucose balance, more plants, protein, fiber, phytoestrogenic foods/plant protein, nutrition
- **Regular Exercise:** including strength-training, cardio, stretching
- **Mind-Body Balance:** meditation, yoga, etc.
- **Herbal Approaches** specific to the individual
Give herbs at least 4 months to assess effect.
- If needed and appropriate: **hormone replacement**, bioidenticals, topical creams....



Black Cohosh (*Actaea racemosa*)

- Not a phytoestrogen but affects estrogen, likely via **receptors (SERM)** or improving **brain-gland communication**
- Popular for **estrogen support** in perimenopause, especially for **hot flashes and cycle support**
- Also lifts “**black cloud**” **depression** and may ease “algia”/arthritis/ rheumatism
- Eases **uterine pain, antiproliferative**, also **osteoprotective**
- May be helpful in feminine gender affirmation, allowing for lower estrogen doses



Black Cohosh Studies

- **Well Studied:** up to 90 clinical trial and reviews in the literature, widely prescribed/approved in Europe for menopause
- 2023 review of 22 trials, 2,310 women significant improvements in **overall menopause symptoms, hot flashes, somatic symptoms** vs placebo
- **Uterine Fibroids:** shrinks them - % volume change = 30% decrease compared to just 5% with meds; 70% response with cohosh vs 36% with meds. 40 mg/day extract for 3 months
- Improves **sleep in perimenopause, mood** (in studies - especially **alongside other herbs** like St. John's wort; I'd personally turn to more to shatavari, magnolia, lemon balm, passionflower, albizia)
- Several studies: **safe/beneficial** for hot flashes alongside **tamoxifen without increased cancer risk**



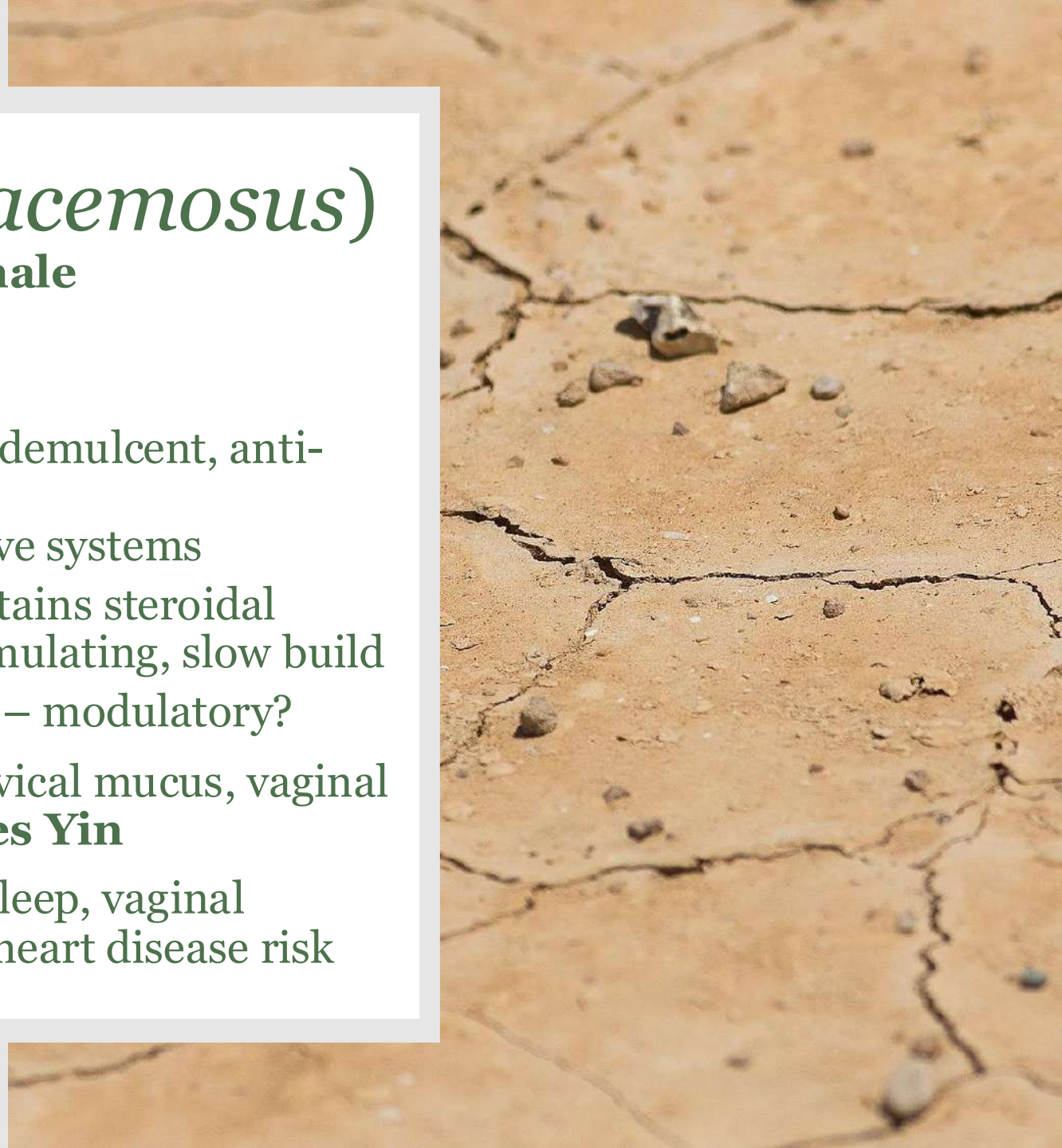
Black Cohosh (*Actaea racemosa*)

- Old name *Cimicifuga racemosa*
- Often adulterated (liver toxic) and overharvested
- At-risk native USA plant – easy to cultivate but often wildcrafted in commerce due to price
- Consider organic USA cultivated, trustworthy sources, or grow it yourself.
- Fresh root ~2x stronger than dry
- Typical Dose: 5-20 drops (or more) tincture 1-3x/day
or 20-40 mg standardized extract
or per product label



