

Nature's Field

An Electronic Journal for NSP Distributors

Astragalus



A member of the pea family, astragalus is an important tonic herb in Chinese medicine. In the same family as licorice root, it

has a sweet taste and a similar warming, strengthening quality. Astragalus is a classic tonic herb, on par with American ginseng, and far less expensive. In Chinese medicine it is believed to strengthen the wei chi, the protective energy that surrounds the body. In Western terms, we would say it strengthens the immune system.

Clinical research on the use of astragalus with cancer showed that cancer patients tended to recover faster and live longer after undergoing radiation or chemotherapy if they were also given astragalus. In American studies, 90% of cancer patients had an increase in white blood cell count, improved resistance and enhanced digestion. It prevents damage to bone marrow and the immune system from chemotherapy and radiation. Similar Canadian studies also indicate that astragalus does not target the cancer cells, but it does advance recovery and adrenal cortical function.

One of the constituents in astragalus, Astragalin B, has been shown to have antiviral properties. It appears to bind to viruses and helps the immune system recognize and destroy them. Astragalus has also been shown to increase interferon production, which helps the body respond to viral infections. This makes it useful for viral disorders like colds and flu.

Astragalus helps regulate fluids in the body, acting as a diuretic and reducing excessive sweating or night sweats. Since it also reduces thirst, it has a balancing effect on the fluid control mechanisms in the body. It has also been shown to increase endurance.

With strong affinity for the respiratory system, astragalus can be taken as a tonic by people who have a tendency to chronic respiratory illness. It also benefits the circulatory system. More than 82% of heart patients displayed improvement on EKGs after administration of astragalus. After receiving injections, congestive heart failure sufferers professed that chest tightness, breathing, and aerobic activity all improved. Those afflicted with a disorder known as Coxsackie B often find relief with astragalus due to its ability to regulate heart rhythms and to limit cellular damage.

The Chinese culture has long used astragalus for the treatment of chronic hepatitis. It has proven to decrease glutamate pyruvate transaminase (GPT) serum levels. Symptoms have been eliminated with one to two months of treatment.

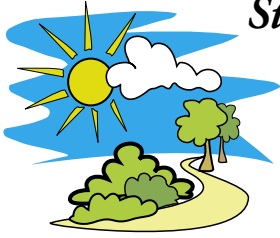
It can be found in many combinations including Fu Lei (LH-C) for the lungs and Sheng Mai (Trigger Immune or IMM-C) for the immune system. It is also in Suma Combination (an adaptogenic tonic) and Elderberry Plus (an immune and antiviral formula). The single herb can be taken to increase energy and reduce stress; it improves immunity in people who suffer from frequent colds and infections. Unlike ginseng, it is well suited to the young and to physically active people.

Sources

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 Astragalus photo courtesy of Steven Foster

In This Issue

Feature Herb: Astragalus	1
Steven's Ramblings & Ravings: Where Do I Begin? .	2-3
Kimberly Balas' Clinician's Corner:	
Childhood Eczema and Cholesterol Levels	4-5
Product Handouts:	
Suma Combination	6
HistaBlock	7
Announcements/Class Schedule	8



Steven's Horne's Ramblings and Ravings

Where Do I Begin? (Part One)

As we start a new era for *Nature's Field*, I thought it would be appropriate to address a common question people have when they first venture into natural health care, "Where do I begin?"

There are so many different herbs and supplements available, as well as a host of "alternative" approaches to healing, that we sometimes tend to have a difficult time deciding what we really need. We attend a lecture on the benefits of a particular supplement and we think, "I need that." Then we read about another supplement and we decide we ought to take that one, too. Before long we have a cupboard full of supplements. (I know I do.)

Many people I consult with on the phone are taking 20-30 different supplements at the same time. Of course, that would be great if they were feeling absolutely wonderful on all of those products, but often they tell me that they aren't noticing that much difference. Often I pare these complex programs down to a few products and they report feeling better. As with anything, more is not always better when it comes to supplements.

The goal of any health care program should be to feel better—to have fewer symptoms of disease, to have more energy, to feel more alert, vibrant and alive, or simply to have more energy. The fact that Nature's Sunshine offers hundreds of high quality herbal products, nutritional supplements and other aids to improved health is a great strength. In contrast, many other companies only offer a few "one size fits all" products. We all recognize, however, that for the person who is just starting out, a product line of this size can be intimidating, thus the question that forms the title of this first in a series of articles.

