

Nature's Field

An Electronic Journal for NSP Distributors

Senna

By Steven Horne and Mark
Montgomery

According to Terry Willard of the Wild Rose College of Natural Healing, senna has been used in Egypt since 1500 B.C. Arabian documents show that it was in use on the Arabian peninsula by at least the 9th century when it was praised by Arabian physicians. Both the *Cassia acutifolia* plant and the *Cassia angustifolia* plant are small shrubs whose leaves are a bright, fresh, yellowish-green. Both species have a faint and distinctive odor a little like green tea, and a sweetish, slightly bitter taste. This taste is the result of the presence of anthraquinone glycosides which give senna and other plants, like cascara sagrada and turkey rhubarb, their purgative (laxative) qualities.

In reviewing the literature about senna, one is struck by the wide variety of attitudes toward it. According to one herbal source it "is, and always has been, one of the safest and most consistently effective of all plant laxatives." Other herbalists caution that it should be used only as a last resort because it is so strong. Both of these claims are true. At Tree of Light Publishing, we refer to senna as a "third-degree" herb, or one of those herbs "you'd never eat in a salad." Although it isn't an herb that can be regularly taken like food, it isn't seriously toxic. It won't kill you or do serious damage to your body. It can, however have unpleasant effects or throw the biochemistry of the body out of balance when used in large quantities or over extended periods of time.

The powerful laxative benefits of senna are what has made it so popular for several thousand years. Like cascara sagrada, its anthraquinone glycosides (referred to as sennoside A, sennoside B and sennoside C) are broken down in the intestines into anthraquinones which increase the peristaltic movements of the colon through their action on the intestinal wall.

Because senna is rich in calcium and magnesium, it also helps balance the acid/alkaline levels in the body and nourish the nervous system. It also contains sodium, which is essential for digestion, stopping fermentation of food and purifying the blood. Its high levels of iron help to build the blood and it contains zinc, which acts as an antioxidant. Senna also contains silicon which supports calcium absorption, as well as the A, C and B-complex vitamins necessary for a healthy liver and colon.



Photo by Steven Foster

Finally, it contains moderate amounts of potassium, selenium, and manganese.

Senna is one of the strongest anthraquinone laxatives, more stimulating than cascara. It is popular today both as an herb and in over-the-counter and prescription laxatives. It is senna's strength which leads herbalists to caution about its use. It is so strong that used alone, it tends to cause severe cramping of the colon. For this reason, it is usually combined with carminative and antispasmodic herbs

like catnip, ginger, coriander, or fennel, which help to relax the intestines and moderate the strength of its effect. Nevertheless, senna's powerful action means it should not be used by those with chronic gastrointestinal conditions, such as ulcers, colitis or hemorrhoids. It should never be used for more than two weeks because over time, it causes lazy bowel syndrome, which is an inability to move stool without biochemical stimulation.

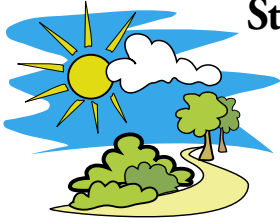
Senna is offered by NSP in two formulas: Senna Combination and LB Extract. In Senna Combination, it is the primary ingredient, and so it is a very strong laxative, though it is buffered by the addition of fennel seed, ginger and catnip. In LB Extract, it plays a smaller role as it is combined with eleven other herbs and is gentler and safer especially for pregnancy.

Selected References

Creating Your Herbal Profile by Dorothy Hall
The Doctors' Vitamin and Mineral Encyclopedia by Sheldon Saul Hendler
Encyclopedia of Natural Remedies by Louise Tenney
The Energetics of Western Herbs by Peter Holmes
The Healing Herbs by Michael Castleman

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Steven Horne's Ramblings and Ravings

Let Go of It Cleansing One's Life

Although it may still be cold in other parts of the world, spring is here in southern Utah. With the heavy rains we've had this winter, the desert is in bloom like I've never seen it before. Many trees are also in bloom, releasing their sweet aromas into the air. Birds are returning, and critters are coming out from their winter slumber.

The same brightening spring sunlight that awakens the animals and flowers is also showing us the streaks and spots on the windows that need to be cleaned and the accumulated sticks and leaves that need to be cleared out of the yard and garden. It's time for spring cleaning, which is why this issue focuses on cleansing.

As herbalists, we know the importance of cleansing. Detoxification is a major part of what we do. Most of us focus on cleansing the body, but it has been my observation that what is happening on the physical level is often deeply connected to what is happening on the mental, emotional and spiritual levels of our being.