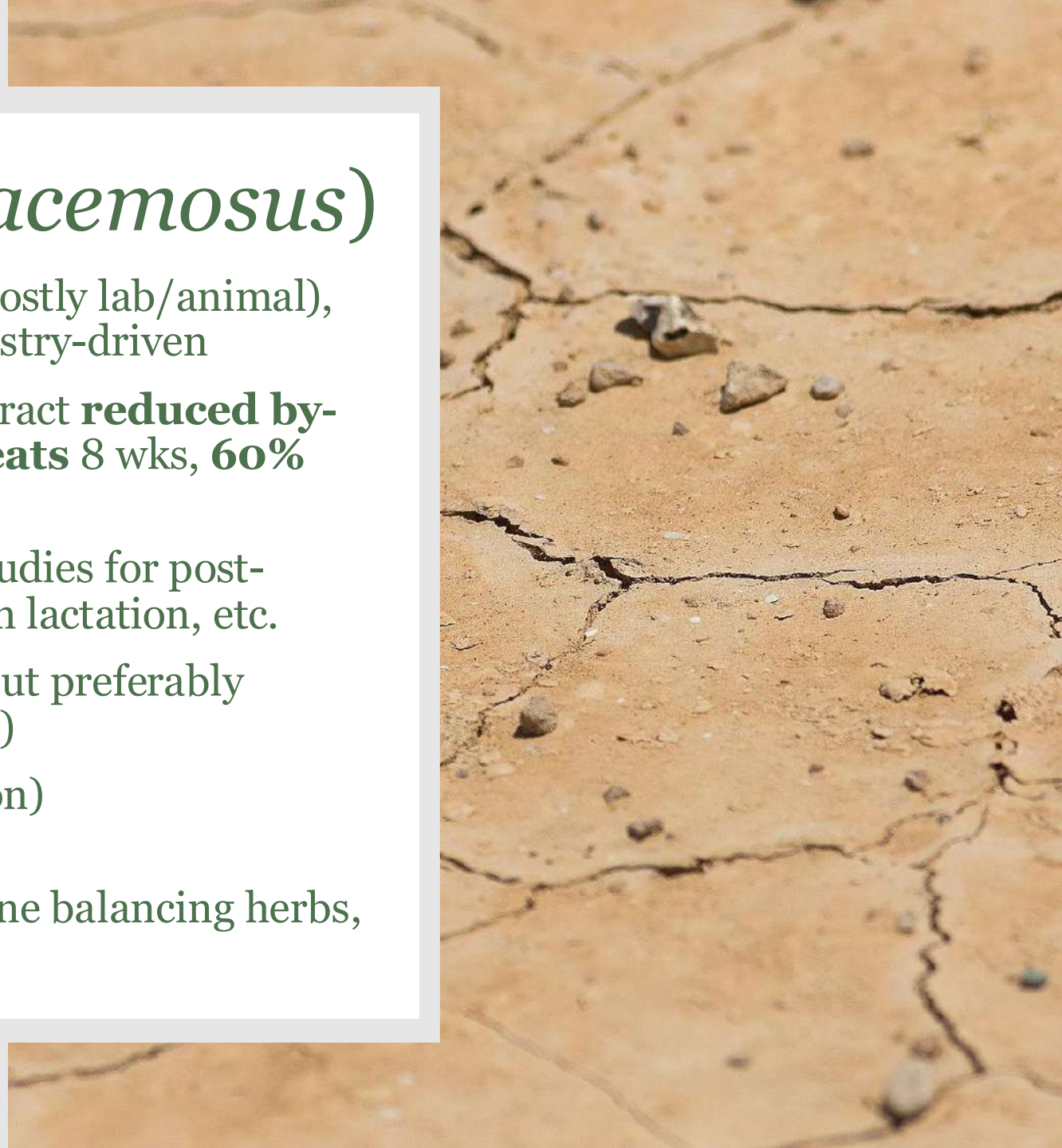
Shatavari (*Asparagus racemosus*)

- **Ayurvedic** use primarily in women (“**female ashwagandha**”)
- **Possible actions/phytochemistry:**
 - Highly mucilaginous/**moistening**/demulcent, anti-inflammatory particularly for gastrointestinal/urinary/reproductive systems
 - Possible **adaptogen/nervine**: contains steroidal saponins, tonic, gentle, not over-stimulating, slow build
 - Contains **phytoestrogens** in roots – modulatory?
- “**Juicy**” herb for dryness: supports cervical mucus, vaginal health, diuretic, joints, nursing. **Nourishes Yin**
- Helpful in **perimenopause** hot flashes, sleep, vaginal dryness, infertility, possibly osteoporosis, heart disease risk



Shatavari (*Asparagus racemosus*)

- Long history of use but minimal research (mostly lab/animal), some human studies and reviews, often industry-driven
- RDBPC 70 pre/post menopause: 500 mg extract **reduced by-85% hot flashes** in 4 wks, **90% night sweats** 8 wks, **60% sleeplessness** vs placebo
- A few other unimpressive tiny sample size studies for post-menopause strength, fitness; some studies on lactation, etc.
- Root powder or extract (tincture may work but preferably ingesting actual powder/pill or water extract)
- Dose: 500-1000 mg or more (up to 1 teaspoon) crude root or extract, 1-2x/day
- Pairs well with adaptogens, nervines, hormone balancing herbs, sleep support herbs, etc.





Hops (*Humulus lupulus*)

- **Multifaceted potent phytoestrogen, sedative, bitter**
- **Phytoestrogenic:** support in menopause and hot flashes
- Binds to both but more to alpha receptors (vs other/isoflavones with beta receptor affinity)
- Both proliferative and (beta acids) anti-proliferative effects
- **Potent 8-prenylnaringenin (8PN)** has both alpha and beta receptor action = **most potent known phytoestrogen**
- **Hot flashes and sleep.** A few human trials confirm benefits.
- 2021 RDBPC 190 mg **soy-hop extract** 12 weeks decreased menopause symptoms 20.61 points vs 14.80 placebo – fatigue, vaginal dryness, aches and pains, palpitations
- May support bones and feminine gender affirmation

