

Improved Crafting: Herbalism

A set of rules for using the Herbalism Kit



by Dr. Damion "Doc" Meany

Improved Crafting: Herbalism

A set of rules for using the Herbalism Kit

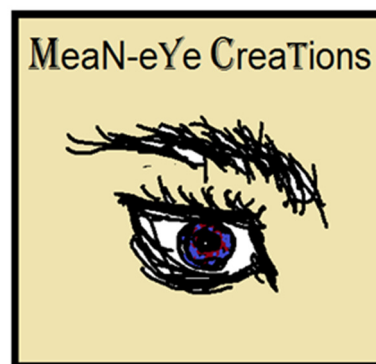
Introduction: Crafting is a staple of MMORPGs, which were greatly inspired by traditional RPGs. The addition of crafting to 5th edition potentially opens several exciting new elements to gameplay. Unfortunately, crafting rules as they are written are bare-bones (to say the least) and leave many wanting a well-defined yet simple system to utilize during play.

My primary goal is to write a set of rules that models foraging flora and fungi. My hope is that the rules are quick to use, make sense, and are realistic (from the perspective of a fantasy game). I do not feel that the RAW or any of the homebrew content (I have seen more than 20 homebrew attempts) has made a system that is simple and sensible.

A secondary goal is to define what characters can do with raw foraged materials.

A tertiary goal is to assemble a long list of names and “flavor” for herbal materials. One of the things that homebrew sources have done an amazing job of is provide creative names for herbal MacGuffins. I’ll list and arrange the ones I love and use here, and give ideas for where an almost infinite number of other herbal names can be found.

by Dr. Damion “Doc” Meany



DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, D&D, Wizards of the Coast, Forgotten Realms, the dragon ampersand, Player’s Handbook, Monster Manual, Dungeon Master’s Guide, D&D Adventurers League, all other Wizards of the Coast product names, and their respective logos are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast in the USA and other countries. All characters and their distinctive likenesses are property of Wizards of the Coast. This material is protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America. Any reproduction or unauthorized use of the material or artwork contained herein is prohibited without the express written permission of Wizards of the Coast.

This work contains material that is copyright Wizards of the Coast and/or other authors. Such material is used with permission under the Community Content Agreement for Dungeon Masters Guild.

All other original material in this work is copyright [2017] by Damion “Doc” Meany and Mean-eye Creations and published under the Community Content Agreement for Dungeon Masters Guild.

Contents

Definitions	3	Using the Herbalism Kit	13
Practicing Herbalism		Using the Kit	
General Mechanics	4	Unrefined Herbs	13
Flowchart		Unrefined Herbs	
Looking for Herbs	5	Crafting Examples	14
Looking for Herbs		Example Herbs	
Step by step	5	Mundane	15
Looking for Herbs		Example Herbs	
Foraging Cautiously	6	Life Magic	16
Looking for Herbs		Example Herbs	
During Rests	7	Death Magic	17
Looking for Food	7	Example Herbs	
Happening Upon		Arcane Magic	18
Randomly Encountering Herbs	8	Example Herbs	
Picking Random		Elemental	18
Herbs	8	Example Herbs	
Defining Herbs		Magic Schools	20
Within a Region	9	Illicit Substances	22
Defining Rarity		Selling, Buying, and Learning	
the 10% Rule	9	Herbalism Shops	24
Example Region		Other Places to Learn	
Desert	10	Libraries and Booksellers	25
Example Region		Final Thoughts	26
Jungle	11		

Herbs

Herbs are the useful products of flora or fungi, and can be roots, stems, bark, leaves, berries, vines, mushrooms, flowers or any other portion of a plant, algae, moss, or fungus the DM can come up with. Herbs in a fantasy RPG setting often either absorb and concentrate magic energies from the weave or have been modified in some way by its presence.

Herbalism

What is Herbalism? According to the inter-webs:

Herbalism is the study of botany and use of plants intended for medicinal purposes or for supplementing a diet.

This sounds like a pretty good definition for use within 5th edition with a few modifications. In a fantasy RPG crafting system herbs are used for nutrition, as products to heal or detoxify, as products to harm, or as products to release stored magic energies or effects.

Some herbs can be used as soon as they are harvested, while others require further refinement by another set of crafting tools to become useful. Those herbs that have immediate utility can be consumed as they are found, can require minor refinement (steeping over a campfire or crushing), or may require combination (with other herbs or items like a medical kit). Those which require further refinement can often be sold to alchemists (or poisoners or illicit drug makers) sometimes for great profit, and sometimes at great risk.

To harvest herbs effectively, the character **must** know what they are looking for. It is extremely unreasonable to expect that a character will come upon and harvest a rare and powerful herb at random without already knowing what the herb is (this is one of my biggest issues with previous herbalism rulesets). Life is not like software developers code video games. Things of value that can be harvested for use or further refinement do not just pop-up and draw your attention as you happen by them; not even when you roll a natural 20. Your characters may tread through a field full of highly useful and/or valuable herbs, but without the knowledge of their value or utility they will just step on them.

This is not to say that rare or useful herbs do not grow in places where you come across them at random; this is to say that without knowledge of an herb's identity if a character was to randomly pick every herb they come across that looks unique to them, most of the time the herb in question will just be a weird looking weed. Characters may happen upon something rare and valuable once in a great while, but the majority of the time dragging in every peculiar looking berry or flower they come across is going to be a waste of time. More importantly, there is no way to "roll a die" and randomly encounter some useful herb that you have no previous knowledge of and have never seen or gathered before.

Herbalism Kit

Proficiency with an herbalism kit is necessary to practice herbalism with any sort of efficacy, although the process of herbalism does not actually require an herbalism kit. Proficiency with an herbalism kit means that a character has devoted enough time harvesting herbs to know how to do it whether they have a kit on them or not. Possession and use of an herbalism kit allows a character to use their proficiency bonus while harvesting herbs and determining if an herb which was harvested survives the trip from its habitat to the location where it is used or sold, as both situations may sometimes require a check.

A character with proficiency in the Herbalism kit has experience harvesting herbs and a knowledge of the herbs that grow in the region where the character was trained, as well as knowledge of any region where they have spent a good deal of time harvesting herbs. The exact amount of time required to become familiar with the herbs of a region is at the DMs discretion.

An herbalism kit contains tools for safe and delicate harvesting, such as gloves, small blades, and tweezers. An herbalism kit also contains items for storage of the herbs that are harvested, such as stoppered jars and vials, several small sacks, and cloths to dampen to keep fresh delicate herbs that lose their potency when dried. The most essential part of an herbalism kit is the regional herb guide that defines and describes the rare and common herbs found within a region, which also describes the conditions and climate where the herbs thrive and illustrates what the herb looks like. An herbalism kit also includes a mortar and pestle, metal tea strainer, kettle, flint, and tinder box for preparing and/or steeping herbs.

Practicing Herbalism – General Mechanics

Determining the herbs that are present in a region as well as several other features that describe each herb in a region is up to the DM. The DM can prepare a regional herb reference sheet by follow a formula, and assign herbs to a region and properties to those herbs based on tables and die rolls. The DM can also fill out the reference sheet by hand; choosing which herbs are in a region based on their preference. Of course, the DM can also choose not to prepare the region ahead of time and pick (or make up) herbs as it suits them and their play style.

Herbs are found in a region and grow in **abundance** or **scarcity**; this growth pattern is a property of that herb in that region (and may be different for the same herb in a different region). Herbs also have a region-specific **potency**, which represents how much magic they absorb from the weave in that region and has implications for its use. Finally, herbs have **stability** properties that determine complications and difficulty when harvesting, handling, and storing.

Herbalism – an overview in reverse order

Once you have located an herb you want to harvest, the total amount you can harvest is based on how much herb you can gather in an hour. The amount you can gather in an hour depends on how densely or sparsely the herb grows. For those of you who want a “crunchy” system Flora and fungi growth pattern is based on a three-tiered system. For those who don’t want the added crunch, just wing it.

