

HERBALIST'S ROADSACK

From shambling mounds to assassin vines and the massive gardens of sentient mushrooms that grow deep below the surface of the world, most adventurers have come upon some manner of exotic vegetation. They cast a cautious glance at vibrantly colored fruits or flowers, expecting signs of magic—some even take up the study of herbalism looking to exploit the properties of potent plant life. This article contains a wealth of information to equip such curious souls. Each of the following herbal ingredients occupies a unique, somewhat strange place within the lives of the common populace, and many are the subjects of myths and legends. For those properly trained they are also the components used to create powerful potions and curatives—or even deadly poisons.



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GATHERING MATERIALS

There are a number of ways to begin the process of transforming plants into useable substances. PCs can attempt to recollect the uses and applications of a specific kind of flora with an Intelligence (Nature) check against a DC chosen by the GM (based on the rarity of the plant), provided of course that the plant is not commonly known folklore or as part of natural remedies. It is also possible for adventurers to discover written records or recipes that provide all the details on how to properly harvest and work with certain plants.

When it comes to actually tracking down the vegetation needed, local quantities are often highly variable—some locations may not have enough of the plants in question, or conditions nearby might make locally grown specimens unsuitable for the intended use. Successful Wisdom (Survival) checks (DC 10, 15, or 20) locate a specific plant if it can be found in the area. Having a local guide to locate known clusters or growths of the plant in the area is much easier, but requires a knowledgeable and friendly commoner that is likely to charge for their services.

Once the plants have been found, a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) or Intelligence (Nature or Arcana) check harvests useable portions of the vegetation. On a success, 4 ounces of usable material is harvested (four successful checks yield 1 pound of material.) On a failure, a portion of the plant becomes spoiled. If the plant had only a small amount of useful material the GM may decide that a failed check prevents further attempts to harvest from it. Alternatively, a PC can spend 10 gold pieces and 1 hour to make a successful DC 8 Intelligence (alchemist's supplies) to harvest a plant.

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There are countless kinds of vegetation that can be clipped or culled to provide the raw ingredients used in a wide variety of handy items—below are but a small sample of the most common. Each includes a description of their appearance and information on where they are likely to be found or the properties ascribed to them in folklore, as well as details of useful products that can be made from the compounds contained in the plant. Creating one of these items requires 1 hour of work and a successful Intelligence (alchemist's supplies) or Wisdom (herbalism kit) against the given DC. On a failure or if the work is interrupted, item is not created and the ingredients used are wasted. The DC of any of these checks can be reduced by –5 by spending 150 gold on additional rare reagents.

Bloodwort

A single white flower blooms atop a tall stalk that grows out of a tangle of dark red leaves below. The sap within those leaves is red like blood and nearly as thick.

The bright red sap from the leaves of bloodwort is often used in cheap red dyes. Flies are drawn to the sap as well and many establishments use it to keep flies from bothering their patrons. The plant is common in dense, damp, dark, temperate forests.

DC 15 Intelligence (alchemist's supplies): A pound of bloodwort can be dried, powdered, and used to create a single dose of oil of taggit.

Devil's Bane

These white five-petaled flowers grow in small, dense clusters from a central woody stalk. Their hirsute leaves bunch around the base of the plant.

Also known as verbena, the devil's bane flower is heralded in lore as a potent remedy against evil. More commonly its leaves are prepared as a highly stimulating, somewhat bitter tea. This plant grows well in cool, dry environments away from prolonged exposure to sunlight, frequently found in old growth forests in mid to low altitudes.

DC 10 Wisdom (herbalism kit): A pound of devil's bane can be dried, the flower petals pulverized into a powder that can be mixed with water to create one vial of holy water.

DC 15 Intelligence (alchemist's supplies): When mixed with an ounce of fresh blood, 2 pounds of dried devil's bane can be made into a thick, crimson paste. A weapon that has been coated with this alchemical substance overcomes resistances as though it were made of silver. Once applied, the paste dries within 1 hour and loses its effects.

Doll's Eye Berries

Clusters of white berries grow from a tangle of stalks. On the far side of each fruit is a dark purplish-black spot giving it an eye-like appearance.

These berries are mildly toxic and sometimes used to create a brew that is consumed to induce vomiting in livestock that have eaten something much worse. It is rumored that hags grow dense bushes of these berries and return to whisper with them, learning what the doll's eyes might have seen. These plants thrive in sunlight and are often found on the edges of forests, or within clearings or other openings of the tree canopy.

DC 10 Wisdom (herbalism kit): A pound of these berries can be distilled into a single dose of malice poison. With sufficient raw materials, up to 5 doses can be prepared at the same time with the same ability check.

Gold Caps

These small mushrooms stand only an inch or two tall with round caps of golden brown color, frequently growing together in circular clusters.