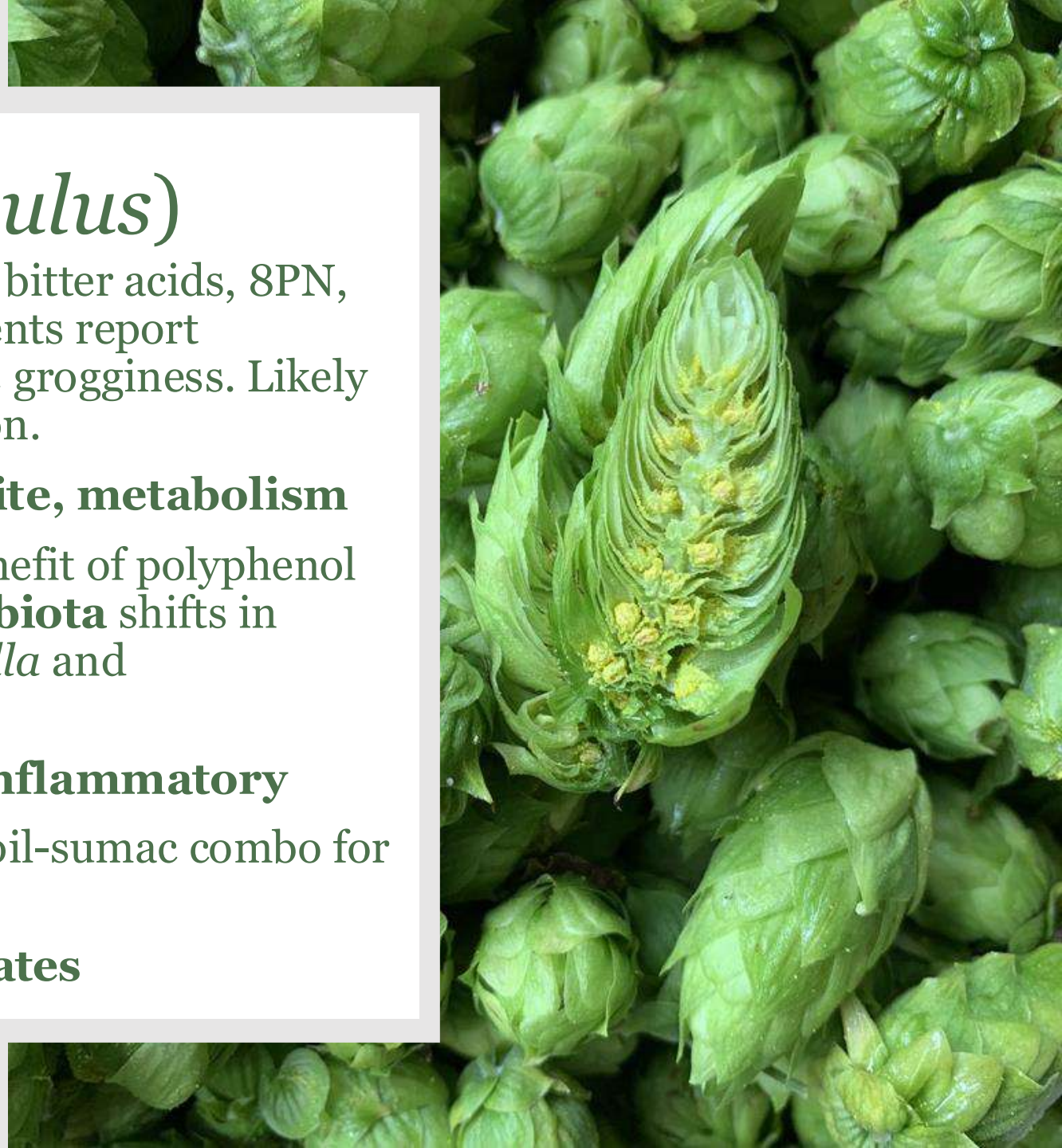
Hops (*Humulus lupulus*)

- **Mainly lab constituent studies.**
Minimal clinical trials.
- **General Anticancer** (LAB studies): antitumor, metastasis, apoptosis. Xanthohumol, etc.
Unclear harm/benefit in estrogen-dependent cancers. One study on high-risk post-menopause breast tissue suggested 8PN benefit. Researchers **caution** in endometrial cancer. *Promotes* cancer in some cell lines.
More clinically relevant research needed
- 2023 trial in 63 women found **vaginal hops extract gel as effective as estradiol** for post-menopausal sexual dysfunction (daily 7 days, then 2x/week 2 months) – desire, arousal, lubrication, pain, satisfaction, orgasm



Hops (*Humulus lupulus*)

- Potent **sedative** (terpenes/myrcene, alpha bitter acids, 8PN, humulone), for sleep, anxiety, but some clients report depressant/depression effects. Daytime use grogginess. Likely to worsen sleep apnea due to strong sedation.
- **Bitter, digestive, hypoglycemic, appetite, metabolism**
- One small human clinical trial indicates benefit of polyphenol 24 mg 8 weeks of “XN” in favorable **microbiota** shifts in healthy men and women, reducing *Prevotella* and *Ruminococcus* enterotypes
- **Antimicrobial** (bitter, beta acids), **anti-inflammatory**
- 2019 trial – benefit of hops-pumpkin seed oil-sumac combo for overactive bladder in women
- **Energetically cold/cooling for heat states**



Hops (*Humulus lupulus*)