Flora and fungi can grow in **abundant** quantities; when found you can harvest for at least an hour and possibly fill all your containers or even a cart full of containers once a single location is found.

Flora and fungi can grow in **sparse** quantities, where only a few to several lone plants or perhaps a single large bush or tree are found in one location. Once a sparse patch of herb is found it can be picked clean in an hour at the most and a new location must be found.

Finally, flora and fungi can grow in **scarce** quantities, with only one blooming plant or perhaps even only one bloom found. A small quantity can be harvested from this single source and then a new location must be found.

To harvest you must **locate** the herb. You may locate by **looking** for a specific herb or notice an herb as you **happen upon** it as you travel. In addition, a character can just pick an unusual looking plant or mushroom as they pass by it (or draw and describe it if they have a knack) and bring that back to someone knowledgeable. As you are actively **looking** for one type of herb you may actually **happen upon** it or another herb.

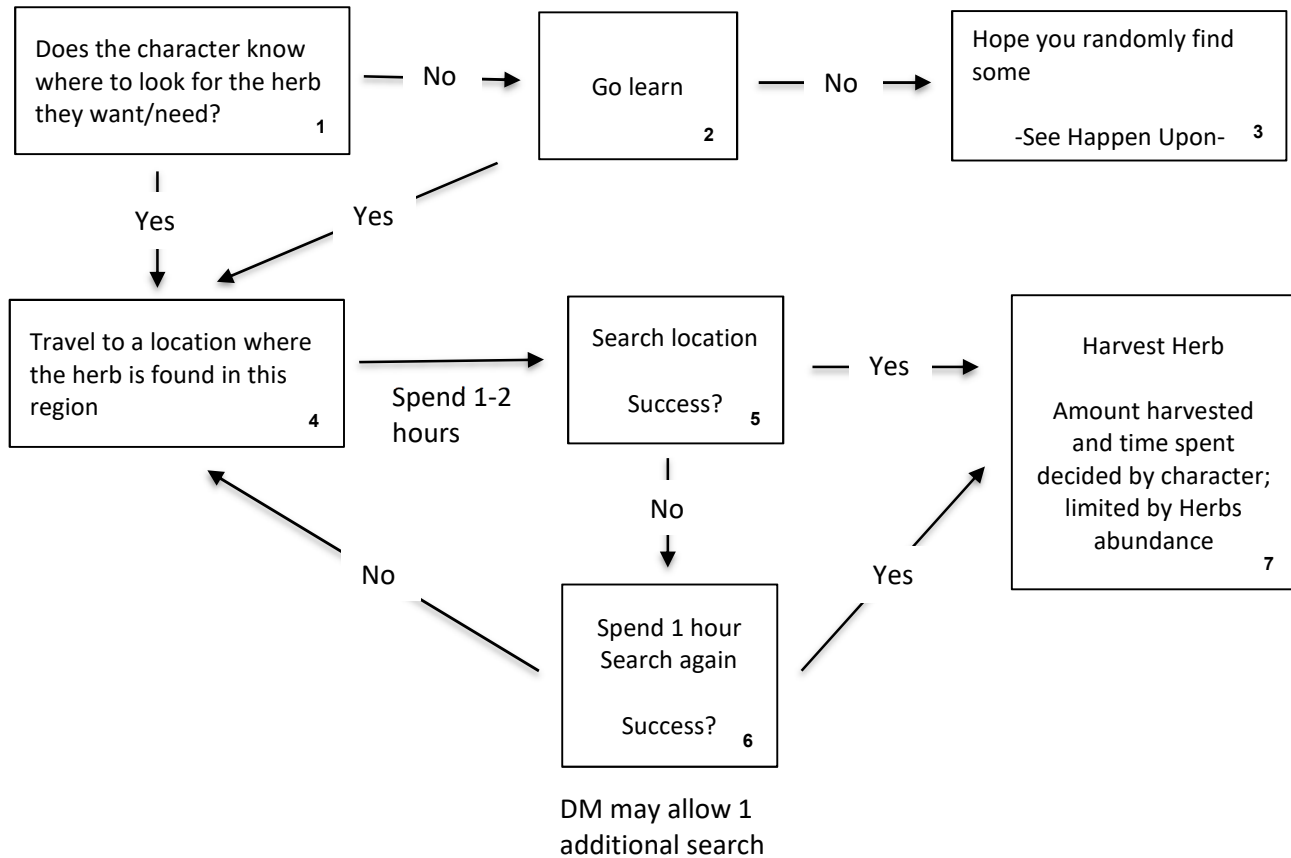
Actively **looking** for an herb requires a sense of where in the region a location is where the herb is likely to grow. A regional herb guide will define this for all but the rarest herbs in the region. Other herbalists or literary sources can also provide details as to where herbs are located.

Finding and travelling to a location should take an hour or so (DM discretion, but I’d suggest no more than 2 hours). Once the location is found the character must make a check against a DC determined by whether the herb is abundant or scarce (unless the DM prefers to RP the process). If the character fails their search, they should only have a limited number of rolls to find the herb in that location. Each roll represents an hour of searching and after an hour or two (1-2 rerolls) the character needs to find a new location (which will require another hour or two of travel) and search again.

At any point along a characters travels they may **happen upon** useful herbs. The DM may use an opportunity to discover one of the current regions known herbs as a random encounter. The characters proximity to highly travelled or populated areas will impact the probability of finding rarer and more valuable herbs. The DM may either choose to include herbal discoveries and other beneficial encounters into their list or table of random encounters (a novel idea for many), or have two random encounter lists or tables; one for combat encounters and one for herbal discoveries.

Lastly, as previously described, a character may harvest any herb within a region and bring it to an expert or library for identification. There is a table that will randomly determine what the character finds. This method is excruciatingly slow, but if repeated enough a character will eventually learn about the majority of the herbs in the region. They could even gain proficiency with the Herbalism kit if they spend the time described in the DMG to earn proficiency with crafting tools.

Flowchart – Looking for Herbs



Looking for Herbs – step by step

1) Does the character know where to look? The answer is yes if:

- The character has proficiency with Herbalism kit
-and-
- The character is in the region where they gained proficiency, have harvested herbs regularly, or they have a regional herb guide for the current region in their herbalism kit
-or-
- The character has read a detailed description of what the herb looks like and where it is found
-or-
- The character has talked to an expert (a skilled herbalist) who has harvested that herb or harvested in that region and has learned what the herb looks like and where it grows

2) Go learn. The characters can learn about herbs within a region by:

- Purchasing a regional field guide at an herbalists' shop or bookseller
-or-
- Speaking to a local herbalist or forager
-or-
- Reading about herbs and the environment where they grow

Looking for Herbs – step by step (cont.)

3) Hope to randomly **happen upon** some.

-discussed later-

4) Spend an hour or two travelling (unless travelling a remote and/or lifeless area where 2-3x more travel time is required).

Encounters may occur

If already travelling, may ask party to stop near favorable harvesting location to minimize (or possibly eliminate) travel time.

5) Search location.

- Use Int(Investigation) -or- Wis(Perception) to search
- DC determined by growth pattern
 - Abundant** – DC 10
 - Sparse** – DC 15
 - Scarce** – DC 20
- Some regions are almost lifeless, and have an added DC to search
 - Desert +10 DC
 - Wastelands +5 to +10 DC
 - Tundra +10 DC
 - Mountains/high elevation
 - within tree line +5 DC
 - above tree line +10 DC
- For every 10-fold increase in rarity +5 DC to search
- Some plants may have added difficulty to spot because of magic effects (very rare)
Added difficulty defined in the herbs description

6) Searching again if search fails:

- May spend 1 hour searching again only once if herb growth is **Abundant**
- May spend an additional 1 hour and search again twice if herb growth is **Sparse** or **Scarce**
Total of 3 searches in 2 hours at that location
- If all searches fail in that location the character must travel another 1-2 hours (or more) to a different location and start searching again

7) Harvesting. Characters who succeed while searching can harvest until:

- Their bags, bottles, containers, packs are full
- They decide they have enough
The characters may decide not to pick everything they find so as not to kill off the herbs growing there (so they can harvest there again later)
- The herb is gone
Overharvesting can cause the herb to die off completely in that location

In addition, there are **stability** concerns:

- Some herbs require a Dex(Herbalism kit), Int(Herbalism kit), or Wis(Herbalism kit) check to harvest
- Herbs that require a harvesting check have consequences for failing

The amount that can be harvested from an area is defined in the DMs description of the regions herbs (or determined by the DM on the spot). The **stability** of an herb is also described there, as well as any consequences for rough harvesting.

