



# SIMH

SOUTHERN INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL HERBALISM

## Diploma of Medical Herbalism

### *Curriculum*

The Southern Institute of Medical Herbalism (SIMH) Diploma of Medical Herbalism is constructed with the primary objective of teaching that which will be most relevant to the practicing medical herbalist who wants to get the best possible results with their work. The course is focused on medicinal herbs, nutrition, and the holistic treatment of common health conditions and includes a great deal of practical and experiential learning!



# Structure

There are four stages to the SIMH Diploma of Medical Herbalism, each one broadly representing the main stages of life as well as correlating to some of the core traditional elements of Nature:

**Wood** - growth & potential - pregnancy & children's health

**Fire** - change & transformation - adolescence

**Earth** - stability & strength - women & men's health

**Water** - adaptation & renewal - adulthood & aging



# Coursework

## Overview

In various formats, the student will create several unique documents for their Diploma coursework

### 1. **Materia Medica**

In each stage, through video & audio lessons & by reading from a variety of sources, the student will construct a close working knowledge of many of the most important medicinal herbs and will create their own A-Z reference text; a 'Materia Medica'

### 2. **Conditions Index**

In each stage, the student develops an understanding of how to work safely and effectively with many of the most common health conditions found in modern herbal practice and will create their own A-Z reference text; a 'Conditions Index'

### 3. **Applied Learning**

The applied learning section of the course contains a number of practical videos designed to teach essential clinical skills to enable the student to begin working with case studies as a student practitioner as soon as they are ready. The second part of the applied learning concerns the development of several research projects. This is discussed in further detail on pages 5-6.

### 4. **Experiential Journal**

Personalised learning is recognised as an optimal method for the knowledge and theory of medical herbalism to become known in a way that can be best used to guide and help others. The learning process is recorded in the 'Experiential Journal'

<b>Materia Medica</b>	<b>Conditions Index</b>
Botanical Name & Family Actions - Energetics History - Folklore Science - Safety Indications Dosage Pairing & Formulation Preparation & Manufacturing	Terms & Concepts Signs & Symptoms Causation - Mitigation History - Development Constitution - Terrain Cycle of Healing Medicinal Options Therapeutic Actions
<b>Experiential Journal</b>	<b>Applied Learning</b>
Therapeutic Diets Exercise Techniques Relaxation Practices Emotional Healing Organoleptic learning Pairing & Formulation Self-Understanding, Awareness & Observation	Taking the Case - Interview skills Diagnostics - physical & laboratory Assessment & follow-up The therapeutic relationship Medical ethics, safety, confidentiality Scope of Practice, Referring Building successful practice Research projects

# 1. Materia Medica

In each stage, through video and audio lessons and by reading from a variety of sources, the student will construct a close working knowledge of many of the most important medicinal herbs and will create their own A-Z reference text; a 'Materia Medica'

This means learning their:

1. Botanical name & family
2. Actions & energetics
3. Uses & indications
4. Dosage matters
5. Science & safety
6. History & folklore
7. Pairing & formulation
8. Preparation & manufacturing



<b>Stage 1 ♦ Wood</b>	<b>Stage 2 ♦ Fire</b>
Agrimony - Alfalfa - Aniseed - Calendula (cert)* Caraway - Catnip - Chamomile (cert) Echinacea (cert) - Elder - Eyebright Fennel - Garlic - Ginger - Hyssop Lemon-balm (cert) - Lime flowers Marshmallow (cert) - Myrrh - Nettles (cert) Oatstraw - Peppermint - Plantain Raspberry (cert) - Thyme - Yarrow	Barberry - Basil (cert) - Boneset - Burdock (cert) Californian poppy - Cascara - Celandine Cinnamon - Dandelion (cert) - Feverfew - Gentian (cert) - Globe artichoke - Goldenrod Golden Seal - Hops - Kava - Lavender Passion flower - Poke root - Red Clover (cert) Rosemary - Skullcap (cert) - St John's (cert) St Mary's thistle - Yellow Dock
<b>Stage 4 ♦ Water</b>	<b>Stage 3 ♦ Earth</b>
Angelica - Arnica - Astragalus Bacopa - Bayberry - Birch leaf - Cayenne Celery seed - Devil's claw - Elecampane Ginkgo biloba - Hawthorn (cert) Horse Chestnut - Lobelia - Mullein Panax Ginseng - Plantago husks Prickly Ash - Reishi - Slippery elm Turmeric (cert) - Valerian (cert) White Horehound - Wild Cherry - Willow	Black Cohosh - Cleavers - Cordyceps Corn silk - Cramp bark (cert) - Damiana Dong Quai - Epimedium - Juniper (cert) Kola nut - Lady's mantle - Licorice (cert) Meadowsweet - Motherwort - Paeony Rehmannia - Rue - Sage - Sarsaparilla Shepherd's purse - Uva-ursi Vitex - Wild yam - Withania - Wormwood