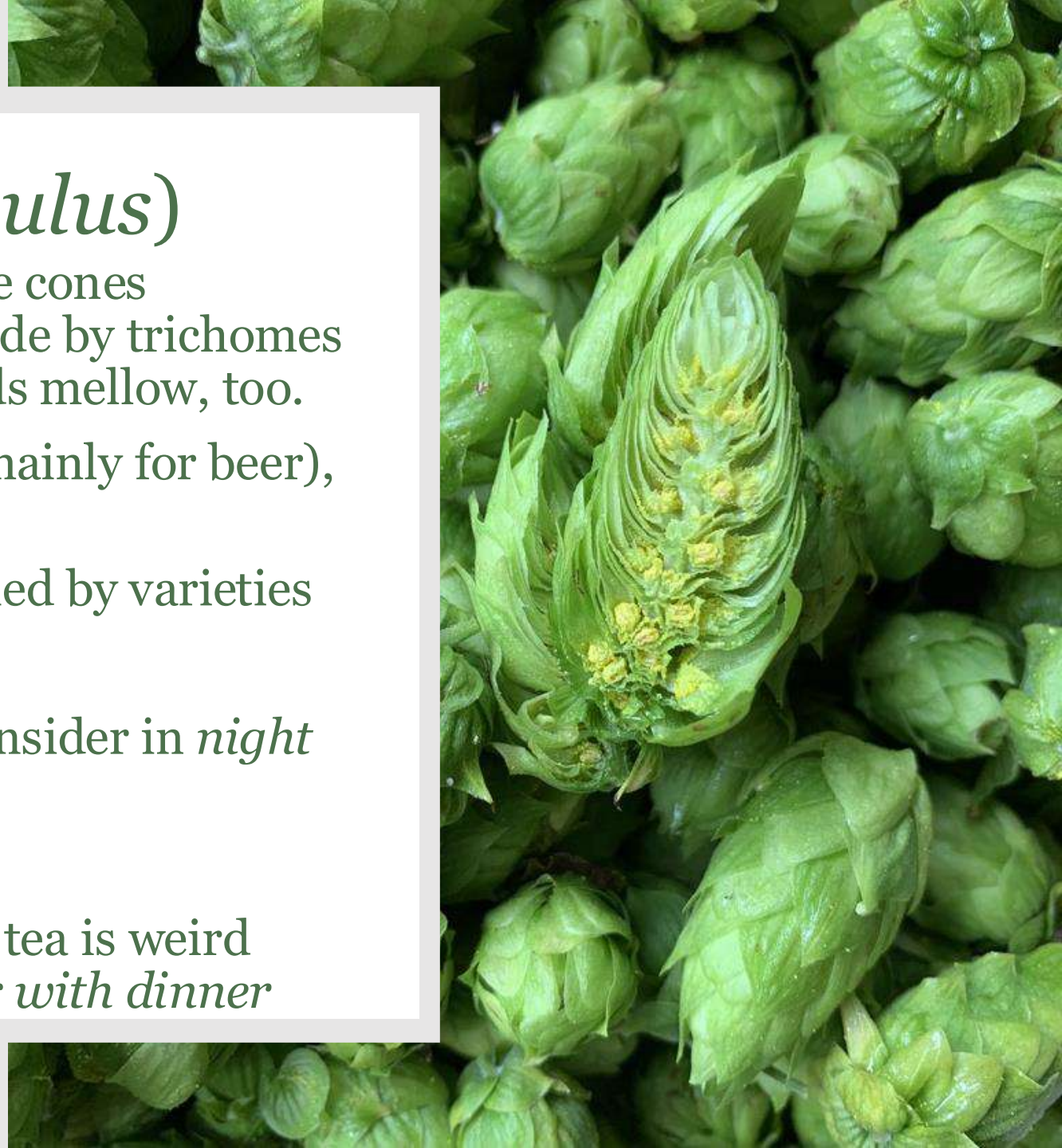
Possible Cautions, Contraindications

- Depression, daytime grogginess
- Hypoglycemia, increased digestion taken on empty stomach or in sensitive individuals (diabetes meds, ulcers, gastritis)
- May reduce thyroid.
- Old reputation for “Brewer’s droop” (erectile dysfunction), and inducing menses amongst pickers. Anti-androgen and sperm effects in in male lab/animal studies.
- Unclear safety in estrogen dependent cancers
- Possible effects on liver enzymes



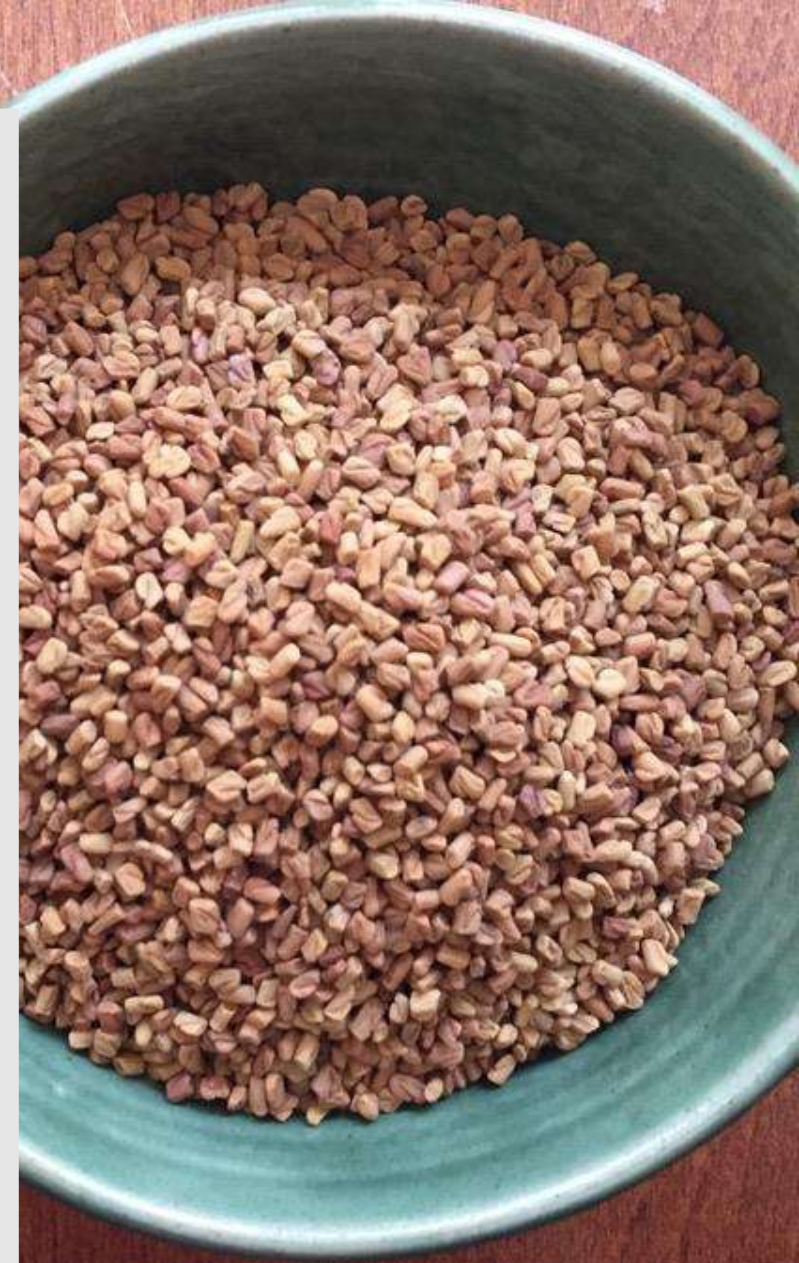
Hops (*Humulus lupulus*)