Looking for Herbs – Foraging Cautiously

Characters who do not want to be caught unaware by beasts or other creatures while foraging may forage cautiously. They may also attempt to use stealth while foraging cautiously. Characters foraging cautiously harvest ½ the amount that can normally be harvested. Characters not foraging cautiously should have an increased risk of encounters and/or surprise.

Looking for Herbs – During Rests

A character that wants to forage for herbs while travelling may choose to do so as the remainder of the groups rests. A character who forages while the remainder of the party takes a short rest does not gain the benefits of a short rest. A character taking a short rest may search (look/poke around) the immediate area while resting, and if they succeed they may harvest what they find when the rest has ended (the time spent harvesting is in addition to the rest).

A player who forages while the rest of the party takes a long rest may gain the benefits of a long rest or a short rest depending on what happens during the rest period. Per the DMG, a player may gain the benefit of a long rest if the 8-hour period of minimal or no activity is interrupted for no longer than 1 hour. If a character does not need to travel to forage (if the party stops to rest in an area where known herbs grow) and the character searches successfully only once (additional searches require another hour of wandering) they can forage the area for 1 hour while the rest of the party rests and still gain the benefit of a long rest.

If the player chooses to forage longer than 1 hour, or if the remainder of the 8-hour rest is later disturbed by an encounter the character gains the benefit of a short rest instead of a long rest. An elven character who requires only 4 hours of meditation to gain the benefit of a long rest may not forage during that 4-hour meditation period without losing the benefit of a long rest.

Looking for Food

Per the DMG, all characters may make a Wis(Survival) check to forage for food while travelling (at DM discretion, Int(Nature) may also be a substitute; possibly at a higher DC). Characters with proficiency in the Herbalism kit can also search for food while searching for herbs; these characters may also use Wis(Perception) or Int(Investigation) to search for food (DM discretion). The DC to forage for food (and water) is defined on pg. 111 of the DMG; DC 10 when food is plentiful, DC 15 when limited, and DC 20 when very little is present (grows) in the region.

If a character succeeds while searching for food and while searching for herbs the character decides what to harvest first and how long to harvest each item. The amount of herb harvested in an hour and how many hours the herb can be harvested are defined by the DM for each herb in the region. The DMG suggests an amount of food found while foraging, but this amount appears to be for 1 entire day searching. In a region where vegetation is plentiful consider allowing characters to harvest 1d4 pounds of food in an hour (forest, jungle), 1d2 pounds in an area with less growth (arid plain), and ½ to 1 pound in an area with very little growth (desert, tundra).

Happening Upon – Randomly Encountering Herbs

There are a variety of ways a DM can simulate a character randomly coming across rare and useful herbs as they travel. DMs who use the standard random encounter table where all encounters are combat encounters will need to keep in mind that every time a character with knowledge of herbs travels not only do they have a chance of running into monsters to fight and kill; they also have a chance of coming across a useful herb they recognize. A second table or roll to incorporate herbal “encounters” seems cumbersome, but may be appropriate.

I recently started using a system where every hour of activity earns a die roll, and every one rolled triggers an encounter. The example for this system had the DM putting a die in a bowl for some amount of time spent adventuring in a dungeon and then at some point they rolled all the dice in the bowl and each one triggered an encounter (I think the example was in a dungeon where every 10 minutes accumulates a die and rolls are made on the hour). As the party travels overland I don't collect the opportunities into a bowl, and I don't roll the dice; I have my players roll as each hour passes and encourage them to pass the die among themselves. If they are travelling stealthily and moving off main roads they roll a d10 or d12 (low probability of a 1). If they travel along main roads and are not quiet or stealthy they roll a d6 or d8 (or even a d4 if they were to wander around a dangerous area singing, yelling, or doing other loud things).

Also noteworthy is the fact that my encounter system now is no longer a table full of combat encounters. I define about a dozen encounters on separate encounter sheets, have beneficial encounters I intersperse with potential combat encounters, and as play progresses I pick which encounter seems most appropriate based on where they are located and how the party is faring when a one is rolled.

One way my encounter system could be expanded to include characters coming across herbs is to increase the number of encounters (make every d6 roll a d4 roll, etc.) and add quite a few beneficial encounters where the party stumbles across herbs. Another slightly more complicated method would be to have every one rolled result in a standard encounter while another number (or numbers) rolled on the same die will indicate the party has stumbled upon useful herbs.

Of course, the simplest way would be for the DM to randomly disperse opportunities whenever they feel like it without relying on a die roll or table of any sort.

Regardless of how it is done, the DM should be mindful of the fact that the probability of encountering rare herbs should increase the farther off the beaten path the party wanders (although rare herbs should not be encountered frequently). Main roads should only allow players to happen upon the most abundant herbs.

Picking Random Herbs

If the characters are unfamiliar with the herbs in a region, they may attempt to learn what grows in that region by picking things that look interesting and/or unusual and bringing them to a regional expert or library. When identifying the herb, the player should roll a d10. Most of the time (1-9 on a d10) they will pick an interesting looking item with no useful properties; on a roll of 0 they have found a useful herb. They should roll a d10 again and on 1-9 they find a common herb for that region they were not previously aware of; on a roll of 0 they find a rarer herb and should roll again. Every time a 0 is rolled, the herb found is located on a rarer table. (further discussion of rarity and rarity tables to follow)

If a character knows over ½ the herbs in a region then they must roll two 0 results on consecutive d10 rolls to find an herb at random. If they know ¾ of the herbs in a region they must roll three consecutive 0s. If they know 90% of the herbs in the region they must roll four consecutive 0s. the more you know the herbs in an area the less likely you are to drag something random in and have it be of value.

Buying and spending time studying a local regional field guide is a much more reasonable strategy.

Defining the Herbs Within a Region

An herb's scarcity within a region determines how difficult it is to find, and how frequently it is happened upon at random. The growth pattern of an herb is defined as **Abundant**, **Sparse**, or **Scarce**, and represents the dispersion of the herb as it grows. The overall rarity of a plant is somewhat related to its growth pattern, but is more directly described by the 10% rule (defined shortly). A DM can choose the growth pattern of an herb, or can roll on the following table(s). It is worth noting that the same herb may have a different growth pattern when that herb is present in a different region.

An herb's **Potency** is a measure of how effective that herb is when used. The potency of an herb can change from region to region, though I don't suggest varying it too widely. Potency has limited impact on use when crafting with an herbalism kit, but has significant impact on crafting with Alchemy or Poisoners kit.

Also, directly related to use with Alchemy Supplies is the **magic type** associated with an herb. Magic type helps the DM decide what type of potion can be made with an herb as it shows the magic the herb absorbed from the weave. Life, Death (or Shadow), the four elements (Air, Earth, Fire, and Water, or 5 if you include Void) are suggested types. The primary magic schools (Abjuration, Divination, Illusion, etc.) can be used instead or as well. Two additional types to consider are Arcane (non-specific) and Mundane (non-magical).

An herb's **Stability** defines and describes any difficulty or concerns when harvesting, transporting, or storing the herb. Some herbs have no stability issues and require no roll to harvest, can be stuffed in a sack with no further precautions, and can stay in that sack for weeks remaining just as potent as the day they were picked. Others...not so much.

There can be **other properties** relevant to the herb that can be rolled on chosen by the DM as well. The most relevant being the **Unrefined** quality which means that the herb does not need to be refined by an alchemist in order to be useful.