The Medical Mindset

Well, for starters, we need to break out of the medical mindset if we want to use herbs and supplements effectively. The medical mindset is oriented towards symptomatic relief without regard to the cause. The following fictitious story illustrates the problem clearly.

There was once a carpenter who was a little clumsy. He regularly hit his thumb with his hammer. Soon, his thumb became very swollen and inflamed. He went to a doctor who said, "That finger is badly inflamed, let me write you a prescription for an anti-inflammatory."

The man took the medication and noticed that it helped the thumb a little, but because he kept striking it with the hammer it continued to get worse. The pain was becoming difficult to bear. So the man went to another doctor. This one prescribed a pain killer.

The pain killer really helped take the pain away, but it also made the man's fingers a little numb so that he wound up hitting his thumb more than ever. Soon the thumb was very raw and badly damaged. So, the man sought out a third doctor, a surgeon, who said, "That thumb is badly diseased, I think we should cut it off before it damages the rest of the body."

Although the causes of our health problems are much more subtle than this fictitious character's, the story clearly illustrates the problem of treating the effect without removing the cause.

So, the first thing the newcomer to natural health care needs to understand is that we aren't interested in simply easing symptoms, we want to help the body heal itself, and there is where most of the confusion lies. Used properly, herbs and supplements actually help the body to heal—often permanently.

My good friend and fellow herbalist Matthew Wood often clears up major health problems using very small doses (1-3 drops of a tincture) of single herbs. He says that the herbs don't really heal the body, they simply remind the body how it is supposed to function. Once the body figures out how to rebalance itself, it takes care of itself from then on. Or, as the 18th century herbalist Samuel Thomson put it so succinctly, "Remove the cause and the effect will cease."

Healing Takes Time

People tell me one of the primary reasons that they continue to take all of these supplements is because they have been told that nutritional healing takes a long time. There is truth in that statement, healing does take time. Any natural process takes time. I may be too impatient in my desire to eat corn to wait for the seeds I'm planting today to mature into a crop of ripe corn on the cob, but nothing I can do is going to avoid the process of growth required for such an event to occur.

In our culture people do tend to be impatient—they're conditioned to want "instant relief." But instant relief isn't healing. It's simply the masking of symptoms without really restoring the body to its natural healthy state, just like our carpenter friend.

Since most drugs are simply masking symptoms, instead of healing, you have to keep taking the drug in order to continue to obtain instant relief. However, the fact that the symptoms return, almost immediately, when the drug is discontinued means that no healing has really taken place. If the drug were actually correcting the problem, then you would take it for a period of time, get better, and not need it anymore.

Think about it. Have you ever met anyone who was "cured" of headaches by taking pain killers? Have you ever known anyone whose high blood pressure medication "healed" them of high blood pressure so they could discontinue the drug? If antibiotics really "cure" infections, then why is it that the more people take them the easier it seems to be for them to get another infection?

In contrast, I've seen herbs actually heal the body. That is, I've observed that when one finds a nutritional and lifestyle program that actually addresses the real root causes, that the person goes on the program for a few months, and then they get better, which means that the supplements they took did their job and aren't needed anymore.

Yes, healing does take time—it can take several months to fully recover from a chronic health problem. It can even take several years to completely overcome a degenerative condition. But, this does not mean that it takes that long to see improvement. Just as you can see a seed sprout and begin to grow long before the plant will completely mature, you can also see the signs that your health is improving long before you are completely healed. So, if you start on a particular supplement and you don't notice

any improvement within a reasonable period of time, that supplement probably isn't going to do you any good.

What is a reasonable amount of time? Based on my experience, the following guidelines are fairly reasonable.

With acute illness, you should take your remedies anywhere from every 10-15 minutes (for liquids) to every hour or two (for capsules). If the remedy is going to make a difference, you should notice improvement in about 3-5 hours at the most. If you don't see improvement, the remedy probably isn't going to help.

With chronic illness, where you are taking a remedy two to four times per day, it typically takes about 3-4 days to see improvement. If a program doesn't cause any improvement in your health within 7-10 days, it probably isn't going to help. Try something different.

Finally, with severe degenerative conditions, like cancer, it may take as long as 2-4 weeks to see improvement. These cases require a lot of skill to monitor, and they shouldn't be attempted by beginners.

