

Bach Flower Remedies

The Bach flower remedies are named after their discoverer, Dr Edward Bach. Dr. Bach was born in Moseley, England, in 1886. He studied at the University College Hospital in London, where he earned a Diploma in Public Health in 1914. He practiced as a bacteriologist and homeopath for sixteen years in London; during this time he noted that patients with particular diseases exhibited predictable patterns of mental and emotional states.

Dr. Bach came to the conclusion that disease was not primarily due to physical causes, but rather to some deeper emotional disharmony. He believed stressful mental states and disharmony produce anxiety, anger, fear, and other negative emotional states. These negative emotions have such a depleting effect on a person's vitality that the body loses its natural resistance to disease, becoming susceptible to infection and illness. He believed that disease originates in the mind and emotions before it is manifested in the body, and we must focus on the healing of thoughts and feelings in order to effect healing at the physical level.

Dr Bach determined that in his practice, he would rather treat the client's emotions, and therefore the root cause of the disease, and not the disease itself. In 1930, he gave up his lucrative medical practice in order to devote all his time to researching a simple method for treating the ultimate cause of illness. For the next six years, Dr. Bach wandered the English countryside, searching for healing plants that would address the negative mental, emotional and spiritual states that, if not addressed, would lead to physical disease. The fruits of his labor are the thirty-eight flower essence remedies and one combination called Rescue Remedy. Dr. Bach viewed the remedies as catalysts to clear away negative states and bring out our positive qualities and virtues. Edward Bach passed away in 1936 at the age of fifty.

The flower essences are created by either the sun method or the boiling method. The sun method involves placing the flowering heads of the desired plants in a glass bowl filled with spring water. The bowl is left in the sun for three hours, allowing the water time to absorb the healing properties of the plant. The remedies derived from trees are prepared by the boiling method. Short twigs heavily loaded with flowers or catkins are boiled in spring water for thirty minutes and then allowed to cool. Flower essences are considered similar too, but not identical with, homeopathic remedies in their production, as both homeopathic remedies and flower essences are extremely dilute.

The essences have no detectable plant constituents in them. How then do they work if there are no chemicals that make a direct impact on the body? The essences work on an energetic or vibrational level. Everything is energy; light, radiation, sound, and even matter is energy that is considerably slowed down. Energy influences other bodies of energy, and the energy pattern remains even after all the physical manifestations have disappeared. Emotions have energy too. Emotional energies interact with physical energies, like our bodies, for better or worse. Positive emotions are said to have a high vibration; negative emotions have a low vibration. Physical bodies function optimally with the high vibrations of positive emotions. Long-term exposure to the low vibrations of negative emotions has a harmful effect on the body. It is now generally regarded as fact by modern medicine that chronic psychological states such as anger, fear, and anxiety take heavy toll on an individual's health. In order to facilitate complete healing, addressing the psychological is imperative. The energy of flower essences resonates at a high vibration, and assist the mind and emotions in converting the negative states back in to positive ones. One doesn't have to be physically ill, though, to experience the flowers' benefits. During any trauma, stress, or transition, the flowers can be used to help maintain a

positive state, thus preserving emotional and mental balance, and warding off negative physical manifestations.

There are no remaining traces of plant constituents in the remedies, only the plant vibration or spirit; therefore there is nothing for the physical body to react to negatively. There are no negative side effects, even if the wrong remedy is administered. The remedy simply will not work. It is impossible to overdose on flower essences. Flower essences are safe to take in combination with other healing modalities; these remedies that work on the emotions won't interact with therapies that work on the physical body.

Successful Bach flower treatment hinges on proper diagnosis. Fundamental to proper diagnosis is asking questions and keen observation. Gaining a thorough history of the horse and its surrounding environment is critical. Observe the horse in question interacting with humans, horses, other animals, and even alone to get a clear perception of the mental and emotional states of the horse. This can pose somewhat of a challenge when preparing flower essence remedies for an equine whose caretaker insists on translating for him. (In which case, a flower essence combination for the owner might be in order.) However, biped involvement aside, animals usually have less ego-involvement in their emotional life than humans do. As a result, the emotions they experience are often self-evident and less clouded by all the baggage that tends to follow humans around. It can therefore be relatively easy to determine the correct flower remedy for them, as long as one understands their unique methods of communication. When in doubt, some people use applied kinesiology or various dowsing methods to choose the proper flower essence or essences. As a result of their lack of emotional clutter, horses usually respond very readily to the aid of the flower essences.

The flower essences are sold in "concentrated" stock bottles; the remedies in these bottles are meant to be further diluted into medicine bottles. Medicine bottles combine four drops of up to seven flower essence remedies in 25 ml spring water, preserved with a touch of brandy. Since the remedies work on the etheric level instead of the physical, dosing methods can be quite creative. The remedies may be misted on the body, or a few drops placed behind the ear or anywhere else that needs attention. Several drops of the remedy can be put in a salve for application. Drops can be added to food or water, or delivered directly into the mouth. Suggested dosing for equines is ten drops four times daily, though this may vary. Flower essence combinations should be stored in amber bottles, in a cool place, and away from direct sunlight.