Unrefined herbs may be ground, dried, or used whole in a poultice, ground or dried and steeped, or ingested whole. To minimize overuse, I recommend healing or status removal with unrefined herbs as a poultice to require combination with one of the 10 uses of a medical kit.

Defining Rarity – the 10% Rule

The suggested organization used to define the herbs within a region follows the 10% rule. There are 9 spaces on the sheet where the herbs most common to the region are written (as well as the sheets for rarer herbs) that correspond to rolls of 1-9 on a d10. A 10th space is there for a roll of 0, but when there are rarer herbs present the 0 roll means re-roll and consult the next sheet for rarer herbs.

The number of sheets available for each region is up to the DM. The suggested use is for areas with little growth (such as tundra, mountaintops beyond the tree line, deserts, etc.) where finding any herb is rare there should only be one or two sheets. The first sheet (representing a d10 roll of 1-9) shows what herbs are present 90% of the time. The second sheet represents the 10 herbs found 91%-100% of the time. In an area of abundant growth three or even four sheets can be used with each sheet representing rarer herbs than the previous sheet.

It is suggested that each sheet representing 10-fold rarer herbs contains herbs more potent, more valuable, and with more stability concerns than the previous sheet. It is also suggested that the sheet of the most commonly occurring herbs contains the herbs most likely to have an abundant growth pattern. For each 10-fold increase in rarity there is also a penalty to search for that herb; also, the rarer herbs should have sparse or scarce growth patterns; this makes them even more challenging to find.

Each sheet does not have to contain 9 (or 10) entries; one herb may be present for more than one roll of the d10. E.G. – a healing herb that grows like a weed may be present in a grassland 30% of the time an herb is found in that region. On the regional sheet representing the most commonly occurring herbs this herb may be listed on roll of 1, 2, and 3.

Example Region – Desert

As an example, here is a desert region. Keep in mind that deserts are +10 DC to search, so a common herb (found 90% of the time) with abundant growth pattern requires a 20 DC search roll to find after 3-6 hours of travel (1-2 hours standard, tripled at DM discretion because deserts require longer travel time). Herbs with sparse growth require 25 DC search, and scarce require 30 DC search. It may be more reasonable for even the most common desert herbs to be found as the result of a random “happen upon” encounter.

Common Herbs (90%)	d10	Herb Base Value	Description	Growth Pattern	Magic Type	Pot.	Stability	Other Notes
	1	Dune Succulent	Red to red-orange thick leafed blooming plant with long single root	Scarce 1d4 plants 1 hour to harvest	Fire Life	2	Root is difficult to harvest DC 15 – harvest check required	Unrefined – can make healing compresses
	2	5 gp/oz 1d4oz per plant root						
	3	Azure Grass	Tall, thin grass with bright blue blades Sends runners and spreads along the ridge of dunes	Abundant 2d12 plants 1 hour to harvest	Air	3	Must be stored with access to breezes or wilts losing 2 potency	N/A
	4							
	5	6gp/bundle 1 bundle per plant						
	6	Scorpion Bane Cactus	2’ tall, round cactus with bright yellow blossoms around top	Sparse 1d4 cacti 1 hour to harvest	Life Earth	1	Must be carried whole (bulky) or falls apart in a few hours	Unrefined – inner fruit consumed raw counts as 1 gallon of water and antivenom
	7	5gp/plant						
	8	Sand Blossom	Small close flower with petals made of sand/sandstone	Abundant 2d12 plants 2 hours to harvest	Earth	1	Very stable if harvested correctly DC 10 check	Difficult to spot +5 DC to search
	9							
	5gp/plant							
0	Roll on rare herbs table							

The rarer herbs on this table (representing 91-100% found) require a 25 DC search for Abundant growth pattern, 30 DC for sparse growth, and 35 for scarce growth. A DM could make a table for rarer herbs if they wish...but in this environment 2 tables is probably adequate.

	d10	Herb Base Value	Description	Growth Pattern	Magic Type	Pot.	Stability	Other Notes
Rare Herbs (10%)	1	Glass Petal	Sturdy deep green stem that is intensely hot sprouts delicate petals of glass	Scarce 1d2 plants 1 hour to harvest	Fire	5	difficult to harvest DC 15 – harvest check required	Must be harvested whole or potency decreases by 1 per hour
	2							
	3	50 gp/oz 1d4oz per plant						
	4	Rolling Geode	Tumbleweed made of stony looking branches	Sparse 2d10 plants 1-2 hours to chase down (depends on wind)	Earth Air	3	Seeds are stable and release when geode is shaken	none
	5	25gp/oz						
	6	1oz seeds per plant						
	7							
	8	Air Jellies	At night appear as brightly colored stones with vines and air sac usually buried in sand underneath During the day, hot air inflates a sack on underside and they float 3-4 feet off the sand trailing vines	Scarce 1d4-2 plant (at least 1) 1 hour to harvest	Air	5	Require careful harvesting DC 10	Stable once dried (fall apart in hours if wet)
	9							
	0	25gp/oz 2d4 vines/jelly 1d4oz per vine						

Example Region – Jungle

This example is of a lush jungle region. Here a common herb (found 90% of the time) with abundant growth pattern requires a 10 DC search roll to find after 1-2 hours of travel. Herbs with sparse growth require a 15 DC search, and scarce require 20 DC search (remember either Int(Investigation) or Wis(Perception) will do).

Common Herbs (90%)	d10	Herb Base Value	Description	Growth Pattern	Magic Type	Pot	Stability	Other Notes
	1	Opalescene Bloom 5gp/bloom d8 blooms/plant d20 plants	Beautiful Shimmering flower with shifting color and heady fragrance 1 hour to harvest 5 plants	Sparse	Arcane	2	Fragile DC 10 Harvest	Will Wilt and lose 1 potency after every 1d4+2 days
	2	Icharway Knot 1gp/oz d20oz/vine d6 vines/tree	Dark green to almost black vine with frequent light green tendrils 1 hour to harvest 1 vine	Sparse	Life	1	Very stable	Unrefined - antivenom if chewed
	3	Pygmy Barrabi 1gp/lb berries d8 lbs/bush	Small flowering shrub that grows in low tree branches 1 hour to harvest 1lb berries from 1 plant	Abundant	Water	3		Will smash with rough handling
	4	Kris Cap Stair 1gp/cap d12caps/tree	Fungus that grows in stairway like pattern on trunks of lavy trees 1 hour to harvest 10 Caps	Abundant – more than one tree	Earth Death	2	DC 12 harvest broken caps spoil	Wrap and keep moist or will spoil in d4 days
	5	Dusk Goldenglow 10sp/stem	Long stemmed flower with clusters of yellow blossoms 1 hour to harvest 20 stems	Abundant Covers large field	Life	1		Unrefined – healing compress
	6	Spear Wort 10sp/stalk	Long, tall (5-6') stalk with deep red tip 1 hour to harvest 10 stalks	Abundant Covers wetlands	Water Death	2		Must keep stalks from breaking
	7	Sorcerer's Hood 1gp/bloom d10blooms/plant	Central stalk with cowl shaped blooms 1 hour to harvest 1 plant	Scarce d4 plants	Arcane Fire	3	DC 10 harvest	
	8	Black Hook 1gp/vine d4vines/tree	Dark clinging vine with black leaves and tendrils 1 hour to harvest 1 vine	Sparse	Death	2	DC 15 harvest must not let vine break/leak	Unrefined – contact poison 1d4 dmg and DC 12 Con save or poisoned
	9	Lava Bud 10sp/lb flowers d12 lbs flowers	Small flowering vine that grows close to the ground 1 hour to harvest 1 lb of flowers	Abundant	Fire Earth	2	DC 10 harvest or flowers melt	
0	Roll on Rare Herb table							

It is recommended for most fertile areas that a few unrefined herbs (allowing utility once harvested) are present. One to make healing compresses, one antivenom and/or common negative status remover, and one unique (poison, uncommon status removal, or causes uncommon status) are recommended. Varying the potency and/or growth pattern of these herbs as characters travel from one area to the next can make each region distinct.