\***Cert** - these herbs were part of the experiential sample pack that students received in the Certificate and will be revised and learned about further in the Diploma

## 2. Conditions Index

In each stage, the student develops an understanding of how to work safely and effectively with many of the most common health conditions found in modern herbal practice and will create their own A-Z reference text: a Conditions Index.

Central to this knowledge is a recognition that it is vital to understand a person's constitution, to see the underlying 'terrain' of their health, and to develop a working toolbox with the kinds of medicinal and therapeutic options that are most likely to help.



<b>Stage 1 ♦ Wood</b>	<b>Stage 2 ♦ Fire</b>
<p><i>Children's health - Pregnancy health</i></p> <p>Allergies &amp; Intolerances - Anxiety - Asthma            Bedwetting - Bronchitis &amp; Pneumonia            Breastfeeding - Childbirth - Colds &amp; Flu - Colic            Constipation - Coughs - Diarrhoea            Ear Infections - Eye problems - Eczema            Failure to thrive - Fevers - Immunisations            Morning sickness - Miscarriage            Nausea &amp; Vomiting - Pre-parturition            Sore throats &amp; Tonsillitis            Sleeping problems - Stomachaches            Stretch marks - Teething - Wounds</p>	<p><i>Adolescent health - Young Adult health</i></p> <p>Acne - ADD/ADHD - Anaemia            Anger &amp; irritability - Anorexia            CFS/Fibromyalgia - Detoxification            Diaphoresis - Gallstones - Hay fever            Headache - Herpes infections - Insomnia            Inflammatory Bowel Disease            Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)            Liver health - Lymphatic health - Migraine            Mouth Ulcers - Nerve Pain            Post-viral syndrome - Sinusitis - Tinnitus -            Vitiligo</p>
<b>Stage 4 ♦ Water</b>	<b>Stage 3 ♦ Earth</b>
<p><i>Mature adult health - Aging health</i></p> <p>Arrhythmias - Back problems - Bad breath            Cancer - Fatigue - Gastritis - Gout            High blood pressure - Intermittent claudication            Involuntary movements - Isolation            Loss of Purpose - Loss of weight or appetite            Meniere's disease - Osteoarthritis            Osteoporosis - Raynaud's Syndrome            Skin Ulcers - Urticaria - Varicose veins</p>	<p><i>Women's health - Men's Health</i></p> <p>Amenorrhoea - Cholesterol - Depression            Dysbiosis - Dysmenorrhoea            ED - Endometriosis - Fertility - Fibroids            Immune deficiency - Kidney health            Low libido - Menorrhagia            Metabolic Syndrome - PCOS            Premenstrual syndrome - Prostate Problems            Rosacea - Menopause - Thyroid health - UTIs</p>



### 3a Applied Learning

The Applied Learning sections in the Diploma include educational videos, audio lectures, selected reading, self-directed study and participation in the student forums.

Core learning outcomes are for the student to develop a practical understanding of key areas of clinical relevance to the practicing herbalist, so there are comprehensive in-depth discussions teaching on such matters as:

- Interview skills
- Medical ethics, safety & confidentiality
- Diagnostics - physical & laboratory
- Scope of practice
- Constructing effective treatment programs
- Referral networks
- Assessment & follow-ups
- Building a successful practice
- The therapeutic relationship
- Manufacturing herbal medicines and running a working dispensary

### 3b Research Projects

The Diploma includes four in-depth research projects. The projects are to deepen knowledge and help the student self-direct their learning with the goal of encouraging a lifelong interest in the study of the art and science of health and medicine. There are four broad areas for each project:

**Nature - History/Philosophy - Health Science - Plant Science**

Some practical examples of the kinds of topics that can be chosen for the research projects are given on the following page. By the end of Stage 1, our students are encouraged to at least have some ideas towards what they feel most inspired to do their research projects on, and to communicate these thoughts to the faculty. We can then give feedback on their topics and goals, check the planned scope of work is reasonable and achievable, ask about their proposed sources of learning and information etc.



