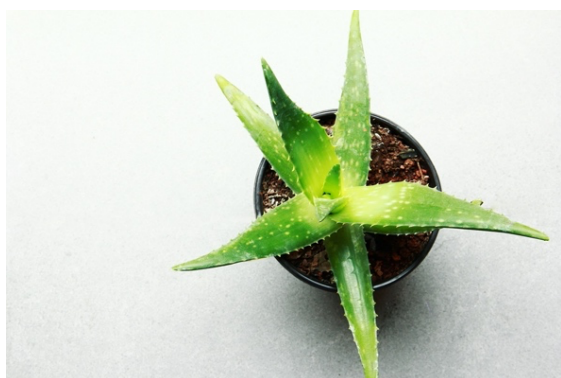


Mary Seacole and Healing Herbs

A resource for Black History Month 2022.

Mary Seacole was a herbalist and botanist who used traditional African and Caribbean remedies made from plants to treat illnesses and injuries. During the 19th Century, her herbal skills saved the lives of many sick and injured soldiers. For this reason, we have included her in our PowerPoint presentation 'Black Botanists from the Past to the Present'.

If you would like to be a herbalist like Mary Seacole, here are two activities you can try at home or in the classroom. Both are appropriate to do with children and are safe to use. However always check with a parent or carer first to make sure there are no allergies to any of these ingredients.



Aloe vera and Vitamin C gel

The inside gel from an Aloe vera plant has been used traditionally to treat insect bites and burns (including sunburn) for hundreds of years. Adding Vitamin C will not only preserve your gel for longer, it will moisturise your skin and act as an anti-inflammatory. You can easily make your own gel with a few simple ingredients.

For each mixture you will need access to an aloe vera plant, powdered vitamin C, some scissors, a plastic knife and teaspoon, paper towels, 2 cups, a blender, and an airtight container. *Make sure your materials are all clean as this product is going on your skin.

Using your scissors, remove a leaf or two from your aloe vera plant. Place them cut end down into one of your cups. This is to remove the resin from the inside of the plant – this resin can contain latex which is a skin irritant. After 10 minutes, wipe off any remaining resin with the paper towels. Then, using the plastic knife, carefully cut open the leaf along the long edge and scoop out and remove the inside of the leaf with your teaspoon, leaving behind the outside parts of the leaf.

Add 500mg of Vitamin C powder to your gel and mix them together thoroughly. Place your mixed gel into the blender and blend for 1-2 minutes until your gel is frothy and bubbly looking. Pour into an airtight container and keep in the fridge – the cool, smooth gel will soothe your bites and burns when you need it most.



*It is always a good idea to test a new product for your skin by adding a little to a small test area. Do not use if any irritation occurs.

Your Aloe vera/Vitamin C gel will last for up to 2 months if kept in an airtight container in the fridge.

Lavender and Porridge Oat bath bags

Lavender flowers produce a wonderful scent and oil. They can be used in cooking, as an ornament in your room or medicinally – they are also good for the bees and other pollinators in your garden.

In this activity you will fill a small cloth bag with both dried lavender flowers and rolled porridge oats to create a relaxing, moisturising and therapeutic bath bag that will clean and sooth any cuts or scratches you might have and soften any dry, hard or itchy skin. Lavender has antiseptic and calming properties and oats will moisturise and soften.

To make these lavender and oat bath bags you will need rolled porridge oats, dried lavender flowers, little cloth bags, ribbons/string or twine, and some teaspoons.

You may want to write on or decorate your cloth bag before you fill it.

Place 2 heaped teaspoons of dried lavender and 2 of rolled oats into your little cloth bag. Pull the bag shut tightly and tie around a ribbon or some string around the top so that your bag stays closed. This can make them look prettier too.

You can throw your filled bag into the bath while it is running or hang it from the tap so that the warm water runs through it. Now lie back and enjoy! Afterwards you should feel relaxed, clean and soft all over.

*You may not be able to use this bag more than once ☹