Example Region – Jungle (cont.)

For the rare herbs (9%) of the lush jungle region, those with an abundant growth pattern are DC 15 to search. Sparse growth requires a DC 20 and scarce requires a DC 25 search.

As characters search for rare herbs (and the DC increases) consider rewarding them by allowing them to find common herbs as a happen upon encounter if they don't find any rare herbs in a location. This rewards their efforts and is reasonable in a region like a jungle where herbs grow in abundance.

Consider making rare, very rare, and ultra-rare herbs sparse and scarce more often than abundant as I have.

	d10	Herb Base Value	Description	Growth Pattern	Magic Type	Pot	Stability	Other Notes
Rare Herbs (9%)	1	Wild Uzealt Seed	Large seed pods grow high in trees on thick vines	Scarce	Water Life	6	Hard to reach but easy to harvest	Unrefined
	2	1gp/seed 1d4seeds/pod 1d12pods/vine	1 hour to harvest 1 vine of all its seed pods	1 vine per tree				Ground – healing compresses
	3	Ideo Root	Thick root of a very large fern	Sparse	Earth Arcane	5	DC 10 harvest – roots break on fail	
	4							
	5	10gp/root	1 hour to harvest grove	1d12 ferns in a grove				
	6	Scorch Bloom	Vivid red and yellow flower the size of a human head	Scarce	Fire	7	DC 15 harvest – bloom melt on fail	Requires delicate handling
		20gp/bloom	1 hour to harvest bloom	1 bloom per plant				
	7	Ussucress	Thick tuber with almost black leaves above ground	Sparse	Water Earth	5	DC 10 harvest	
	8	5gp/tuber 1d12tubers/patch	1 hour to harvest patch					
	9	Shegivine Silk	Delicate vine with white hairs that undulate in even the slightest breezes	Scarce	Air Death	6	DC 15 harvest –	Stable once vines are skinned
		35gp/vine skin	1 hour to harvest 1 vine	1d2 vines per tree				
	0	Roll on Very Rare Herb table						

On very rare table there would be only 3-4 herbs; all of which are scarce (maybe one sparse). Potency would be higher (8-10) and DC to harvest would be high as well. All would be more valuable and Earth (possibly Life) would be the dominant type of magic found.

Again, these are just suggestions. If you feel your world would benefit from less variety and more focus then have nothing but Earth or Life magic herbs growing in jungles. Air could grow on mountain tops and fire could grow in deserts. Or you could scrap using elemental energy types and use a system that mimics the schools of magic. You could have the majority of herbs be mundane, and not based on magic at all.

You could develop a table like this (or just use this if you want) for each broad region in your world. I plan to make a master chart for each region, and then modify that chart for the area around each settlement (or every time the characters travel more than a couple miles) to make each area distinct and “alive”.

I used an online plant/herb name generator to come up with the names on these tables; there are ½ dozen good ones that come up if you type random herb name generator into a search engine. There are also lots of premade resources out there, some of which I will skim from and add in the final section.

Using the Herbalism Kit

Kits are used for harvesting, although they are not necessary. Consider penalizing characters who attempt to harvest without the proper equipment by increasing the DC or imposing disadvantage. Kits are used for storing herbs, although again, they are not necessary. As above, consider penalizing characters without storage solutions for herbs that require delicate treatment. Kits are used to identify herbs and where they grow but, yet again, are not necessary. Consider (harshly) penalizing characters without an appropriate regional field guide if they are harvesting in areas where they are unfamiliar.

Herbs with mundane capacity and imbued with energy they absorb from the weave can be very valuable to people who will use them in rituals, use them in cooking, brewing, or preparing other foodstuffs, or use them create potions and other consumable items. Selling herbs can (and possibly should) be an in-depth process, or if you want it can be a quick and dirty way for your characters to make a buck or generate food while travelling.

Herbs can be passed from one player to another so that a player with skill in a kit used to refine herbs (Primarily Alchemists' Supplies, but to lesser degree Poisoners Kit) can use/experiment with those herbs to make other things. I also think it is appropriate for some herbs to be useful on their own without refinement. I do not think these herbs should be as powerful as a potion or other alchemical concoction, but think that they should have utility to heal and remove status effects.

Using the Kit – Unrefined Herbs

Some herbs may be used without refinement from another kit. When defining the use of unrefined herbs, some ways they can be used are:

- 1) ingested raw for immediate benefit (e.g. – healing, gain of temporary HP, reversal of negative status)
- 2) steeped, ground, or otherwise prepared and ingested
 same potential beneficial effects but requires a rest or small amount of down time to utilize
- 3) pre-made for immediate benefit in the future
 poultice or other preparation made and stabilized to have ready for future need

My favorite idea for unrefined healing utility is for characters to prepare antivenom (remove poison status) and healing (heal similar to bard song of rest) compresses for use after a battle to benefit characters during and/or after a rest. I have the characters use one use of a medical kit to form a compress (this limits overuse), and give bonuses to save or additional save opportunities for the antivenom compresses or small healing bonuses (+1d4 to +1d8 based on potency of herb) at the end of a rest for healing compresses. The healing effect is modest, and is not immediate (thus doesn't overshadow or replace potions), but has the added utility of working with or without using hit dice to heal (so has a little better utility than bards' song of rest).

Unrefined Herbs – Crafting Examples

Healing Compress

Requires amount of ground, dried, or fresh herb sufficient to cover 6" x 2" compress (DM discretion), 1 use of healing kit
Stable for 1 week (less or more time per DM discretion)

Heals HP per potency (potency 1-2 heals 1d4, potency 3-4 heals 1d6, potency 5+ heals 1d8 – all per DM discretion) at end of rest in addition to any HD spent to gain (spending HD not required – per DM discretion).

Herbs and use of healing kit lost after 1 use (rest) or when herbs are no longer fresh/effective.

Antivenom Compress

Requires amount of ground, dried, or fresh herb sufficient to cover 6" x 2" compress (DM discretion), 1 use of healing kit
Stable for 1 week (less or more time per DM discretion)

Allows saving throw (type and DC defined by poison – typically Con) 1x/hour (in addition to saves defined by poison type) for up to 10 hours while worn. For herb with potency 3 or more advantage given for every save attempt.

Herbs and use of healing kit lost after 1 use (rest) or when herbs are no longer effective.

Focus/Clearing/Revivifying Tea

Requires steeping of a few leaves to 1oz (DM discretion) ground or whole herbs in fresh water over flame.

Tea stable (fresh) for up to 1 day once steeped; prepared herb stable for longer (per herb stability)

Removes stunned effect 1 round after consumed

Allows saving throw for blinded and/or charmed and/or deafened and/or diseased and/or frightened and/or paralyzed and/or poisoned status (status herbs may remove per DM discretion) 1 round after consuming.

Herbs with potency 3 or greater may add additional saves beyond 1st save (DM discretion)

Herbs with potency 3 or greater may give advantage on saves (DM discretion)

Herbs may remove some/all statuses without requiring save (DM discretion)

Sleepytime Tea

Requires steeping of a few leaves to 1oz (DM discretion) ground or whole herbs in fresh water over flame.

Tea stable (fresh) for up to 1 day once steeped; prepared herb stable for longer (per herb stability)

Places creature to sleep (per sleep spell) 1d4 rounds after consumed.

Requires Con save; DC 5, +5 for 1 point of herbs potency

(e.g. – DC 10 for potency 1, DC 15 for potency 2, DC 20 for potency 3, etc.)

Stone to Flesh Balm

Requires grinding and applying sufficient herb to cover the whole body of the petrified creature (possibly more than once – once armor/clothing are no longer stone may require removal and re-application to newly exposed petrified flesh).

Removes petrification status 1 (or more) round(s) after applied.