What do I mean by improvement? It's very simple. You should feel better. Who cares what some expert says, or what muscle testing shows? The true test of any herb, supplement, or healing modality (even if it's a drug or surgical procedure) is how it affects your body. Does it increase your sense of well-being. Do you notice more energy, greater resistance to disease, a better mental attitude or other signs that tell you that what you are doing is increasing your overall sense of feeling alive and healthy? If not, why bother?

In other words, the place to begin is to start learning to LISTEN TO YOUR OWN BODY and trust what it is telling you. We'll continue next time with some program basics that help most people start feeling better quickly.

Steven H. Horne is a past president and professional member 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

Childhood Eczema and Cholesterol Levels

Child with Eczema

I have a new client whose 11 year old has a fairly bad case of eczema. There has not been a diagnosis for the source of the problem; she has had it since infancy. Recently, the child was really having a difficult time with the itching. In an effort to help, I gave them some Pau D'Arco lotion and a sample of the Irish Moss lotion. Neither really helped.

I have talked to them about cleansing and blood purification as well as diet and stress control. I thought about starting the child on Red Clover blend and Herbal Pumpkin (for cleansing). The child will not swallow capsules, so that limits the options somewhat. Does anyone have a really good program for eczema in children?

I have also given them liquid ALJ because this child's "normal" breathing sounds like a truck muffler with a hole in it. The doctors have checked her sinuses, etc. and can find nothing wrong. She only seems to have problems breathing when she lays down. Breathe Free has helped that.

Thanks for ANY help.

Laurie

There are two types of eczema—the weepy kind and the dry kind. Both are excess heat conditions of the body trying to flush the irritant. Eczema is inflammation of the skin. In order for tissues to become inflamed something must be irritating them.

A lot of times the source of the irritation is food allergies. Foods incompatible with one's immune system (and blood type) will create toxins in the body. Eliminate wheat, dairy, and refined foods from diet. Increase water and essential fatty acid intake to flush toxins.

If there are a lot of hydrogenated oils and fats in the diet, this can contribute as well. Hydrogenated fats and oils increase the production of prostaglandins that are proinflammatory. The Omega-3 oils (in Flax Seed oil and Omega-3 EPA) help to promote anti-inflammatory prostaglandins, as well as help eliminate toxins.

Fat metabolism may also be a factor. Hi Lipase, taken between meals, can be helpful here.

Eczema is also connected to stress because of the adrenals, which produce a hormone called cortisol that helps control inflammation. When the adrenals weaken, the inflammation can flare up.

In the past, I have used HistaBlock and Yucca for kids with eczema. HistaBlock blocks histamine reactions that are involved in inflammation, and yucca has a cortisol-like action for reducing inflammation. Oregon Grape extract painted on the skin helps with itching.

There is a need for adrenal support, but B-complex vitamins are contraindicated. Licorice root also has a cortisol-like action and supports the adrenals but is contraindicated in the wet type of eczema. Siberian ginseng and HS-C are good adrenal formulas to use here. If the adrenals are not built up, the problem will keep coming back.

The upcoming issue of *Sunshine Sharing* has more information on eczema and psoriasis.

Cholesterol Levels

My friend's doctor put her on Lipitor because she had a less than wonderful stress test. She has a family history of heart trouble, and her cholesterol is 223. If I recall correctly, Lipitor is not good. Can you please tell me why?

Carolyn

I know this is a long answer but I don't know how else to explain it! First, let's look at the numbers. 223 is not high! High cholesterol is a "disease" created by the pharmaceutical industry in order to sell more statin products. These products have a high profit margin, so the lab ranges have been altered over the last 7-10 years so that more people will show up as having "high" cholesterol and be convinced to take medications. Normal cholesterol ranges should be 175 to 275, with Blood Type O people running at the higher end of this spectrum because of the way their body utilizes protein. Cholesterol will also be elevated when environmental toxins, especially mercury, are present in excess.

These are the pathological ranges, meaning that if you are above or below these values then your body is becoming seriously imbalanced. For optimal health, you should be in the middle third of this range. So healthy cholesterol should be between 208 and 242. With your friend's reading at 223, she is actually within the ideal range.

At this range, which is normal or healthy, doctors are writing prescriptions. Cholesterol levels are affected by many organs and glands, and the cholesterol level by itself is not a reliable indicator as to what is going on in the body. The doctors isolate this one test and "treat it" without regard to the bigger picture. They have also been trained to utilize the fear factor here. Understanding more about how the body uses fats, and cholesterol in particular, can help overcome that fear factor.