The Bach remedies are the original flower essences, but since Dr. Bach's time, other flower essences have been developed. Australian flower essences, California flower essences, and Alaskan flower essences are some of the more prolific of the new remedies, but plenty of others abound. Wherever there are flowers, there is the potential for a flower essence.

Flower essences can be purchased at most health food stores; even some pharmacies carry Rescue Remedy. And of course, the flower essences are easily bought online.

An Overview of the 38 Bach Flower Essences:

Agrimony - mental torture behind a cheerful or brave face, seeks company to escape from fears

Aspen - vague fears of unknown origin, startles easily, nervous sweat for no apparent reason

Beech - intolerance, very short with others, does not like being around others

Centaury - weak-willed, subservient, door mat, does what everyone else tells them to do

Cerato - lack of trust in one's own decisions, seeks advice and confirmation from others, tends to imitate

Cherry Plum - fear of the mind giving way, nervous breakdown
Chestnut Bud - failure to learn from mistakes, takes a long time to learn, forgets lessons
Chicory - selfish, possessive love, easily hurt and offended
Clematis - dreaming of the future without working in the present, spacey, absentminded
Crab Apple – the cleansing remedy, useful for helping the soul purge physical ailments, also for self-hatred and self-mutilation
Elm - overwhelmed by responsibility, temporarily feels inadequate for the job at hand
Gentian – easily discouraged if things go wrong, negative attitude, “discouraged school child syndrome”
Gorse - hopelessness and despair, feels at the end of their rope and nothing more can be done
Heather - self-centeredness, self-concern, obsessed with own issues, saps energy from others
Holly - hatred, envy, jealousy, bad temper
Honeysuckle - lives in the past, homesick
Hornbeam - procrastination, tiredness at the thought of doing something, weariness, mental fatigue, sour about work for no apparent reason
Impatiens – impatience, irritable, frustration
Larch - lack of confidence, insecure
Mimulus - fear of known things, spooks at the same object repeatedly
Mustard - deep gloom for no reason, black cloud over head, melancholy that comes on suddenly and lifts just as abruptly
Oak - the plodder who keeps going past the point of exhaustion
Olive - exhaustion following mental or physical effort, vitality drained after long struggle or illness, mind and body tire easily
Pine – guilt, “everything is my fault”
Red Chestnut – anxiety for others, fear for the welfare of others, separation anxiety
Rock Rose – terror, fright, panic
Rock Water - self-denial, rigidity, self-repression, up-tight, rigidity in thought processes
Scleranthus - inability to choose between alternatives, indecision, experiences extreme mood swings
Star of Bethlehem – shock from any cause
Sweet Chestnut - Extreme mental anguish, bereavement, loss of a loved one, almost destroyed from mental despair
Vervain - over-enthusiasm, over-effort, tenseness, high strung
Vine – domineering, inflexible, extremely alpha
Walnut - protection from change and unwanted influences, facilitates transitioning from one situation to another
Water Violet – proud, aloof
White Chestnut - unwanted thoughts, mental arguments, thoughts go around and around, reliving scenarios
Wild Oat - uncertainty over one's direction in life, talented but unfocused
Wild Rose - drifting, resignation, apathy, “I’ll just live with it” attitude, expressionless
Willow - self-pity, resentment, ungrateful, begrudges good coming to anyone else

The most famous Bach Flower essence, Rescue Remedy, is actually a combination of five essences: Cherry Plum, Clematis, Impatiens, Rock Rose, and Star of Bethlehem. In combination these remedies are an effective and expedient treatment for first-aid use, emergencies and associated stress. It was created to solve temporary states of inner stress. It can help the horse who doesn't trailer well, is separated from the herd, feels stress in certain environments, as well as ease the trauma of a sudden injury, a colic episode, and the like. Rescue Remedy is a necessity for the natural first aid kit.

Research on Bach Flower Remedies

Clinical research on the flower remedies is sparse; most of the proof of the remedies' efficacy derives from anecdotal evidence and empirical observation. It is supremely difficult to create a double-blind, placebo-controlled study that will satisfy the scientific researcher, due to the subjective nature of emotions. Everyone is unique, and two people presenting similar disorders would likely need completely different treatment remedies. However, there are a few brave researchers who have ventured into this territory.

For links to abstracts, go to the research section at www.edwardbach.org

Recommended reading for further study:

The Medical Discoveries of Edward Bach, Physician by Nora Weeks

Heal Thyself by Edward Bach, MD

The Twelve Healers by Edward Bach, MC

Illustrated Handbook of the Bach Flower Remedies by Philip Chancellor

Dictionary of the Bach Flower Remedies by T.W. Hyne Jones

Bach Flower Remedies for Animals by Judy Howard and Stefan Ball

Emotional Healing for Horses and Ponies by Stefan Ball and Judy Howard

www.bachcentre.com

www.flowersociety.org

www.ausflowers.com.au

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A Psychological and Metaphysical Study of Dr Edward Bach's
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(*Pilot study of Bach Flower Essences administered to first-time mothers in prolonged pregnancy*)
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