Our language is full of metaphorical references to these connections. Having an "anal retentive" personality is likely to contribute to physical constipation (and vice-versa). I have also observed that people who are "full of it" emotionally because they can't "let go" of past hurts and traumas are more likely to hang onto physical toxins than people who are able to release these experiences through forgiveness and otherwise "go with the flow" of life.

So, as I look around and see the "huge" problems our society is having with obesity and our cultural obsession with acquiring more and more material possessions, I wonder if the two aren't somehow related. We are a society of accumulators, forever obsessed with having more and more. Unable to find contentment in our hearts, we "consume" more than we need in every aspect of our lives. In a similar manner, the level of chemical pollution our society is creating in the environment suggests there is a corresponding pollution of the cultural heart and mind.

According to the system of energetics I've been teaching for more than a decade, there are three primary forces at work in the universe—a force of attraction that creates expansion, a force of expulsion which creates contraction, and a force of equilibrium which creates rest. We see these forces at work in the body. The heart expands as it draws in blood and contracts

as it pushes blood throughout the body. The lungs expand as they draw in air and contract as we exhale. In between each beat of the heart and each breath we take there is a pause, a moment of equilibrium or rest.

Notice that the pause occurs after the heart and lungs have contracted and expelled their contents. The pause does not occur when the heart and lungs are full, it occurs when they are empty. The emptying out allows the organ to rest and prepare for the next cycle of expansion.

There are some powerful lessons in this. First of all, the ability of tissues to draw in (or assimilate) nutrients is dependent on their ability to push out (or eliminate) toxins. Cleansing, or emptying out, opens up space in the tissues that allows them to rest, and prepares them to assimilate nutrition and produce energy. If the tissues are clogged with waste, they cannot rest and the nutrition can't get to the cells. Once the tissues are able to "let go" of the waste material, they are able to "take in" nourishment again.

Long ago, I learned a very simple, but powerful, lesson that relates to this concept. That lesson is, don't eat when you aren't hungry. Practicing this has really helped my health. By the way, I'm not talking about mental hunger, I'm talking about physical hunger. Your stomach feels "empty" when you are hungry. If your stomach feels "full" you shouldn't eat, because the body hasn't been able to completely empty the digestive organs and rest so it can be ready for the next meal.

How can the digestive tract process and absorb the nutrients when it is bloated, stuffed, congested and constipated? So, when I feel this way, I drink water, take enzymes, drink juice or do things which flush the system. I start eating again when I feel "empty" so that the digestive tract has had time to rest and prepare to receive the next meal.

This is also why so many people benefit from doing a cleanse at the beginning of a nutritional program. As they "empty out" the accumulation of waste material in the body, they create space which allows nutrition to enter.

Deanna Hansen, the certified athletic therapist who is teaching the "Love Your Body Beautiful" classes with me, told me that she works to open up "space" in tissue. Aging, she believes, is a function of tissue becoming dense and compacted so that it loses space. One has to "let go" of tension for muscles to relax.

So, here is another example of how allowing things to “empty out” improves life.

People don't just need to cleanse the body. They also need cleansing on mental, emotional and spiritual levels. In general, people are afraid to “let go” of things because they perceive it as a loss. So, they constantly try to “fill up” their lives and this drive for “fullness” in order to avoid feeling “empty” is happening on many levels.

For example, one motivational writer, Bob Proctor, suggested that you aren't going to get something new into your life until you're willing to let go of the old. People will hang onto possessions and relationships that they don't like because they feel these things are all they have. It is easier for them to handle the idea of having “something,” even if it's something they don't want or like, than it is to deal with the emptiness of “letting go.”

But, if we don't learn to let go, we will never allow the space in our lives to draw in something new. People fill closets, basements, attics, garages, sheds, and even pay extra money to rent storage lockers so they can accumulate more and more things. As a teenager, I read Henry David Thoreau's book *Walden Pond* and I was struck by his assertion that our possessions own us as much as we own them. The more stuff we have, the more stuff we have to take care of, and the less space there is in our lives.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, in his essay on compensation eloquently, explains how loss is impossible, since gain and loss are two sides of the same coin. Anything we gain has a loss associated with it, while anything we lose has a gain associated with it. He says that those who seek to gain the most while benefiting others the least wind up impoverished, while those who benefit others ultimately gain the most.

