

FLOWER ESSENCES AND ANXIETY

Patricia Kaminski, co-director of the Flower Essence Society, has observed a common theme in all who suffer from anxiety. "The underlying soul predicament with anxiety is fear, and underlying that fear is a lack in the ability to meet the world, to take on the world. The virtue that is lacking is courage." She notes that, in contrast to depression, where the body shuts down in a lethargic condition, anxiety is a speeded-up condition, with the body going into overdrive, as typified by heart palpitations, rapid pulse, and sweating. The challenge with anxiety is to gain emotional objectivity and not allow certain emotions to take over. "People with anxiety disorders need to step back from a kind of hyper-emotional reaction to life," Kaminski states. "They need calming, but not as in shutting the doors and not going out into life. They need to develop courage to meet life, and to trust life on its own terms."

Flower essences can be very helpful in this regard. 1-4 drops, as needed, can be put in water or taken directly on the tongue. Anne McIntyre, in her book, Flower Power, has identified many herbal allies for dealing with anxiety in the form of flower essences:

- *Populus tremble* (Aspen) for those who are anxious about the future
- *Mimulus* for anxiety about the past
- *Aesculus x carnea* (Red Chestnut) can help when feeling anxious about the safety of others
- *Ulmus* (Elm) for overwhelming anxiety
- *Cistus* (Rock Rose) when anxiety escalates into panic
- *Lavandula* (Lavender) can balance the emotions, relieve anxiety, depression and reduce stress and conflict. It's also valuable in spiritual practices, as it calms the mind and helps ease emotional conflicts blocking spiritual growth. It activates the crown chakra; stimulates awareness and alertness and helps connect people with their higher self
- *Allium sativum* (Garlic), the flower of power, is recommended particularly for those who are plagued by fears and anxieties and are emotionally drained as a result. It helps restore wholeness and strength, imparting courage to help overcoming fears and increasing resistance to parasitic and poisonous influences. It has a stabilizing and harmonious effect.
- *Matricaria* is a strong herbal ally for anxiety. It also makes a great flower essence. As an essence, it is known as a remedy of the sun, soothing tension and anxiety, stopping it from accumulating throughout the day to cause restlessness, insomnia or nightmares.
- *Passiflora*, as an essence, helps ease tensions within and calms the spirit. According to McIntyre, it opens both the throat and heart chakras. The throat chakra is associated with taking responsibility for one's personal needs and for nourishing one's inner self, while the heart chakra is the center through which we love.

David Dalton, in Stars of the Meadow has also identified specific flower essences to use for specific types of anxiety.

- *Verbena hastata* (Blue vervain) is indicated for anxiety due to overwork or feeling obligation to live life as a leader, role model or provider; and for those unable to relax.
- *Cirsium vulgare* (Bull thistle) is for anxiety about authority or fear of being controlled. One might choose
- *Asclepias tuberosa* (Butterfly weed) for those who are anxious about commitment.
- *Melissa off.* (Lemon balm) is useful for mental turbulence, producing a calmness that allows for deeper emotional exploration.
- *Eupatorium purpureum* (Gravel root) for anxiety over friendships and relationships.
- *Pulmonaria* (Lungwort) is useful for those who lose their breath in anxious moments. It helps move blockages, so energy flows properly in rhythm with the breath.
- *Amaranthus cruentus* (Pink amaranthus) can be used when one feels anxious in love
- *Anagallis arvensis* (Scarlet pimpernel) has been known to help for many aspects of difficult emotions like anxiety, obsession and fear. It helps one understand and transform intense emotions, and release blocked energy of the heart.

There is no magic pill when working with anxiety, and alleviating symptoms is an exercise in trial and error. As with all ailments, one must treat the entire person and take into consideration one's past, family history, trauma and current life circumstances. Herbs without lifestyle changes in diet, exercise, sleep and supplementation, will only do so much toward helping. But for the individual committed to a holistic life, willing to put in the effort by making changes, anxiety can be eliminated without pharmaceuticals and they can again enjoy a peaceful inner landscape.