- Part Used: fresh or freshly dried strobile cones rich in yellow powdery lupulin resin made by trichomes Potency degrades with dry storage. Acids mellow, too.
- Many varieties with varied chemistry (mainly for beer), (Cascade is one studied for sleep).
- Cannabis relative, similar terpenes, varied by varieties
- Tastes like IPA beer, high terpene
- Timing is tricky due to multi effects. Consider in *night* blends.
- Tincture, pill, other extracts common
- Tea offers some benefits but “IPA beer” tea is weird May prefer as tincture/extract in seltzer *with dinner*



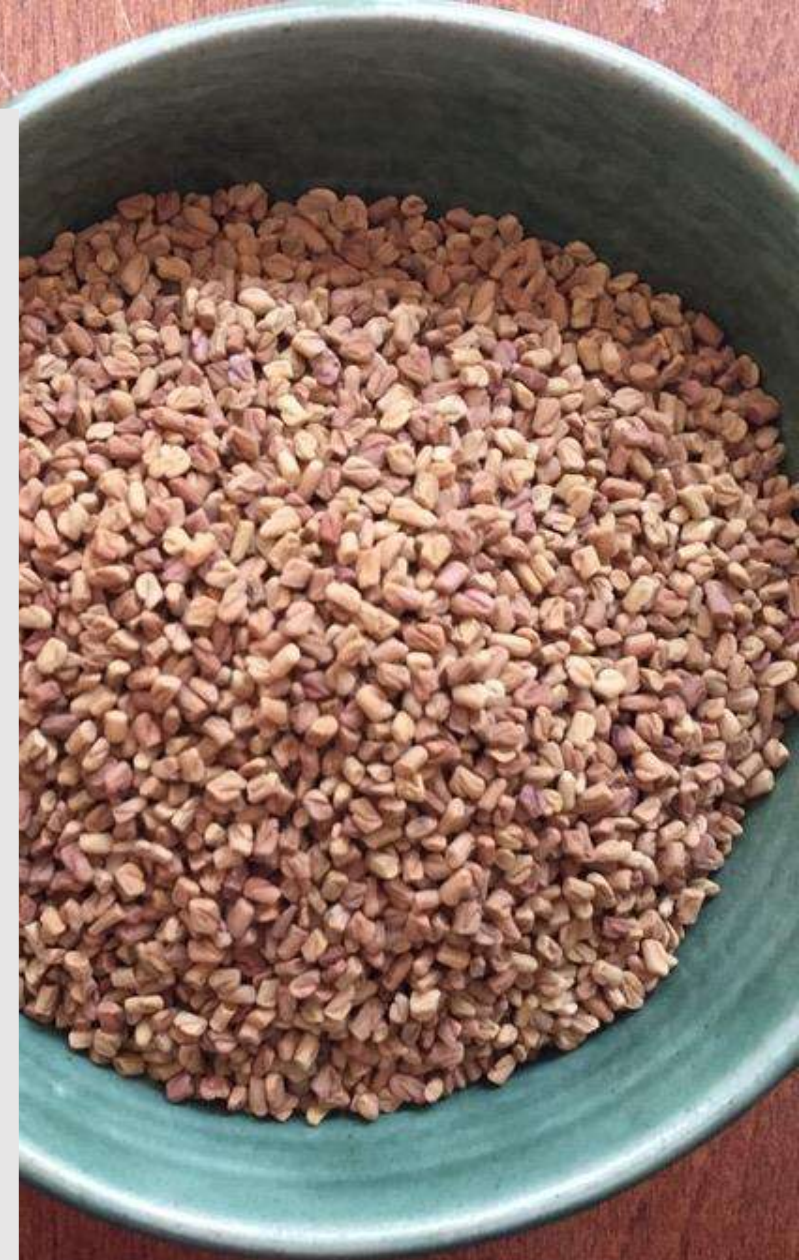
Fenugreek (*Trigonella foenum-graecum*)

- **Multifaceted!** Most research/history on **diabetes/glucose** balance, but also for repro hormones, galactagogue, possibly allergies
- **Many endocrine effects:**
 - Modulating insulin, glucose, cholesterol – most studied
 - Increased/modulated estrogen, menopause and PCOS
 - Increased testosterone in all genders (but helps in PCOS)
 - May reduce thyroid function, increase Hashimoto's (high dose in rat studies only)
 - May affect prolactin
- Contains steroidal saponins, phytoestrogens, 50% mucilage fiber, and more



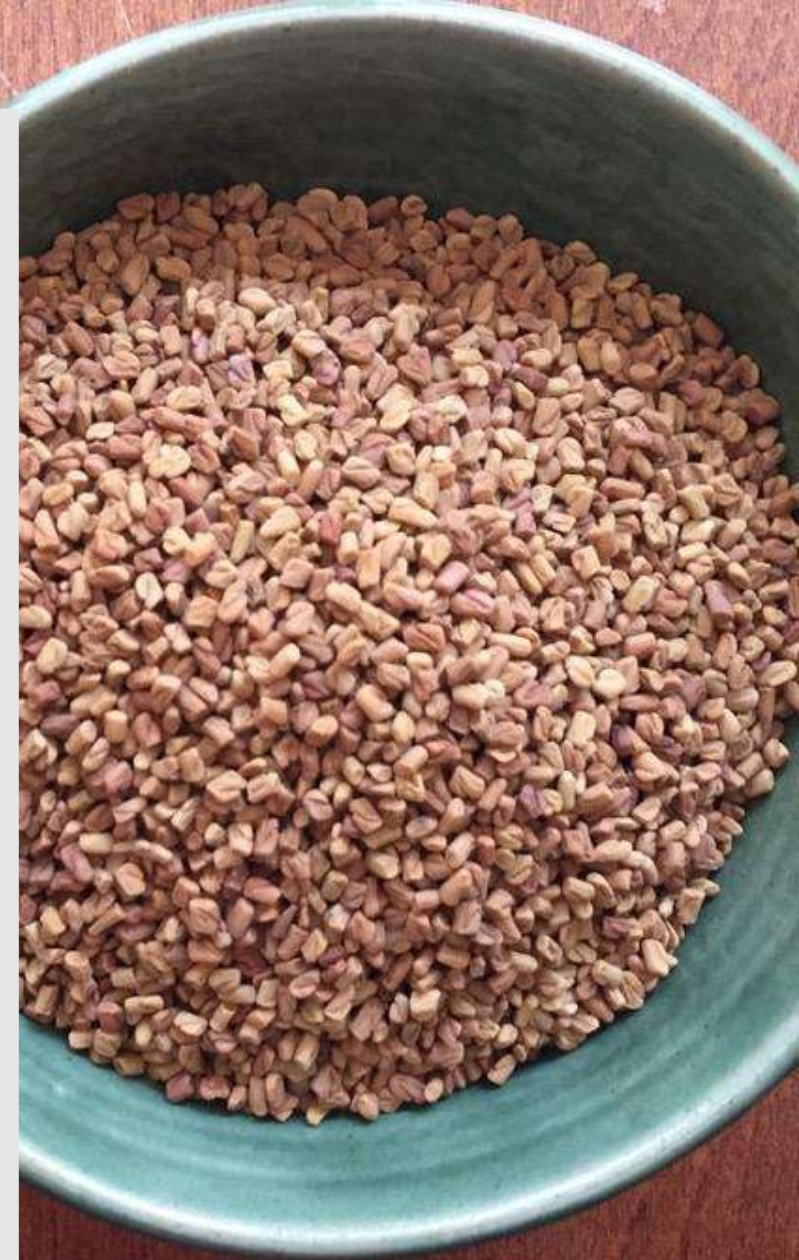
Fenugreek (*Trigonella foenum-graecum*)