Nature abhors a vacuum. When I give something away or let go of something, it creates a void that something must come in to fill. When one tries to gain things at the expense of others, there is a hidden debt that will be extracted from one's life sooner or later.

Understanding this, I periodically do a “life cleanse” by going through closets and other storage areas and “purge” myself of possessions I'm not using anymore or don't need. It creates space in my life for new things to appear. Most people try to hold onto what they have and don't want to let go of it until something better appears. The problem is that what you are holding onto doesn't allow space for what you want to appear. You have to get over your fear of “not having” and let go of what isn't serving you before you will make the space for what you really want in life.

Emotionally, we are afraid to let go because we fear the emptiness. Most people are afraid of silence, solitude, or quiet

time. They want to constantly be occupied with something. This is especially true of today's youth. With all the electronic gadgets we have today (TV, video games, the internet, radio, cell phones, CDs and MP3 players) many people seem to feel the need to constantly keep their mind and emotions occupied and distracted. There is always “noise” in the background. Kids become easily “bored” if something isn't going on. Of course, many adults have this problem, too.

We need moments of quiet, solitude and stillness. Inspiration comes when the mind is clear of excessive mental chatter, which is why our mind has to be emptied through contemplation or meditation to be open to new ideas. My creativity and inspiration come when I allow space and quiet in my life.

All these ways of letting go are valuable and healing on various levels of our being, but the biggest thing we need to learn to let go of is the past. For many years, I've taught that one of the root causes of disease is *unresolved* mental and emotional stress. I emphasize the word unresolved because all of us have mental and emotional stress in our lives. We all experience difficulties with relationships, finances, health, accidents and the other assorted “woes” of life. It's those things we can't resolve that give us problems.

You can tell when something is unresolved because when the subject comes up, there is an emotional charge attached to it. So, the problem isn't that you got divorced or cheated or whatever, it's the fact that twenty years later you're still carrying an emotional charge about it. I've learned in my healing work that most people are carrying around a hidden burden of shame, fear, guilt, anger, resentment and/or sadness. I think that is part of the reason why people work so hard to stay constantly occupied—it keeps them from having to face their own unresolved emotions.

Yet, only when we create the space in our lives to face, acknowledge and confront these issues and emotions are we able to let them go. Peace and joy can only come into our heart when we forgive or otherwise release our emotional burdens. Only when we lose our fear of being empty can we allow ourselves to be filled.

We'll talk about this process more in the next issue.

Steven H. Horne is a professional member and past president of the American Herbalists Guild, a certified iridologist with the International Iridology Practitioners Association, and a gifted teacher and consultant in the field of natural health care. He is president of Tree of Light Publishing.





Kimberly Balas' Clinician's Corner

Dry Hands, Leukemia, Glaucoma and More

Dry Hands

My hands have gotten extremely dry this last week and are starting to peel. What is causing this? It has turned quite a bit colder this week, but other than that nothing has changed. Lotion doesn't seem to help either.

Jen

This is typically a thyroid issue which is affecting the skin indirectly. Dry skin is a common indicator of low thyroid. The skin is kept moist through fats and the thyroid hormone is needed to emulsify and metabolize fats for keeping the skin moist. So, strengthening the thyroid and getting more iodine into the body using supplements like liquid dulse, black walnut or Thyroid Activator may help.

This can also be liver-related. The liver also works to process fats for use by the skin. In this case, the liver probably needs to convert more A & D and to get B6 production going in the intestines.

There may also be a problem with communication with the adrenals, which move minerals through the system. So, I would also add B6 and some supplements for the adrenals. Licorice can be helpful as it helps to hydrate tissues.

Adding more essential fatty acids may also help, but be sure to work with the adrenals, liver and thyroid so the body can process them correctly.

Leukemia and Paw Paw

One of my downline just wrote me that her mom was sent home from the hospital to die from leukemia—told there is nothing else they can do for her. She has had chemo. Could leukemia be treated with the paw paw program the same as other cancers?

Karen

Paw Paw works more on the tumor type of cancer. If this were me, I would use the Germanium Combination and the Olive Leaf Extract. Any time the white blood cell count goes high, as in leukemia, then stress will aggravate it.

Chemotherapy stresses the body. The adrenals are going to need lots of support here with something like the Chinese Stress Relief or Nervous Fatigue Formula. Another factor is elevating red blood cells. For this, I would use Lymphatic Drainage and Chlorophyll Capsules.

I also find the common denominator in people with leukemia is that they eat a lot of refined foods and have intestinal parasites. Flu shots can be a causal factor because they can set off this reaction when a person is on a poor diet.