Herbs only stable for minutes after ground (requires immediate use and time to apply)

If ingested may give advantage to saves vs petrification (DM discretion)

Noxious Vine

If placed on open flame (torch or larger) 1-10oz dried vine (amount per DM discretion) releases foul, noxious gas in cloud 10' radius from source of combustion.

Effects per stinking cloud spell; requires Con save; DC 5, +5 for 1 point of herbs potency

(e.g. – DC 10 for potency 1, DC 15 for potency 2, DC 20 for potency 3, etc.)

Increase radius by 10' for potency 3 or more (DM discretion).

Increase radius by 10' for every additional 1-10oz added to flame (maximum radius of effect per DM discretion)

Like these? Make up more. Want to make the system “crunchy”? Require a Dex, Int, or Wis(Herbalism Kit) roll to craft these items and increase potency with high rolls.

Want some herbal poisons? Make those up too. Poison effectiveness should be based on potency of herb, but I suggest you keep the efficacy (total damage and DC of poison) small and save the potent stuff for herbs refined by the Alchemists' Supplies or Poisoners Kit.

Example Herbs – Mundane

Here are some example herbs with suggestions for utility and growth pattern. Potency and rarity should be determined by the DM, as well as any harvesting or handling DCs or considerations.

Plantaine Weed

Absorbs toxins and can make antivenom compresses. Grows in abundance in low grassy areas; almost impossible to harvest completely or kill off a patch. Recommended potency 1-2.

Aniseed

Useful in trace amounts as a spice, in large amounts as a healing herb. Grows abundantly as a grass with large flat seeds which are stable for transport and storage for extended periods.

Willow Bark

Steeped as a tea which removes pain and swelling and promotes healing and recovery. One tree can produce copious amounts of bark, and stands of more than one tree are typically found.

Wormwood

Rotting wood from felled trees contains hallucinogenic properties. Most potent areas are layers near outside of tree closest to the ground. Live trees may be in abundance, but felled trees with the right amount of decay are scarce.

Hawthorne

Flowers and berries of this small bush have healing properties. Sparse growth in well shaded regions of forests. Healing properties fade quickly once picked.

Chamomile

Broad leaves of this bush grow in abundance in sparse forests with lots of sunlight. Mildly sedating effects of steeped leaves or poultices calms nerves and aids healing.

Redcap

Small mushroom with distinctive red caps with several bright white buttons on the cap and a pale tan stem with NO buttons. Eating the caps causes vomiting within 1 hour and then 2-4 hours of hallucinations. The redcap grows near the roots of large trees and is often found growing in the manure of grazing animals. Redcaps (caps, red-eyes, oracles tops) are quite often valuable and/or illegal.

False Redcap

Small mushroom with distinctive red caps with several pale yellowish white buttons on the cap and along the white stem. Grows near the roots of large trees. False redcaps are pleasant in flavor but contain a potent neuro-toxin that causes paralysis and often death 15 minutes after ingestion. Harvested false redcaps that have been plucked from their stems are almost identical to redcaps.

Valerian Root

Valerian shrubs grow sparsely in the shade of large trees. Steeped or chewed the soft root causes relaxation and restful sleep which helps calm stress and heal wounds.

Foxglove Flower

Foxgloves grow in abundance in fields and sparse groves of trees. Steeped foxglove leaves and flowers help sick or poisoned creatures recover.

Example Herbs – Life Magic

Here are some example herbs appropriately themed for use in crafting healing, status removal, and radiant damage consumables. Some flavor text included, but specifics left to DM discretion.

Angel Flower

Bright white flower with large delicate bloom/petals.

Angel Hair

Thin, wispy vine that reaches for sunlight and has long, almost invisibly thin tendrils.

Blessed Thistle

Deep purple (perhaps golden?) flower on tall stalks with silvery sheen of thin protective needles.

Goldenharp

Bright yellow blossom from low growing bush/shrub or hanging vine.

Lifebloom

Brilliant red flower with white center growing from shrub/plant with broad, deep red leaves.

Radiant Synthseed

White or chromatic seeds from tall golden grass or pods from vibrant vine.

Sacrament Flower

Flat golden or crimson flower with many petals that form a circle or 4-5 petals that are reminiscent of a humanoid body.

Silverleaf

Indistinct plant/shrub with bright silver flower or silver/white leaves

White Foam

Creeping vine with abundant small white flowers

Suggestions for naming:

Angels, Angelic, Radiant, Luminous, Light, Golden, Caress, Embrace, Embracing, Love, Loving, Life, Healing, Healers, Fortified, Bliss, Bless, Blessed, Glowing, Glow, Mothers, Moms, Mums, etc.

Example Herbs – Death Magic

Here are some example herbs appropriately themed for use in crafting poisons, negative status, and necrotic damage consumables. Some flavor text included, but specifics left to DM discretion.

Nightshade

Low, creeping plant with dark twisted stems and deep green leaves. Sometimes bears deep red fruits.

Wrackblade, Bloodgrass

Short, deep red grass with firm, sharp blades. Grows in patches in some regions, and entire pastures in others.

Mandrake

Root with roughly humanoid shape, sometimes including finger and toe like root hairs. Grows under gallows and trees where humanoid creatures were hung or tortured.

Corpse Flower

Pale flower with long drooping petals that looks like a shrouded humanoid body. Grows in sparse patches, except in areas connected to the realm of shadow, where it grows in abundance.

Death Blossom

Low, bush with small, dark leaves and tall stalks where brightly colored flowers bloom like a ball, open in all directions.

Fiend Ivy

Crimson vines with dark green, almost black, leaves. Grows plump deep purple berries that give off a sickly-sweet aroma.

Voidroot

Root so deep black in color it almost absorbs all light.

Lightbane Flower

Scarce plant that grows a single flower with delicate petals that are jet black and a single bright pistil in their center that looks like a point of light in a dark sky.

Suggestions for naming:

Wrack, Wracked, Death, Dead, Pale, Corpse, Sickle, Sick, Sickly, Wart, Wort, Fiend, Fiends, Abyssal, Demon, Demons, Strangle, Choke, Choking, Blood, Bloodied, Rot, Rotted, Rotten, Putrid, etc.

Example Herbs – Arcane Magic

Here are some example herbs appropriately themed for use as adjuncts in crafting potions, for removing or imposing status effects, and force damage consumables. Some flavor text included, but specifics left to DM discretion.

Mana Blossom

Bright, almost glowing, blue flower with thick petals. Grows alone or in small beds in isolated regions where little else can.

Wizard Eye

A shrub with bright red berries with purple hair-like protrusions at the base of the berries. Grow in hard to find areas that are difficult to access.

Iridescent Creeper

Purple vine with many colored leaves and tendrils. Found in ancient forests at the top of the tallest trees.

Example Herbs – Elemental

Here are some example herbs appropriately themed for removing or imposing status effects, and to add elemental damage to consumables.

Wind Reed

A tall stalk with white cap that undulates in the breeze, even when there is little breeze present.

Mist Vine

Thin Clear vine with blue-green leaves that are constantly moving. Grows upward from the tops of the highest trees, tendrils reaching into the air as if supported by the breeze itself.

Cloud Berry

Small white berry that grows from a low bush. Located above the tree line on high mountains where clouds gather as the day warms.

Air Element naming suggestions:

Air, Airy, Effervescent, Wind, Mist, Cloud, Breeze, Thunder, Spark, Lightning, Storm, Gale, Hurricane, Cloud

Water Berry

Deep blue berries that grow on a vine that always originates in rivers or streams.

Sea Foam Flower

Small white blossoms that grow from creeping tendrils on the crest of ocean dunes.

Ocean bloom

Flower with blue petals that pale to white at the edges. Flowers bloom on cliffs that overlook the ocean

Water Element naming suggestions:

Blue, Liquid, Sea, Lake, Deep, Depth, Fathom, Ocean, Water, Wet, River, Creek, Pool, Shallow, Shallows

Example Herbs – Elemental (cont.)

Searing razorvine

Vines have sharp spines and radiate heat, which often leave scorch marks and cuts on the trees or bushes it grows over.