- At least 4 trials on perio/post menopausal women
- 2020 RDBPC 48 perimeno 250 mg fenugreek extract or placebo for 42 days: benefits in **hot flashes** (25.9%), **night sweats** (26.5%), **depression** (31.8%), and **insomnia** (21.6%) and increased **estradiol** (18.9%), free **testosterone** (38.2%), and **progesterone** (19.9%) concentrations and a significant **decrease in FSH** (38.2%) and **SHBG** (21.1%)
- 2017 RDBPC reduced **hot flashes, night sweats, increased serum estradiol** after 12 weeks 600 mg ext.
- 2016 RDBPC: 1000 mg/day extract, 90 days, moderate to severe menopause symptoms, 32% had **zero hot flashes** vs 1-2/day placebo (3-5x/day at baseline)
- **Vaginal cream** helpful but **not as strong as estrogen**



Fenugreek (*Trigonella foenum-graecum*)

- Many clinical trials and long history worldwide for **glucose type 2 diabetes, cholesterol, triglycerides, PCOS**
- **Modulating:** Regulates healthier insulin production/secretion and glucose curve in T1D, T2D *and* normal patients
- Impressive benefits in **PCOS, fertility**
- **Wide Range in Dose:** 1 g hydroethanolic extract to 50 g ground seeds; 1-2 ml w/meals tincture (dry ground seeds 1:5 in 50% alcohol tincture); tea; in food, pills/extracts...
- From India, Africa, Egypt. Historical for diabetes since at least Ancient Rome/Greece. Widespread use.
- **Cautions:** ?Thyroid?, ground seeds mucilage/fiber at same time as meds, rare allergies, unclear/inconsistent safety vs benefit in estrogen-dependent cancer cells



Motherwort (*Leonurus cardiaca*)

- Bitter, cooling, grounding, moves stagnation
- Fast and tonic/chronic relief from anxiety, mood swings, panic attacks, frustration, PMS, menopause, hot flashes, grief, trauma, “hug”, regulates menses flow
- Heart tonic, heart-stress symptoms/ connection, relax, hypotensive, calms palpitations
- Digestive bitter. Relaxant.
- For the overworked, underappreciated, emotional roller coasters, supports healthy boundaries, selfcare, tough love
- Best fresh (or high quality dry) tinctured 1-2 ml, 2-4x/d (tea works, just bitter)