Glaucoma

I have a new client with glaucoma who is blind from it. Is there anything that can be done for glaucoma?

Lisa

Glaucoma is a fluid build up and pressure inside the eye. It comes from inflammation in the capillaries which creates debris in the fluid going into the eye. There is a "drain" at the bottom of the eye which "clogs" from the debris, causing this fluid buildup. So, the key thing here is to reduce inflammation.

I have used IF-C along with calmatives, anti-inflammatories and remedies to nourish the blood. The constriction on the capillaries is a factor, so caffeine has to be eliminated along with any other vasoconstrictive substances.

There is also a neurological tension present from lack of oxygenation. Deep breathing exercises and Nervous Fatigue Formula or Adrenal Support help here. I would also look at some HSN-W for the transport of the clear antioxidant rich matter in the ciliary body; Ho Shou Wu would be one to consider, as well. SUMA Combination would be another remedy to consider. I have also used the Liver Balance here for the bupleurum in it, which helps clear toxins in the blood and reduces inflammation.

Craving "Avoids"

I'm wondering how to interpret what it means when you really, really like a food that is on your "Avoid" list for the

blood type diet. I'm an "A," and yesterday, I went to lunch at a Mediterranean restaurant that makes fresh hummus every day. I've never really liked it before, but this was amazingly good!

Dan

This program was never set up to follow 100% of the time when one is just trying to maintain health. It isn't what you do once in a while, it is what you do everyday that counts.

When a food is listed as an "Avoid," it just means that it causes lectin binding and antigen binding activity in the blood. This means it causes the blood to get a little sticky. When this happens to excess, the blood can't carry as much oxygen. Sometimes, the blood has to become a little sticky so that it can surround invaders to get them out. You just don't want it to be that way all the time. There are actually some instances with cancer that I put them on an ALL avoid plan and NO beneficials. We are surrounding the invaders and cutting off the food supply to them. There is no "right or wrong" per se in this blood type diet thing. It is simply understanding how that food will react with one's blood.

This is all stuff that I learned from Peter D'Adamo. It is based on a polymorphism study on antigen profiles. I have been researching and using the blood type diet information for about 7 years now and was in close contact with Peter so that I could ask these questions anytime I wanted. I have more limited access to him now, but I can usually get someone in his research department to help.

As for your hummus, it is made with chickpeas, which are high in glutamic acid, arginine and lysine. It also has garlic, lemon and sesame seeds (tahini), so it may just have some things in it your body really needed at the time.

Chiropractic Adjustments

I've read somewhere about something that can be taken to aid chiropractic adjustments in holding better. What might that be and why does it work? Why would the adjustments not be holding in the first place?

Lisa

Nerves control muscles and muscles control bones, so if you adjust the bones but don't regulate the nerves and muscles, then adjustments won't hold. We have stress and tension; this causes some muscles to contract or tense, which pulls bones out of alignment. In the spine, the muscles on one side will be contracted and on the other side, they will

be stretched. If these muscles aren't balanced, then they will just pull the vertebrae back out of alignment.

Chinese medicine recognizes that the bones are affected by the kidneys. This is because the kidneys regulate pH balance. When the body is overacid, magnesium and potassium are lost which can cause muscles to spasm. KB-C is the formula which works on the kidneys and helps chiropractic adjustments to hold and there are other things that will help, too.

In addition to the KB-C formula, the first thing I usually use when someone can't hold an adjustment is Nerve Eight formula. This formula is relaxing and anti-inflammatory; it helps feed the nerves, too. The next thing is to work on relaxing muscles with something like a small amount of Kava Kava or the Magnesium Complex.

One can also look at which vertebrae are out of alignment because that gives clues as to which emotions are behind the stress and tension. Dealing with these emotional issues also helps the alignment to hold better.

Chlorophyll and Water

We had a discussion last night about liquid chlorophyll being added to water throughout the day. Some people felt that if you do this, your body recognizes the liquid as a food, not as water, so your body's water needs are not being met. Can you share your insights on this.

Sharon

Chlorophyll is just chlorophyllin with sodium and copper. There are no proteins, fats or carbohydrates to digest, so the body isn't going to see it as a food. It will activate the parotids to start producing enzymes, but because there isn't anything there to really work on, the enzymes will then start breaking down toxins. This is why it is cleansing. In short, water with chlorophyll in it would still count as water intake.

