

## 5 Skin-Detoxing Herbs That Can Heal Your Acne Naturally

It doesn't take expensive chemical acne medicines or creams to see a huge change in your skin.

By: Larell Scardelli



Believe it or not, we use plants to heal everyday. From a refreshing cup of peppermint tea to warming turmeric curry, we've integrated these edible tools into our life often without realizing just how powerful their healing potentials are. In fact, until recently, I had no idea that some of my favorite rituals (like sipping on a big mug of green tea and honey) had positive impacts on my body, and that I could introduce new ones.

(Slash your cholesterol, burn stubborn belly fat, solve your insomnia, and more—naturally—with Rodale's Eat For Extraordinary Health & Healing.)

I learned more about herbal remedies when my holistic dermatologist suggested I introduce a few herbal tinctures (herbs extracted into alcohol) into my daily routine to help treat my late-onset cystic acne. This practice has been used in Asia for centuries, but there has been recent scientific research into its benefits.

Today, two years after I began altering my lifestyle, my acne is 90% gone. It wasn't strictly the herbs that cleared my skin, as Alex Casper, MA, RD, head dietitian for HUM nutrition explains: "While the mechanism of acne is still not fully understood, research suggests that a combination of normal body processes, increased hormonal stress, inflammatory responses, and dietary factors play a contributing role."

So while herbs and supplements are important, she also strongly recommends a diet low in sugar and milk, and high in omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids, water, and antioxidants. I followed a diet similar to this one and had great success.

It's important to note that in different modalities, like Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), herbs are rarely taken alone. "We formulate prescriptions for each individual patient and these herbal prescriptions may contain 10 to 15 different herbs in very specific dosages," explains Diana Hermann, licensed acupuncturist, herbalist, and practitioner of Chinese Medicine at Zi Zai Dermatology.

But for beginners, like me, who are just starting to learn about the ancient practice of herbs, it's okay to introduce one or two to see shifts in your skin. The great part about playing with herbs is that they can be taken via tea, tinctures, or capsules and even used topically in some cases. Here's your guide to the best herbs to help support your body in healing some of the underlying causes of acne.

### **Red clover**



From a TCM standpoint, red clover is thought to support cardiovascular health and blood flow, says Ellen Evert Hopman, herbalist and author of the book *Secret Medicines From Your Garden*. When taken orally, this vibrant plant is known as an 'alterative', which means it helps stimulate the immune system, clear infections, and support the liver and kidneys, which, if compromised, can be underlying contributors of acne, explains **Dr. Gabrielle Francis**, naturopathic doctor at The Herban Alchemist. Red Clover is bitter, so try mixing it with flavored tea. And watch out for the 'detox' effect—more urination and bowel movements—from this one.