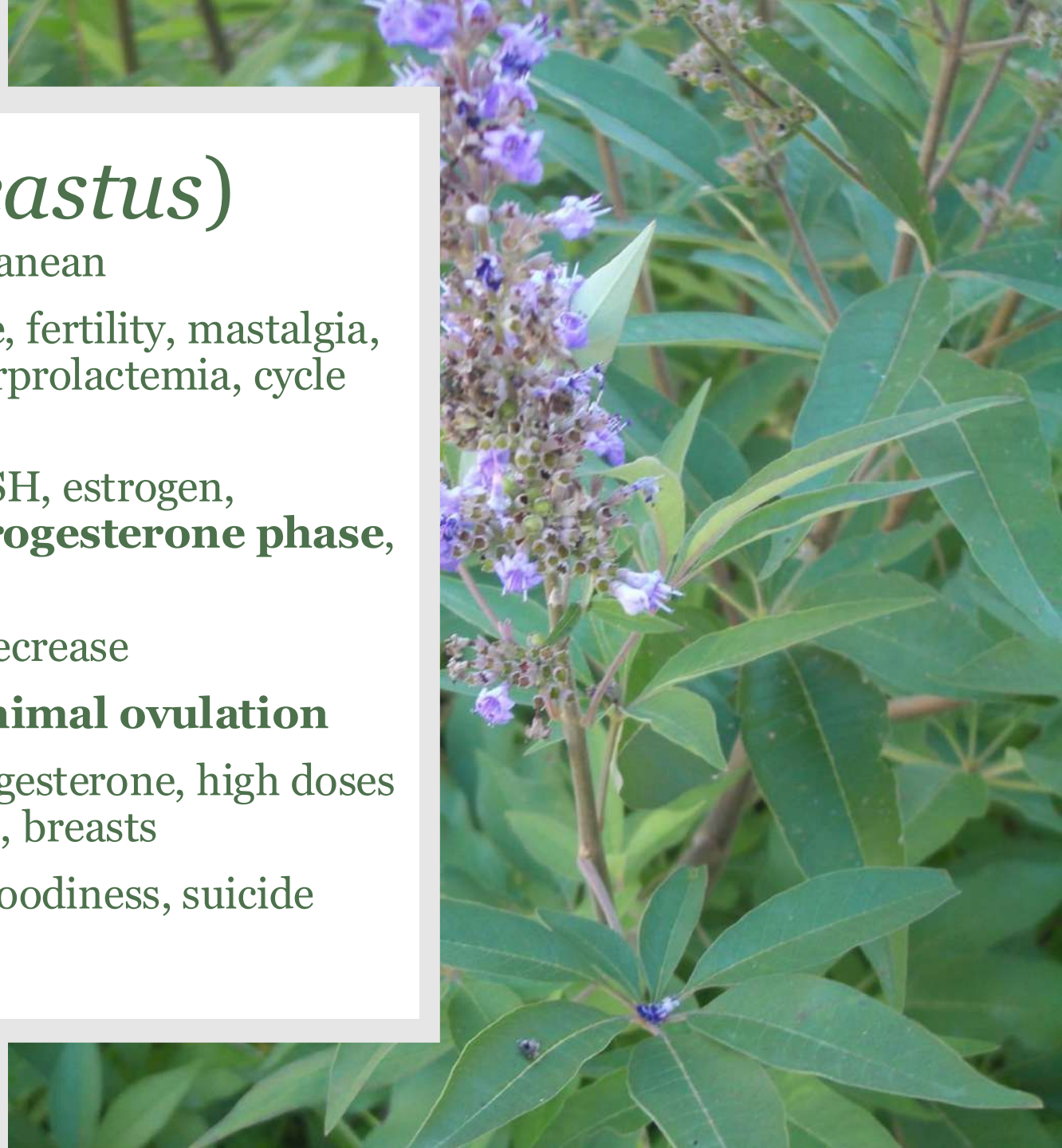


Minimal research – sources include my clinical experience, herbalists Moore, Gladstar, Garran, de la

Vitex (*Vitex agnus-castus*)

- Chaste Tree Berry, berry/seed from Mediterranean
- **QUIRKY HERB!** PMS, early perimenopause, fertility, mastalgia, dysmenorrhea, PCOS, lactation but also hyperprolactemia, cycle acne and cycle migraines
- Seems to affect brain/pituitary output, LH, FSH, estrogen, progesterone... Generally used to **support progesterone phase, lengthen or regulate cycle**
- Low dose may increase prolactin, high dose decrease
- Due to progesterone, **less helpful if no/minimal ovulation**
- Feminine Gender Affirmation: increasing progesterone, high doses may decrease testosterone and boost estrogen, breasts
- **Caution:** May relieve *or* cause depression, moodiness, suicide thoughts

Romm, Moore, Clinical experience, [Momoeda](#), [Aksoy](#),
[Mirghafourvand](#), [Cerqueira](#) , [Merz](#), Peters,



White Peony Root (*Paeonia lactiflora*)

- **Progesterone/luteal and overall hormone support**
- Generally **better tolerated** (less quirky) vs vitex
- Popular in **TCM**, increasing Western use, also in other cultures
- **Cools inflammation**, normalizes **roller coasters in cycle dysregulation**, **PCOS**, **PMS**, **perimenopause**, fertility, eases **pain/spasm/tension "Wind"**, **regulates menses**, **support mood**
- **Bai shao** – 3-5 yo, **root peeled**, boiled, then dried (unpeeled = red peony)
- **Often combined with licorice, cinnamon for PCOS**. Perhaps also including ginger, Baikal skullcap
- Traditional for nightmares, convulsions. Also in “estrogen dominance,” **liver stagnation**, autoimmune disease – **clear heat, nourish Yin**
- Feminine gender affirmation: may inhibit production of testosterone and promote aromatase (encouraging testosterone to convert into estrogen)

AMR, Mandelbaum, Herbal Academy, Poulton, Henningsen, Bensky (this garden peony is not the typical medicinal



Damiana (*Turnera diffusa*)

- NOT an adaptogen, but...
- Formerly *T. aphrodisiaca*, Part: aerial flowering parts
- Reputation in Mexico/SW as an **aphrodisiac** and **aromatic nervine** tonic – **lift mood**, reduce **anxiety**
- **May strengthen estrogen, progesterone, and testosterone** (limited studies) via **communication and/or receptors**
- *Mostly lab/animal* studies: estrogenic, progestogenic, testostrogenic, aromatase inhibitor, anti-breast cancer,
- Animal and human trials, in formulas for **sexual vitality**
- Trial w/EPO, ginseng, royal jelly, 88% rated menopause symptoms after 4 weeks as “very/much improved” vs 57% in placebo group



Maca (*Lepidium meyenii*)

- Root long revered in **Peru** for **nutrient density, food, libido, fertility, energy, vitality in all genders, andropause, menopause, gentle energy**
- Preliminary human studies support libido, fertility, **anti-stress, uplifting**, sleep, calm, **semen quality, menopause, sexual function** in all genders
- **Most** studies show **no direct hormone effects** yet **supports testosterone and estrogen-related health states**
- 2,000 mg extract pill study = ↑ estrogen, FSH, progesterone; **74-87% alleviation of perimenopausal symptoms**; ↓ body weight, blood pressure, cholesterol, triglycerides in 2 months
- Postmenopause trial 3.3g/day 12 wk – no effect on repro, thyroid, and other hormones but improvements in **depression, diastolic BP**
- Add to food, tincture, pill, cooked vs raw (turnip relative)
- Theorized goitrogen when raw for thyroid but no evidence found. Seek Peruvian-grown (not from China). Oft adulterated. Possibly FODMAP.

Clinical experience, [Beharry](#), [Lee](#), [Lee](#), [Shin](#), [Gonzalez](#), [Brooks](#), [Stojanovska 1](#), [Stojanovska 2](#), [Meissner](#),

Many Additional Herbal Supports

- **Sleep:** passionflower, high quality lemon balm, magnolia...
- **Brain Health:** bacopa, tulsi, high quality lemon balm, rosemary, ginkgo...
- **Stress:** All the above herbs, also motherwort, ashwagandha, shatavari, and many others
- **Energy:** ashwagandha, maca, schizandra...
- **Mood:** albizia, St. John's wort, damiana, tulsi, lemon balm...
- **Bones:** nettle, oat straw, gotu kola, horsetail, red clover...
- **Stanch Menstrual Overflow:** raspberry leaf, sometimes yarrow, lady's mantle, rose petals...
- **Liver:** blue vervain, artichoke leaf, schizandra, dandelion...



