

Lesson 5.4

A BOOK OF EIGHTEENTH CENTURY HERBAL REMEDIES

Objective: Students will discover the kinds of medicines used by midwives in the late 1700s by researching several herbs used by Martha Ballard.

Materials:

- **Sheet 5.4A:** Martha Ballard's List of Herbal Remedies
- **Sheet 5.4B:** Sample Herb Description: Marigold either on an overhead, or copied for students
- Library access, with materials available on historical medicinal practices

Timing: Two to three class periods, with time outside of class for research

Background Reading: Chapter Five, Section Two

Procedure:

1. Review Section Two with students. Discuss with them the difference in medical technology two hundred years ago compared with today.
2. Pass out Martha Ballard's List of Herbal Remedies. Ask students if they recognize any of the plants listed there. Can they make any guesses as to what those plants were used for? Use the Sample Herb Description of Marigold as an example. Go over it with the class.
3. Have students choose five or more plants to research. Give students at least one full class period to get started with their research. Bring in books for them to use, or go to the library. They should find out as much as they can about each of the herbs they picked, i.e. where the plant grows, what it has been used for throughout history, what it looks like, if it's used at all today. If they can find a drawing of their plants, they should sketch it.

***Note:** Check your library first to make sure they have enough resources for the students to find the information they need.

4. **Portfolio Option:** Have students compile a small, illustrated book of late eighteenth century herbal remedies. They may make their own books, or make one large class book, including the whole class' research. Put the book(s) on display in the classroom, so students can view each other's work.

Evaluation: Grade students based on the completeness of their research and the quality of their final product.

Follow up Activities:

- Have students make a book of contemporary remedies, either homeopathic or allopathic.
- Have students grow one of the herbs listed on their own.

Alignment with Learning Results:

Grade Level: **MIDDLE GRADES**

Content Area: **GEOGRAPHY**

Standard: **HUMAN INTERACTION WITH ENVIRONMENTS.**

Students will understand and analyze the relationships among people and their physical environment.

Performance Indicator: Analyze how technology shapes the physical and human characteristics of places and regions, including Maine.

Grade Level: **MIDDLE GRADES**

Content Area: **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

Standard: **IMPLICATIONS OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY.**

Students will understand the historical, social, economic, environmental, and ethical implications of science and technology.

Performance Indicator:

Research and evaluate the social and environmental impacts of scientific and technological developments, and recognize the scientific and technological contributions of diverse people including women, different ethnic groups, races, and the physically disabled.

Name: _____

Date: _____

MARTHA BALLARD'S LIST OF HERBAL REMEDIES

The following is a partial list of herbs used by Martha Ballard, compiled by Laurel Thatcher Ulrich in *A Midwife's Tale*. Martha Ballard could find most of these herbs locally, either in her garden, or growing wild in the woods.

Agrimony	Patience	Hyssop
London pride	Chamomile	Peppers
Turnips	Pennyroyal	Lily
Anise	Catnip or Catmint	Sorrel
Marigolds	Solomon's Seal	Southernwood
Wormwood	Comfrey	Lovage
Balm of Gilead	Plantain	Sumac Berries
Mugwort	Coriander	Maidenhair
Yarrow	Summer Savory	Rhubarb
Balsam	Currants	Mandrake
Mullein	Rue	Tansy
Sage	Dock Root	
Basswood	Saffron	
Mustard	Feverfew	
Buckthorn root	Sanicle	
Onions	Gold Thread	
Burdock	Shepard's-Purse	
Parsley	Hops	
Burnet	Snakeroot	

SAMPLE HERB DESCRIPTION***MARIGOLD (*Calendula officinalis*)****Description:**

The common marigold is a familiar plant, identified by its pale green leaves and its orange flowers.

Cultivation:

Easy to grow. Likes sunny or partly sunny places. Weed frequently and thin plants to 9 or 10 inches apart. They will reseed themselves.

Parts Used:

Only the common deep orange-flowered variety is used medicinally. Gather leaves only after any dew or rainfall has been thoroughly dried by the sun. Dry the florets quickly by spreading them loosely on sheets of paper so they are not touching each other and placing them in the shade, preferably in a spot that has a nice warm breeze blowing through.

Medicinal Uses:

Traditionally used as a simple garden flower, as well as in cooking and medicine. The flowers were dried and then made into a broth, which was said to comfort the heart and spirits. Marigold has also been used historically to color cheeses and even dye the hair. Mixed with vinegar, it was used to help ease swollen parts of the body. An ointment made of powdered marigold flowers, hog's-grease, turpentine, and rosin was said to be a strengthening medicine against fever, if applied to the chest. Also said to be helpful for headache, jaundice, red eyes, toothache, and ague.

Mainly used locally. Can help cause sweating. If taken internally, it can prevent the formation of pus. Good for chronic ulcer, varicose veins, constipation, and bee stings. A lotion made from the flowers soothes sprains and wounds. Water distilled from the flowers helps soothe inflamed eyes. The leaves have helped soothe children's scrofula (tuberculosis of the lymph nodes). They also have been used to help remove warts.

* From *A Modern Herbal: The Medicinal, Culinary, Cosmetic and Economic Properties, Cultivation, and Folklore of Herbs, Grasses, Fungi, Shrubs & Trees with All Their Modern Scientific Uses*, by Mrs. M. Grieve. London: Jonathan Cape, 30 Bedford Square, 1931, pp. 517-18.