Kimberly Balas is a board certified naturopath and an instructor for Tree of Light. She is also a certified iridology instructor and a board member with the International Iridology Practitioners Association (IIPA). She is available for personal consultations in her Melbourne, FL office or by phone (321-725-7731).





Spring Cleaning

A springtime cleanse helps overcome the winter blues

Chinese medicine states that there is a specific energy that corresponds to each season of year. In summer it is the bubbling energy of the Fire element; in fall the downward, inward energy of Metal; in winter the deep silence of the Water element. Springtime is associated with the upward-welling, bursting energy of Wood. After a period of deeper, slower activity in the winter, the whole world seems to speed up in springtime, almost as if we, along with all the plants and animals, are trying to make up for lost time.

After a good night's sleep, we often need to stretch and "get the blood going." In the same way, after a winter of lower levels of everything from light to physical activity, we often need to "rev the engine" a little bit in order to "clear the gunk out of the system." So, spring seems to be a time for cleaning. We open the windows and "air out" the home and clean out the accumulations of winter to make room for new life and activity. It's also a great time to clear out the toxins that may have accumulated in the body during the more sedentary winter months. When we do this, we not only feel better immediately, we also set the stage for a healthier, more energetic and productive year.

The organs that correspond to the springtime and the Wood element according to Chinese medicine are the liver and the gallbladder. It should come as no surprise that these are two of the primary organs involved in detoxifying the body. In particular, the liver functions to build and clean the blood. So, herbs that support the liver are often called blood purifiers.

Many of the young greens that start sprouting in the springtime like dandelion, nettles, burdock, etc. are blood purifiers. At one time, people took herbs like these as "spring tonics" to cleanse the blood from the effects of winter. With all the chemicals we're exposed to on a regular basis, using herbs to clean out the blood in the spring is a good practice in modern times, too. Herbal formulas that can do this include: I-X, BP-X, Enviro-Detox and Milk Thistle Combination.

The colon is obviously another major organ of detoxification. If waste is not completely cleared from the colon, it can be reabsorbed and can sensitize various tissues in the body to a wide variety of "trigger" compounds that can cause allergies and hay fever later in the year. If you suffer from these problems during seasonal changes, cleansing the colon and liver will reduce your environmental sensitivities.

The Tiao He Cleanse program is an ideal "spring cleaning" program for both the liver and the colon. It contains the Chinese Liver Balance (Tiao He) formula, which calms down the wood element in Chinese medicine. Since the wood element is strongest in spring, this formula tempers the excess energy of spring,

helping the body have better balance during this transitional period.

The Tiao He cleanse also contains burdock, a traditional western liver herb and blood purifier; one of those spring tonic herbs that cleanses the blood from the accumulations of winter. All Cell Detox is another ingredient in the cleanse. All Cell Detox is a general cleansing formula that helps the tissues detoxify while supporting organs of elimination like the kidneys, liver, colon and lymphatics. The laxative formula LBS II and the antiparasitic herb, black walnut, are also part of this cleansing program.

The Tiao He Cleanse is a conveniently packaged 10 day cleansing program. Taking some fiber like Psyllium Hulls Combo or Irritable Bowel Fiber first thing in the morning with some water or juice while on the Tiao He Cleanse will make it even more effective.

Dietary change is also helpful during the springtime. During the winter, one needs heavier, or more "acid-forming" foods to stay warm. In summer, one needs lighter, more alkaline foods, which help keep the body cool. It's time to shift the body to a milder, simpler diet emphasizing fruits and vegetables over grains, meat and dairy. A short, three-day fast can be beneficial for some, but for most people a short (3-7 day) juice "fast" using raw fruit or vegetable juices works best.

If we want to "rev the motor," another logical "step to take" is to get some exercise. The skin is another major eliminative organ and inducing perspiration is a great way to cleanse it—that's one of the reasons why exercise is so beneficial. There's no need to set one's sights on harsh or unrealistic exercise goals here, all that is really necessary is to do something gentle and moderate—a 15-minute walk several times a week during your lunch break will help you a lot more than an ambitious gym routine that you drop after a week. Just get outside and do something. In other words, find an activity that you *enjoy* and reward yourself for sticking with it.

Spring is a wonderful time for new beginnings. So, now is a great time to establish habits that will support our health over the coming years. Take the process one step at a time and, above all, enjoy the results of the efforts that you make. It's a time to renew yourself. Happy spring cleaning!