## Research Projects *cntd.*

Nature	History/Philosophy
<p>Some examples are, the student could grow a plant from seed and, as it grows, journal their process of taking a deep dive into its unique properties, or they could learn how to identify and sustainably wildcraft medicinal plants in their region. This project may not require citations and classical 'research', what matters is that the student has a personal learning journey that connects them with Nature in a way that is compelling and meaningful to them.</p>	<p>Some examples are, the student could learn and write about the history and/or philosophy of 'Western Medical Herbalism', or write a detailed essay on one or more key figures in herbal medicine, or write something on one or more of the different schools of thought over the years, or something about the history of women in herbal medicine, or something how the folklore and use of a particular herb has evolved over the centuries - there are many possibilities here.</p>
Plant Science	Health Science
<p>Some examples are, the student could delve into the chemistry of plants to learn more about their active constituents and how that might better guide us towards safe and effective practice, or compare different methods of manufacturing herbal medicines to see what produces optimal medicinal extracts, or look into any of the multiple branches of botany, horticulture, ecology, sustainability, phytopharmacology, there are many possibilities here.</p>	<p>Some examples are, the student could choose a health condition that is personally relevant or interesting to them and then do a deep dive into its anatomy, physiology and pathophysiology. This research project has particular importance because there will be many occasions in practice when the student needs to know how to learn more about what they need to understand from health science sources to do their work more safely and effectively.</p>

The student is expected to work on their Research Projects at their own pace and at different times throughout the Diploma program however again, we do ask that, by the time they have completed Stage 1, that they plan to be ready to give us at least an outline of the topics they are planning to work on along with such matters as their learning goals, proposed sources of information etc.

**Important Note:** remember that the research project topics shown above are given as examples only. The student is free to choose entirely different topics so long as they fit the subject headings of Nature, History/Philosophy, Plant Science and Health Science. Whatever the student ends up deciding on for their research project, it is recommended that they choose something that engages as much of their personal interest as possible, so that they love the learning journey as much as possible too!

## 4. Experiential Journal

A good herbalist, depending on who is coming to see them and why, can sometimes need to be a nutritionist, an exercise coach, or a counsellor. Throughout the Diploma program, our students practice experiential learning and journal their process with various diets, exercise methods and emotional healing techniques, and the herbs that they are increasingly getting to know in person.



Stage 1	Stage 2
<p>Hypoallergenic Diet</p> <p>Gut Activation e.g. Hara massage, Belly-dancing, Hula-hooping, Belly breathing</p> <p>Emotional Healing practice Working with anxiety e.g. Breathing - Worry time</p> <p>Course of Gut-healing herbs</p> <p>Organoleptic learning Pairing &amp; Formulation</p> <p>Observing Nature</p>	<p>Cleansing diet</p> <p>High intensity training e.g. Calisthenics, circuit training, Freeletics etc.</p> <p>Emotional Healing practice Working with anger e.g. Releasing the heat - Active Listening</p> <p>Course of Cleansing herbs</p> <p>Organoleptic learning Pairing &amp; Formulation</p> <p>Self-Reflection on the Cycle of Healing</p>
Stage 4	Stage 3
<p>Conscious eating</p> <p>Restorative exercise e.g. Yoga, Tai Chi, Walking</p> <p>Emotional Healing practice Working with tiredness Releasing tension</p> <p>Course of Nervine herbs</p> <p>Organoleptic learning Pairing &amp; Formulation</p> <p>Personal Calling - Hopes &amp; Aspirations</p>	<p>Ketogenic Diet</p> <p>Sustained exercise e.g. Hill walks, cycling, swimming</p> <p>Emotional Healing practice Working with sadness Constitutional approaches</p> <p>Course of Tonic herbs</p> <p>Organoleptic learning Pairing &amp; Formulation</p> <p>Practicing Compassion</p>





# Paul Bergner's Courses

Fourteen complete courses from our senior lecturer, world renowned herbal educator Paul Bergner, are available. Three are completed during the prerequisite Certificate of Herbal Medicine and 9 are spaced throughout the Diploma. Note that in Stage 4 (see below) the student will undertake three electives of their choosing, but they may also choose to do the other two at an earlier or later date at additional cost.