Cholesterol is a bi-product of protein metabolism. The body binds oily fats to the nitrogen in protein to form lipoproteins (lipid=fats, proteins). There are two basic types of lipoproteins—high density lipoproteins and low density lipoproteins.

High density lipoproteins (HDL) are about 50% protein, with the majority of the lipid portion being triglycerides. Triglycerides are neutral fats composed of three fatty acids and glycerol. They are needed by the body for fuel.

Low density lipoproteins (LDL) have a lower triglyceride content and a higher cholesterol content. Having a high quantity of LDL and a low quantity of HDL is a another indicator of mercury and solvent toxicity. The body determines the ratio between LDL and HDL, and an imbalance does create problems.

These lipoproteins help engulf toxins, so the more toxins you have in your body, the higher the cholesterol and LDL lipoproteins. The body tries to break these toxins down gradually, but if it is unable to do so, it will simply create more cholesterol to engulf them.

Cholesterol plays a very important role in our body. The primary use of cholesterol (60-80%) is to make bile for the digestion of fats. This is why diets—like those in the Mediterranean region—that are high in olive oil, a monounsaturated fat, actually help to lower cholesterol. The cholesterol is used to digest the healthy fats. In contrast, low fat, high carbohydrate diets actually increase cholesterol levels.

Another important role of cholesterol is in producing hormones. Our sex hormones (testosterone, estrogen,

and progesterone) are all made from cholesterol. Cortisol, DHEA, and other adrenal hormones also use cholesterol as their starting material. That's why people's hormones start getting messed up when cholesterol levels get too low (as in below 175).

Here is some additional information on the statin drugs and their potential side effects. The common side effects of the statins include upset stomach, headache, fatigue, skin rash, difficulty sleeping, nightmares, and peripheral neuropathy (changes in sensation in the arms and legs). Another important side effect of the statins is the development of liver damage. The liver damage can usually be prevented or reversed if the statin is stopped when the liver tests first become abnormal. But if the statin is not stopped in time, severe liver injury can occur. They also impair the body's immune system by not allowing lipids to bind with toxins.

As a more serious side effect, statins may also produce inflammation of the muscles and create muscle damage. The inflammation makes the muscles painful. Muscle damage is confirmed by finding muscle proteins (proteins that leak from the inflamed muscle cells) in the blood, such as creatine phosphokinase (CPK).

If the inflammation is severe enough, the cells in the inflamed muscle tissue may disintegrate (a process called rhabdomyolysis). They then release myoglobin, a protein present in very large amounts within the muscle cells, into the blood. (Myoglobin is the muscles' version of hemoglobin and permits muscles to respire, to take on oxygen and dispose of carbon dioxide.) The myoglobin released from the disintegrating muscle reaches the kidneys, damages them and may even cause them to fail. In some cases, the kidneys may recover; however the damage to the kidneys from the myoglobin *may* be permanent and necessitate lifelong kidney dialysis.

The key to balancing cholesterol is to remove toxins and increase intake of essential fatty acids.

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Suma Combination

Supporting the Body in Times of Stress

The term *adaptogenic* refers to any substance which helps normalize the body under stressful conditions. In other words, it helps the body adapt to difficult circumstances, reducing anxiety and tension, and helping a person feel more relaxed and focused in stressful situations. Adaptagens aren't taken to correct a specific health problem; instead, they act to improve overall health and well-being.

Likewise, herbs that have a *tonic* effect aren't targeted towards specific diseases. Tonics help to strengthen and normalize body functions, which results in improved energy levels, increased resistance to infection and a general improvement in health.

In modern society where people are often under heavy stress loads, adaptagens and tonics can help the body cope. Because stress is a root cause of many health problems—ranging from simple problems like frequent colds and infections to very serious problems like high blood pressure, heart disease and even cancer—adaptagens will indirectly help to solve many of these health concerns.

Suma Combination is a formula containing some of the world's finest adaptagenic and tonic herbs: suma from Brazil, astragalus from China, siberian ginseng from Russia, ginkgo from Europe, and gotu kola from India. Each of these plants contributes its own unique properties to the combination.