For additional information on cleansing, consult a local herb specialist. Additional information on cleansing can also be found in *The Comprehensive Guide to Nature's Sunshine Products*, *Dr.Mom-Dr. Dad* and *The ABC+D Approach* by Tree of Light Publishing.

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Senna Combination

Powerful stimulant laxative for purging the colon

Senna Combination is a stimulant laxative or purgative formula used for severe constipation. It's primary ingredient is senna, a powerful stimulant laxative which stimulates peristalsis of the intestines. The primary active ingredients in senna are anthraquinone glycosides which are broken down in the colon. The anthraquinones then act to stimulate the peristaltic action (wave-like contractions that move food) in the colon. Because this breakdown of the anthraquinone glycosides takes six to ten hours after ingesting the capsules, senna is usually given at bedtime.

Aside from the anthraquinone glycosides which provide its laxative effect, senna is also rich in calcium and magnesium which help balance the acid/alkaline levels in the body and nourish the nervous system. Other important components of senna are: sodium, which is essential for digestion, stopping fermentation of food in the digestive system, and purifying the blood; iron, which builds the blood; zinc, which acts as an antioxidant; silicon, which supports calcium absorption; A, C and B-complex vitamins which help in maintaining liver and colon health; and moderate amounts of potassium, selenium, and manganese.

Senna, by itself, is so strong that it often causes painfully strong cramps. So, Senna Combination combines senna with fennel seed, ginger and catnip to balance senna's strong effects. All of these other ingredients are aromatic herbs containing essential oils which mobilize energy inwardly within the digestive tract and help to buffer the strong stimulant effect of the senna. They also have the following additional properties:

Fennel is a gentle, antispasmodic herb often found in children's formulas. Its digestive properties are demonstrated by the bowls of fennel seeds that are found in Indian restaurants; chewing them after a meal always helps to improve digestion. Fennel also has several phytochemicals which inhibit spasms of smooth muscle, including that found in the digestive tract. It also stimulates digestive secretions.

Ginger has many beneficial effects on the digestive tract. In addition to its ability to allay nausea and vomiting, ginger is known to stimulate digestive secretions and to increase circulation in the digestive organs and pelvic region. It reduces inflammation and irritation to tissues.

Catnip is often combined with fennel as a formula to relieve infant colic. Sometimes referred to as "nature's alkaseltzer," catnip has a soothing and settling effect on the digestive system and is used to relieve indigestion, gas, bloating and an acid stomach. It has mild antispasmodic (anti-cramping) and sedative properties which make it a perfect complement to the activity of the senna in this formula.

Usage: Take two to four capsules with water and a late evening snack for occasional relief from persistent and severe constipation. Senna Combination may also be used occasionally as part of a short colon cleanse to purge the liver and digestive tract.

Precautions: Senna, like any other stimulant laxative, should not be taken on a regular basis. It is generally recognized that nursing mothers who take senna pass it on to their infants, though there is some controversy as to whether or not it then has a laxative effect on the infant. Because senna is so powerful, it is a good idea to try other, commonsense measures first. If, after increasing the fiber in your diet, drinking more fluids, and exercising more, you still are experiencing constipation, try a milder laxative like cascara sagrada or LBS II. If this still doesn't help, then use Senna Combination. You can think of senna as the "big guns" to be brought out if gentler methods don't do the trick. Some herbalists claim that senna has a habit-forming character. In fact, what happens is that its stimulative laxative effect is so strong that, used over time, the tissue of the colon acclimatizes to it and then has difficulty providing the stimulus itself. For this reason, it should never be used for more than two weeks at a time.

If people have become habituated to the use of stimulant laxatives like senna, then magnesium, vitamin C, bioflavonoids and/or Cellular Energy may be used to re-energize the colon and help to restore normal peristalsis.

Sources:

Complete Medicinal Herbal by Penelope Ody
A Hand Book of Native American Herbs by Alma R. Hutchings
The Healing Herbs by Michael Castleman
Nutritional Herbology by Mark Pederson
Wild Rose Scientific Herbal by Terry Willard

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President: Steven H. Horne
General Manager: Darla Steiner
Production Manager: David Tanner
Assistant Writer and Editor: Mark Montgomery
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Computers and Design: David Horne
Order Entry: Katherine Tanner

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We welcome your questions and comments. You can reach us at:

Shipping Address:

321 North Mall Drive #J-101
St. George, UT 84790

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 911239
St. George, UT 84791-1239

Order Entry: 800-416-2887

Customer Service: 435-627-8709

Fax: 435-627-2367

E-mail: nf@treelite.com

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