Smoldering crimsonweed

Small dark plant that scorches the earth around its large single taproot. Found on arid plains where spontaneous grassfires occur during the dry months

Burning bush

Small sparse shrub that grows in isolation on mountainsides. Its aromatic resins often spontaneously combust, which does no damage to the plant itself

Fire Element naming suggestions:

Red, Crimson, Burning, Searing, Smoldering, Smoke, Fire, Flame, Heat, Hot, Warm, Immolation, Scorch, Scorching, Lava

Rock Maple

This large tree has tan leaves in the spring and summer that fall apart into dust in the fall. The wood is incredibly hard and difficult to harvest

Sand Flower

Small yellow flowered plant with petals that look like pressed sand or earth. Grows at the base of sand dunes or in areas where dunes give way to rock outcroppings

Dust Blossom

Low creeping plant with abundant pale flowers. Will grow in almost any location, but thrive in arid climates where most other plants lack the water to grow

Earth Element naming suggestions:

Sand, Dust, Dirt, Earth, Ground, Rock, Rocky, Stone, Pebble, Pumice, Crack, Cracked, Boulder, Pulverize, Marble, Gem, any gem or precious metal name

Example Herbs – Magic Schools

Here are some example herbs appropriately themed for use in crafting potions, other consumables, or items with specific properties tied to the common schools of magic. Some flavor text included, but specifics left to DM discretion

Bane Flower

Bright pink flowering vine that grows on gates linking planes. Often interferes with the function of the gate, or limits the ability of creatures to perceive or cross the portal

Shield Stool

Very hardy fungus with a large, shield shaped cap. Grows in areas most plants or fungus would find inhospitable or dangerous.

Abjuration naming suggestions:

Bane, Ward, Warding, Cancelling, Shield, Shielding

Emperors call

Creeping plant that grows out from a central root and flowers at the edge in a circular formation. Blooming flowers are vivid purple in color identical to the hue worn exclusively by royalty

Herald blossom

Single green bloom that feeds on the energy of the fey realm. Usually blossoms immediately before a rift to the fey realm forms nearby

Conjuration naming suggestions:

Summon, summoning, call, calling, herald, draw, irresistible, beckoning

Crone's Shroud

Grey-green hanging moss that usually covers whatever it grows on completely. Found primarily in lowlands and swamps.

Viziers Boon

Small tree with strong smelling resin exuded from the many cracks in its bark. Incense made of this resin is highly valued by fortune tellers and other diviners

Divination naming suggestions:

Sight, Vision, Seeing, View, Dream, Stupor, Fog, Mystic, Shaman, Journey

Lovers Embrace

Flowering plant that always grows in pairs. When flowers bloom they often face each other as if looking at one another.

Resolute Mahogany

These exquisite, large hardwood trees make the ideal material for wands used to enchant creatures. They grow in forests where other trees seem to bend and bow out of the way so as not to impede their light, and streams seem to meander right to their waiting roots.

Enchantment naming suggestions:

Tempt, Temptation, Will, Call, Calling, Yearning, Embrace, Calming, Bewitching, Dominating

Evocation naming suggestions:

Any/all Elemental naming suggestions

Ephemeral grass

Short shimmering grasses that are almost invisible, showing only the outline of their blades, which allows the color and shape of the surrounding grasses to show through them.

False spineflower

This soft and delicate flowering plant appears to have large, sharp thorns, but they are illusory. Grows in grasslands where grazing animals are common

Illusion naming suggestions:

False, Mock, Ephemeral, Shimmering, Illusory, Mirage

Necromancy naming suggestions:

Any/all death magic suggestions

Reversal weed

Small broad-leafed plant that lives amongst grasses. Ingestion of this plant causes a temporary reversal in gender

Gill flower

Flowering reed that grows in wet or swampy regions. Ingestion causes humanoids to develop large frills on their neck and gain the ability to breathe water for around 1 hour. The frills are tender and cause extreme pain if they dry out

Transmutation naming suggestions:

Shift, Shifting, Grow, Growth, Shrinking, Shrink, Change, Sprout, Turn, Adapt, Adapting

Illicit Substances

Some herbs effect certain humanoid's bodily functions and are consumed in one way or another so those humanoids can experience these effects. Herbs with effects that increase a creature's metabolism or alertness/awareness are called **stimulants**. Herbs with effects that slow a creature's metabolism or sedate the creature are called **depressants**. Herbs that cause a change in a creature's mental state such that they perceive things differently than others around them are called **hallucinogens**. Herbs which cause any of these effects are referred to as intoxicants, and creatures experiencing these effects are intoxicated.

Some intoxicants are commonly used, such as alcohol (a depressant) or tobacco (a stimulant) and as such, are commonly available. Some intoxicants are legal (or use is ignored) in certain areas while illegal or unavailable in others.

Some intoxicants are very likely to cause chemical dependence and withdrawal after a short period of regular use. This can lead to increased use, psychological dependence, and/or addiction. Herbs which lead to dependence and/or addiction and the behaviors that accompany these states are often illegal in populated regions (towns and cities) and shunned in more isolated areas (villages).

Here are some example herbs with intoxicating effects:

Pipeweed – stimulant – smoked weed can lead to increased alertness at times (advantage on perception or initiative rolls at DM discretion) but withdrawal leads to consistent use, which can cause complications (lighting a pipe at night draws attention, smell of smoke give advantage to creatures' perception rolls to detect). Grows in many regions with adequate water (not in arid regions). Legal in most areas

Pinleaf Pipeweed – depressant, hallucinogen – smoked bud causes relaxation (improved healing during rests) but impairs alertness/awareness. Strong potential for psychological dependence, which leads to repeated use. Can be refined by alchemy into potent oil or resin. Grows almost everywhere, but grows exceptionally well in arid regions at high elevation. Legal in most areas as bud, refined forms illegal in most areas.

Fey Pipeweed – stimulant, hallucinogen – small leafed plant. Smoked leaf can lead to wild hallucinations and cause the creature to engage in erratic behaviors. Strongly habit forming. Grows in areas where Fey realms are close/connected. Leaf is often illegal in populated areas and use is frowned upon in rural locations. Dried leaf is almost impossible to differentiate from common pipeweed.

Suoso Leaf – stimulant – chewed leaf is a mild stimulant which helps with mood and/or altitude sickness. Can be refined by alchemy into a white powder with potent stimulant effects which is inhaled or crystals which are smoked. All forms are habit forming and refined forms cause significant chemical dependence. Grows abundantly in jungles. Raw leaf is usually legal, but refined forms are almost always illegal.

Blackleaf – depressant – chewed leaf is strongly sedating and rots the teeth within a short period of use. Grows in wet regions that are connected to the shadow realm. Can be refined by alchemy into a powerful sedative powder that paralyzes in trace quantities and can stop the heart in larger (but still relatively small) doses. While paralyzed, creatures are aware of everything that transpires around them but are unable to respond to their environment. Use of raw leaf is often legal but frowned upon, while refined products are almost always illegal.

Pleasure Root – intoxicant – chewed or steeped the pleasure root leaves a creature feeling content. Refined into a liquid, pleasure root is much more potent, and causes creatures to feel euphoric and highly sensitive to physical stimulation. The root grows in dark, wet areas, often at the base of large trees in amongst the tree roots. Use of pleasure root in refined and/or unrefined forms is frequently illegal, but seldom enforced.

Orc Nip – hallucinogen – orc nip is a mild hallucinogen that invokes pleasant, playful visions and behavior. The intoxicating effects are seen only in orcs (and to lesser degree in ogres). In orcs, inhaling the scent of the leaves (wild or dried) fills them with the urge to chew and ingest the source immediately. Ingesting the leaves causes pleasant hallucinations and playful behaviors for several minutes to hours. Refined orc nip can be smoked or inhaled to bring about a pleasant stupor that lasts for many hours or even days. Orc nip grows in scarce quantities in arid regions, and orc tribes will often fight to the death to defend a plant located in their tribal lands. Orc nip is almost unknown outside of orc culture and is therefore legal and overlooked in most areas.