Gold caps grow nearly anywhere and are well known for their psychoactive properties, prominently featured in a number of rituals. A creature that consumes gold caps experiences vivid hallucinations and must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or suffer from a randomly determined short-term madness for 1d4 hours.

DC 20 Intelligence (alchemist's supplies): While it must be brewed very carefully, 4 pounds of dried gold caps can be distilled into a *potion of mind reading*. Any creature that drinks this potion is afflicted with a randomly determined short-term madness for the duration.

Hag's Tongue

Looking something like an elongated lily pad the hag's tongue plant grows in shallow bodies of water, a single stalk rising upwards towards the surface where its large leaf floats.

Hag's tongue is an aquatic plant found in wetlands, swamps, bogs, and shallow ponds. Folklore associates it with the restless souls of those that have ran afoul of witches and were drowned, and fears of its origins have led it to have few common uses.

DC 10 Intelligence (herbalism kit) or Wisdom (herbalism kit): A dried bundle of leaves from 2 pounds of hag's tongue can be used as an arcane or druidic focus. In addition, a creature holding it has advantage on Constitution ability checks made to maintain concentration on the spell *bestow curse*. Eating this bundle of leaves grants the effects of a *potion of water breathing*.

Jelly Ear

These translucent orange mushrooms grow in shelf-like clusters on the shady side of trees. Their underside is folded and furrowed, giving it a superficial resemblance to an ear.

Jelly ear is a popular ingredient in soups and stews, and it is often served as a side dish on special occasions. During the rainy season this mushroom is incredibly common in old growth forests—the oldest trees get practically covered in clusters.

DC 5 Intelligence (herbalism kit): A meal suitable for a Medium-sized creature can be prepared from a pound of jelly ear. With sufficient raw materials, up to 6 meals can be prepared at the same time with the same ability check.

DC 5 Intelligence (alchemist's supplies): As long as it is prepared without exposure to sunlight, 2 pounds of jelly ear can be used to make a dose of restorative ointment.

Mandrake Root

There no fewer than three varieties of mandragora plant. All are squat and leafy, looking something like a cabbage that has been splayed open from the middle. They produce edible berries or flowering buds in the springtime but are best known for their

bulbous roots, which are often larger than the plant itself and superficially resemble an infantile humanoid shape.

Mandrake roots almost universally look like crude caricatures of cherubic children and have strong supernatural connotations in folklore. Some associate their properties to the poses that the figure appears to have. A plant that looks like a child curled up slumbering on its side is said to be useful as a sleep aid, while another that appears to have its arms raised as if in a fit might be believed to be useful for cursing someone with restlessness. They are also frequently used as a protective charm for both expectant mothers and newborns, placed beneath their beds in a bowl of fresh milk each night to promote good health.

DC 20 Intelligence (herbalism kit): When prepared with a drop of humanoid blood, 2 pounds of mandrake root can be used to create four doses of assassin's blood.

DC 20 Wisdom (herbalism kit): The sap from 4 pounds of mandrake root can be used to make a single *potion of greater healing*.

DC 20 Wisdom (alchemist's supplies): When prepared with a drop of tears shed from heartbreak, 1 pound of powdered mandrake root can be used to make a *philter of love*.

Snowdrop

These delicate plants have a pair of linear leaves and a single small white drooping bell-shaped flower with six petal-like tepals, each with distinctive green

markings and arranged in two circular whorls.

Known among the elves as *galanthas*, the snowdrop flower grows exclusively in cold climates. It flourishes in high altitudes and some of the most beautiful fields of these flowers are cultivated by the slender folk atop remote mountain ranges. Any creature able to cast *remove curse* can spend an hour and burn 10 pounds of snowdrop flowers as part of a ritual to cast it without expending a spell slot.

DC 20 Intelligence (alchemist's supplies): When combined with other common reagents, 6 pounds of snowdrop can be distilled into an elixir identical to a *potion of cold resistance*.

Virola Bark

The bark of the virola oak consists of raised vertical bands of ridges which alternately meet and spread apart as they wind skyward, each brittle, porous, and oozing a clear, thin sap when squeezed.

Virola bark is a commonly chewed as an herbal remedy for mild body aches and pains. Grown best in damp soils and often found clumped together in season floodplains, the trees this is stripped from are not as common as they once were—fortunately it's relatively easy to gather the bark when one is found.

DC 10 Wisdom (herbalism kit): A single harvesting of sap from virola bark can be transformed into an ointment that treats an herbalism kit as a healer's kit for a single use.

DC 20 Intelligence (herbalism kit): Although the quality of the ingredients must be high, 5 pounds of virola bark can be used to create a *potion of healing*. 🧪