Stage 1	Stage 2
<p><b>Advanced Herbal Actions &amp; Formulation</b> Learning the clinical herbal actions that will accurately predict the physiological effects in the person taking the medicine. The art of combining actions and herbal pairing to learn how to devise the right formula for the patient first and their condition second.</p> <p><b>Materia Medica Intensive</b> An advanced course on <i>materia medica</i> - the 'materials of medicine' for the nervous, respiratory, digestive, liver, and reproductive systems. Identifying and applying concepts of herbal energetics, temperatures, and humidity in the study of our healing herbs</p>	<p><b>Herbal Detoxification, Alteratives &amp; the Liver</b> Learning about the liver in health and disease, the different kinds of toxicity and the role of nutrition in supporting detoxification. In-depth study on cleansing herbs; <i>alteratives</i>, including how to match the right herbs to the right person and how to prevent side effects</p> <p><b>Inflammation, Intolerance &amp; Autoimmunity</b> Learning safe and effective methods of treatment for patients with serious chronic illnesses such as allergies, autoimmune conditions, neurological problems, cardiovascular inflammation, cancer, kidney failure, mental disorders, and more</p>
Stage 4	Stage 3
<p><b>Student chooses 3 of the following:</b> <b>Herbal Safety; The Heavy Cannabis User</b> Note these 2 courses are combined as 1 elective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Herb-drug interactions, iatrogenic disease, essential oils &amp; working with frail patients.</li> <li>○ The heavy cannabis user.</li> </ul> <p><b>Infectious Disease</b> Learn herbal therapeutics for bacteria, biofilms, viruses and chronic infection.</p> <p><b>Interview Skills &amp; Pattern Assessment</b> Getting the patient's story right is essential to effective clinical work.</p> <p><b>Materia Medica &amp; Formulation</b> More on creating a specific patient-centered formula for each patient tailored to their constitution and to the herbal actions required.</p> <p><b>Nutrition &amp; Metabolism</b> Practical clinical nutrition, presenting detailed pathophysiology, therapeutics, assessment, nutrition, dietetics and herbal strategies.</p>	<p><b>Fatigue: pathophysiology, adaptogens</b> How to assess and treat the patient with fatigue as their chief complaint. The role of key nutrients, food selection and food intolerance in fatigue. The science of sleep, sleep cycles and sleep debt. The vital but misunderstood class of <i>adaptogens</i>; key herbs for stress and fatigue.</p> <p><b>Insulin resistance; pathophysiology</b> An in-depth course on insulin resistance and its central role in many modern diseases. Practical, clinical tools for assessment and treatment of prediabetes, diabetes, vascular conditions, cancers, neurological diseases, and different kinds of reproductive dysfunction</p>

# Assessment

Throughout the course, and especially at the end of each stage, we assess and guide our students accordingly. There are three key methods of review as well as mentoring that is personalised for each student.

<b>Coursework</b>	<b>Exams</b>
<p>Return for review at completion of each stage</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assignments from Paul's courses</li> <li>2. Research Projects - as developed</li> <li>3. Experiential Journal - personal notes</li> </ol> <p>The student is encouraged to show their work in their Materia Medica and Conditions journal at least once but these are not marked or assessed.</p>	<p>Invigilated exams at completion of each stage Examinations ensure knowledge of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Key terms &amp; concepts</li> <li>2. Materia Medica - core herb lore</li> <li>3. Conditions - safe &amp; effective strategies</li> <li>4. Holistic medicine- readiness to practice</li> </ol>
<b>Mentoring</b>	<b>Case Studies</b>
<p>Individualised &amp; personal mentoring is an essential part of the student's professional development and can play a key role in identifying impediments to learning as well as helping to recognise strengths &amp; areas of special interest in the work</p>	<p>Gaining personal, practical experience via a number of case studies is essential to learning how to become a safe and effective herbalist. Students will also help each other's learning journey by sharing their case studies on our live and interactive forum</p>



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