Thought Bane – depressant – the leaves of this delicate vine contain a substance that reacts strongly within the elven nervous system. When steeped in tea or wine, the unrefined or dried leaf leads to a long trance like state very similar to the state an elf enters for a long rest. During this period, the elf is completely unaware of their surroundings, and their minds are completely inactive. After, the elf feels very well rested and refreshed. The active compounds can be refined by alchemy into an oil which is strongly paralytic if ingested or applied to a wound, but only to elves or ½ elves. The leaves are legal almost everywhere, but refined forms are highly illegal (sometimes carrying a death sentence) in elven lands.

Gut Rot – stimulant – gut rot is the common term used among dwarves for the spores of a fungi that grow in many mines. The dwarves exposed to the fungi develop a tolerance to the unpleasant effects most other races experience when they imbibe the spores, and for them the spores are a mild stimulant. For most other races, the spores cause intense stomach upset and pain followed almost immediately by vomiting. Many clans will include gut rot in some of their brews; the taste is mild and pleasant and the stimulant activity allows the dwarves to drink longer. Foreigners who are invited to drink are often chided for their inability to hold down their drink.

Dream Blossom – depressant – the dream blossom poppy grows in abundance in arid soils. After the flower blooms and is pollinated, it forms a seed pod at the base of the flower. When cut, the seed pod leaks a milky fluid; the fluid is collected and when consumed leads to sedation and euphoria. The dream blossom milk can be refined by alchemy into a variety of potent liquid and solid forms that can be smoked or ingested. In high enough doses dream blossom milk and its derivatives can lead to respiratory depression, coma, and/or death.

Selling, Buying, and Learning – Herbalism Shops

Herbs can be found almost everywhere and used by anyone. Shops where herbalists buy and sell local herbs are present in many villages (50% - DM discretion for their world), most towns (90% - DM discretion), and almost all cities (100% - in many cities there are more than one). Herbalism shops are places where expert advice can be found regarding the herbs of the region. Herbalism shops will often sell other items associated with healing.

The NPCs who run an herbalism shop will often provide information about local herbs, to include their uses, potency, rarity, appearance, and where they grow. Some shop owners will avoid telling characters information about herbs that are rare, or that have potential illicit use. Some shops will have NPC customers or employees who can provide information in addition to the shop owner.

Item	Cost	Village Have (%)	Amount	Town Have (%)	Amount	City Have (%)	Amount
Common herb (from local region)	100% list	75%	1d20 units	90%	2d20 units	100%	3d20 units
Common herb (neighboring region)	110% list	10%	1d12 units	50%	1d12 units	75%	1d12 units
Common Herb (distant region)	150% list	5%	1d10 units	25%	1d10 units	50%	1d10 units
Rare herb (local)	110% list	50%	1d6 units	75%	1d6 units	90%	1d8 units
Rare herb (neighboring region)	150% list	10%	1d4 units	25%	1d4 units	33%	1d6 units
Rare herb (distant region)	200% list	5%	1d4 units	10%	1d4 units	25%	1d4 units
Very rare herb (local)	150% list	10%	1d4 units	25%	1d6 units	50%	1d8 units
Very rare herb (neighboring region)	200% list	5%	1d4 units	10%	1d4 units	25%	1d4 units
Very rare herb (distant region)	300% list	1%	1d2 units	5%	1d2 units	10%	1d4 units
Herbalism kit	5gp	75%	1d4	90%	1d4	100%	1d6
Local regional herb guide	1gp	50%	1d4	90%	1d6	100%	1d6
Neighboring herb guide	2gp	10%	1	50%	1	75%	1d4
Distant regional herb guide	5gp	5%	1	25%	1	50%	1
Healers kit	5gp	75%	1d4	90%	1d8	100%	2d6
Healing potion	50gp	10%	1d4	25%	1d6	75%	1d8
Superior healing potion	150gp	1%	1	5%	1	10%	1d2
Antitoxin	50gp	90%	1d4	100%	1d6	100%	1d12

Other Places to Learn – Libraries and Booksellers

Herbalism shops are a useful source of written and verbal information regarding the herbs of a region, but they are not the only sources of information for characters. Libraries and Bookstores can also have regional field guides or other books to borrow and study or purchase.

Regional field guides should be present in large libraries, but scarce in smaller libraries. Unlike herbalism shops, Libraries will be less likely to have field guides in their collections that are immediately useful. They are just as likely to have a field guide or other source of literature that describes a far distant region as they are for the immediate region. The presence or utility of information on herbs in a library is up to the discretion of the DM, but it is suggested that the presence and distribution of useful information should be sporadic.

This sporadic distribution of useful information should extend to booksellers as well. The collection of books available should be random and useful books should be happened upon while spending a good deal of time browsing titles. The price and quality of available resources should also be inconsistent and random with characters finding very expensive, poorly written books just as often as they find comprehensive books at a reasonable price.

The DM should also consider rewarding side research with partial results. E.G. – in a library often frequented by wizards and alchemists, books which describe herbs used in potion crafting or as material components will abound. Often these books will not describe all the herbs of a region, or the particulars of harvesting the herbs that are included, but can give the herbalist insight into one or two herbs in a region.

Book found	Personal library	College library	Large city library	Book seller	Cost
Local regional field guide	10%	20%	20%	10%	1gp
Neighboring regional field guide	5%	20%	20%	10%	1gp
Distant regional field guide	1%	20%	20%	10%	1gp
Inexpensive decent reference (1d4 common, 1d2 rare)	5%	30%	30%	20%	5sp
Inexpensive modest reference (1d4 common)	10%	20%	30%	20%	5sp
Inexpensive poor reference (1 common)	20%	10%	30%	20%	5sp
Expensive decent reference (1d4 common, 1d2 rare)	20%	40%	20%	30%	1gp
Expensive modest reference (1d4 common)	30%	20%	20%	40%	1gp
Expensive poor reference (1 common)	40%	10%	20%	50%	1gp
Obscure reference (1 rare, 1 very rare)	10%	30%	10%	20%	3gp

Final Thoughts

Everyone plays the game differently; many have put their version of crafting rules up for others to use, but none have scratched the itch for me. I want a system that makes sense, that has depth, but maintains a simplified core mechanism. Most other systems have a one size fits all approach where every forest in the whole world contains the same herb; this kind of system is simple to utilize but does not possess the immersive depth I desire. You can create one table for every forest in your world with this system if you choose, but adding variety creates a world that feels more alive (but takes more time for the DM)

Most other attempts to flesh out this crafting toolset have used a system where players roll vs a DC and find something regardless of where they are looking, whether they have ever been there or have any experience in that environment, or what they hope to find that would best assist them in the game. This is oversimplified and feels unrealistic and does not promote immersive play. To me it resembles video game play, where characters walk past consumables/materials and they light up to draw their attention. Players with skill in herbalism kit using these rules will quickly become accustomed to rolling dice and waiting for their hand-out every time they travel anywhere.

The herbalism kit systems created by other homebrewers are simpler for a DM to pick up and use, and they reward players for having skill in a kit or set of tools (which is a gaping hole in 5^{ed} rules), but they do not promote immersive play. I intend this as an alternative system which requires some thought and effort on the part of the DM, but rewards DM and players with an immersive experience (game within a game or mini-game).

You can, of course, thin out elements of this system to simplify things considerably. You can remove the concept of potency, harvesting difficulty, and/or stability concerns altogether. You can standardize the quantities harvested (e.g. – measure every herb harvested in oz or lb). You can create and utilize a recipe system to create a small number of potions from one given type of herb. You can eliminate the concept of rarity entirely; you can make regional tables less than 10 entries (for easy d6, d8, d12, or even d20 rolls).

This system is designed for DMs who want to put in some degree of effort to create a greater degree of immersion than that offered by the multitude of other homebrew offerings. I imagine that if you are still reading, this includes you. I hope you find some use for this interpretation at your table, even if you only use a small part.

Thanks, and enjoy!