Suma has a reputation as a panacea in Brazil. It is known there as *para tudo*, which means for everything. It increases energy, strengthens the immune system, helps to balance hormones and regulates blood sugar. An acrid, sweet-tasting herb, it is a classic tonic, which has earned it the nickname "Brazilian ginseng." is one of those herbs which has been used to treat almost everything from cancer to loss of energy. It is considered a nutritive herb.

Astragalus is a major tonic herb in Chinese medicine. With a sweet taste and warming energy, it has been used to improve resistance to disease, balance body fluids, lower blood pressure and increase stamina. Modern research has shown that astragalus increases production of white blood cells and interferon. The Chinese have used it to treat

infections, ulcers, poor digestion, prolapsus of organs, weakness of the immune system and fatigue.

Eleuthero root was heavily researched by Russian scientists who coined the term adaptagen to describe the unique properties they found in this plant. Also known by the name Siberian ginseng, it has been found to affect the hypothalamus and pituitary to reduce adrenal stress. It helps to calm stress levels, increase stamina and endurance, enhance immune function, and stimulate the production of male hormones.

Although **ginkgo** was known in China, the properties of ginkgo leaf were discovered in Germany through modern research. Ginkgo was found to enhance circulation, scavenge free radicals and improve brain function. It has an antiaging effect. A concentrated extract of ginkgo is being used by European doctors to treat Alzheimer's disease, senility, vertigo (dizziness), tinnitus (ringing in the ears), neurological disorders, diabetic tissue damage, and circulatory disorders.

In India, **gotu kola** is considered to be another anti-aging herb, believed to improve memory and increase life span. It is a favorite food of the elephants and hence is antecodately connected to memory—the proverbial "an elephant never forgets." Herbalists in the West recommend gotu kola to improve concentration, alertness, memory and energy, but it is used for a much wider range of complaints in India, where it has been used to treat high blood pressure, rheumatism, nervous disorders, fevers, ulcers, leprosy, skin eruptions, and jaundice.

In summary, Suma Combination helps increase overall energy and vitality in the body while countering the effects of stress and aging. It can also improve immune and glandular functions.

Dosage: Take two or three capsules three times daily.

Sources

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HistaBlock

Natural Help for Allergic Reactions

When cells get damaged in the body they release several substances that create inflammatory reactions. One of these substances is histamine. Histamine is known for its ability to create the inflammation associated with allergic reactions, both respiratory (hayfever) and digestive (food allergies). In both our intestinal and respiratory tracts we have specialized cells called mast cells. These cells are part of one's immune system and help the body to neutralize substances that are irritating to the body. When mast cells become hypersensitized to irritants, they can burst prematurely, releasing the histamine that creates the inflammatory, allergic reaction.

HistaBlock is a nutritional supplement that has natural antihistamine action. It also helps to stabilize mast cells, making them less likely to rupture and release more histamine. The net effect is a reduction in allergic sensitivity. Here are the ingredients that help this formula work:

Nettles

If you've ever accidentally brushed up against stinging nettle, you know how irritating the sting from this plant can be. Oddly enough, the juice that causes the stinging pain contains histamine, as well as two neurotransmitters, serotonin and acetylcholine. So, the use of stinging nettle as an allergy-reducing remedy is an example of the principle of taking "the hair of the dog that bit." While the plant causes an inflammatory reaction on the skin, injecting the prepared herb actually reduces inflammation and allergic reactions. In fact, the juice of the plant will actually relieve its own stings.

The herb has a definite action on the kidneys, helping them to flush irritating waste. In particular, it flushes uric acid waste from the system. Nettles are also rich in minerals and very nourishing.

Quercetin

One of the chemicals known collectively as bioflavonoids, quercetin has been shown to help reduce allergic symptoms. It has antioxidant properties and appears to stabilize mast cells. This protects them from becoming damaged and releasing the histamine that causes allergic reactions.

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Bromelain

Derived from the pineapple plant, bromelain is a protein-digesting (proteolytic) enzyme. Besides helping the body to break down protein in the digestive tract, bromelain has been shown to possess a wide variety of pharmacological effects. For purposes of this formula, its most important action is its ability to reduce inflammation.

Since allergens are typically foreign protein substances, the proteolytic nature of bromelain may also help the body to break down irritants. It also helps to liquify mucus (making it easier to expell) and decrease bronchial secretions. It has shown clinical efficacy in helping conditions like bronchitis, pneumonia, and sinusitis.