Sleep or Mood Support:

Shatavari pills and/or

Equal Parts Tincture of

- Black Cohosh, and/or Hops*
- Damiana
- White Peony Root
- Passionflower* or Motherwort
- Lemon Balm
- Magnolia

2-5 ml in water at bedtime
Or if daytime, avoid these*

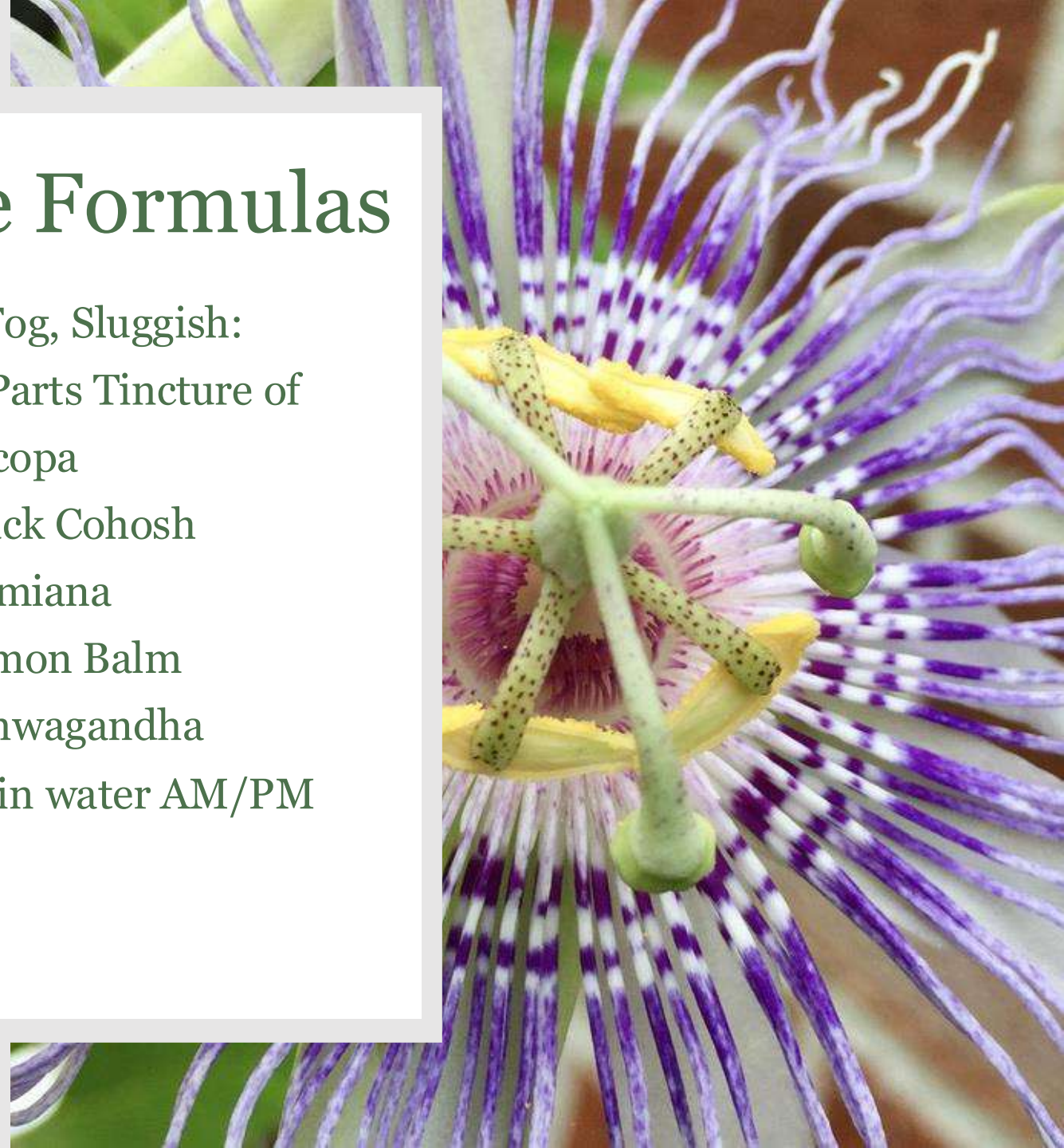
Sample Formulas

Brain Fog, Sluggish:

Equal Parts Tincture of

- Bacopa
- Black Cohosh
- Damiana
- Lemon Balm
- Ashwagandha

2-5 ml in water AM/PM



Formula Thoughts

- **Biphasic herbal formulas** for day 1-14 and day 15-28 if needed for extra push for cycle regularity (more so in early perimenopause)...often I combine herbs in *one* month-long blend *unless* extreme cycle dysregulation or one blend didn't work well enough
- **AM/PM Blends** with more energy support (such as adaptogens) in morning, sleep/sedating herbs in evening (such as hops, passionflower...)
- **Single ingredients** for **sensitive** clients in particular
- If tendency for **depression**, **caution** in vitex, hops, sedatives
- If tendency for **anxiety**, **caution** with most adaptogens, stimulants, (and in **bipolar**, **hypomania** – avoid St. John's wort, albizia, sedatives, stimulants)
- **Cancer risk** – consider bk cohosh, nervines, stress, liver support



General Remedy Options & Dosing

- **Fresh:** a handful or so daily in food, tea, seltzer, etc.
- **Infused Seltzer or Water:** 1 cup to 1 liter+
- **Tea:** 1-3 cups daily (infuse, decoct, super infuse, broth)
- **Tincture:** 1-5 ml (squirts) = 1/5-1 tsp, 1-3x daily
- **Vinegar, Honey, Oxymel, Glycerite, Syrup:**
1/2 to 1 teaspoon, 1-3 x/day
- **Cordial:** A shot/ounce as a treat
- **Powders:** 1/4 to 2 teaspoons/day
- **Capsules:** see label
- **Topicals:** apply 2 or more times per day or as needed
- Divide dose by weight for kids.



Converting Dose by Format

This is NOT an exact science – they are *not* equal solvents!

There's usually no way to equate a standardized extract to home-

Solvent/ Remedy	Basic Tea	Strong Tea	Dry Plant Tincture	Fresh Plant Tincture	Powder	Capsule (CRUDE)	Honey, Vinegar, Glycerite...
Ratio	1 teaspoon – 1 tablespoon dry herb per cup	1 ounce dry herb per quart	1 ounce dry herb to 5 oz alcohol	1 ounce fresh herb to 2 oz alcohol	~ 2000 mg per teaspoon	~300-500 mg per “00” pill	1:2 to 1:10 (weaker solvency)
% Herb per serving	~1% herb	3% herb	17% herb	33% herb (but about half this is water)	Pure herb	Pure herb (but often lower quality)	9-33% herb (about half herb is water if fresh)
Dose per Day	1-3 cups	½ - 1 quart	1-15 ml (¼ - 3 tsp)	1-15 ml (¼ - 3 tsp)	~ 1 tsp	2-6 caps	1-3 tsp





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