Immature Orange Peel

Bitter orange has been used in Chinese medicine for indigestion with abdominal pain and distention. It improves digestive function and helps with bacterial and fungal infections. Like the other remedies in this formula, it has anti-inflammatory actions. It also acts as an expectorant, helping to expell excessive mucus.

Modern research has shown that this herb contains an epinephrine-like compound, similar to ephedrine in Chinese ephedra, but with a gentler and more lasting action. This compound, called synephrine, causes vasoconstriction of the mucus membranes, reducing excessive mucus drainage and watery eyes.

Dosage: For food- or respiratory allergies take two capsules two to three times daily, depending on the severity of symptoms. The formula can also be used in an enema solution to reduce allergic responses in the digestive tract.

Warnings: The synephrine in bitter orange is a stimulant. Combining it with ephedra products or caffeine may cause sleeplessness, anxiety, hypertension and rapid or irregular heart beat. Persons with these symptoms should be cautious with this formula.

Sources

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Discover the Benefits of Paw Paw Extract

To help you get excited about the potential of NSP's new one-of-a-kind product, paw paw extract, and to assist you in sharing information about the benefits of paw paw, we've prepared the following new educational materials.

The Miracle of Paw Paw (Herbal Hour Video vid-406)

This 55-minute video features Steven H. Horne, AHG, and Kimberly Balas, N.D., discussing the fundamentals of paw paw extract and clinical uses. Learn the many uses for Paw Paw Cell Reg and Paw Paw Lice Remover Shampoo such as viral and fungal infections, and skin problems like acne and athlete's foot, etc. The general protocols for using paw paw with cancer are also discussed. Detailed graphics to show how the acetogenins in paw paw work at the cell level to cause cancer cells to self-destruct—a process called apoptosis. Copies of this video are available for \$29.95.

The Power of Paw Paw (Audio Tape)

Narrated by Steven Horne, AHG, this 30-minute audio tape features five medical doctors and research scientists, including Jerry McLaughlin, Ph.D., Alex Duarte, Ph.D. and Bill Keller, Ph.D., who explain the research and science behind these products. The tape also includes reports from two medical doctors Hugo Rodier and James Forsythe, detailing actual case histories of cancer patients who have experienced success with paw paw. If you are an NSP Manager, you can request a free sample copy of this audio tape by calling Tree of Light



Class Schedule

Tree of Light Classes Call 888-707-4372 to register.

pH and Blood Typing—Kimberly Balas (\$290)

Aug 23-24 Casper, WY

Biochemical Blood Analysis—Kimberly Balas

June 28-29 Los Angeles, CA (\$295)
July 25 Buffalo, NY (\$175)
Sept 2 San Francisco, CA (\$225)

Herb Walk: Field Bot. & Plant Ident.—July 11-12

Herbal Preparations and Applications—July 13-14

Both taught in Canada by Lorene Benoit for \$250 or \$450 for both. Lunch Included! Call 250-748-6802.

Publishing at 800-416-2887. Additional copies are \$3.00 each or less depending on quantity purchased.

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Our most recent issue of Sunshine Sharing will acquaint you with the remarkable properties of Paw Paw Cell Reg, ParaCleanse with Paw Paw, and Paw Paw Lice Remover Shampoo. Learn how these products can be used for health problems like cancer, parasites, viral and fungal infections, head lice, ticks and more. Additional copies of this newsletter are available for \$9.00 per package of 25 copies.

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Subscription Information

The *Nature's Field* e-zine and website is published by Tree of Light Publishing, a division of Kether-One, Inc. A year's subscription is \$29.00 USD for both domestic and foreign subscribers.

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Tree of Light Publishing is an independent educational organization dedicated to research, writing, and education in the field of natural health. Our approach is holistic, meaning we discuss health on all levels of our being: physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, social and environmental.

Important Notice

The information in *Nature's Field* is for educational purposes only and should not be used to diagnose and treat diseases. If you have a serious health problem, consult a competent health practitioner.

In an effort to offer you a variety of viewpoints and to broaden your scope of health, body systems and natural healing, *Nature's Field* selects a variety of competent and qualified writers with diverse and experienced talent in these areas. The viewpoints expressed by each writer do not necessarily reflect the opinions or philosophies of Steven Horne or Tree of Light and its staff. We hope that you continue to learn and grow in your health endeavors through our publication!

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