Yarrow

Latin Name: *Achillea millefolium*
Other Common Names: Thousandleaf, Thousand-Heal, Staunch Weed, Staunchgrass, "Herb militaris," Bloodwort, Bloodweed, Sanguinary, Milfoil, Soldier's Woundwort, Carpenter's Weed, Nose-Bleed, Life Medicine
Genus: Achillea
Plant Family: Asteraceae (Daisy)
Parts Used: leaf, flower
Herbal Energetics and Actions: alterative, amphoteric, analgesic, anticatarrhal, antifungal, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, anti-phlogistic, antiseptic, antispasmodic, astringent, bitter, carminative, chalogogue, choleretic, circulatory stimulant, diaphoretic, digestive stimulant, diuretic (mild), emmenagogue, expectorant, febrifuge, hemostatic, hepatic stimulant, tonic, uterine decongestant, vasodilator, vulnerary
Body Systems Affiliation: genito-urinary system (reproductive and urinary systems), digestive system, integumentary system, cardiovascular/circulatory system
Elemental Correspondence: Earth
Aroma: rich, deep, herbaceous, bittersweet, pungent, slightly camphoraceous

Source Recommendations:

- Yarrow Essential Oil (Aromatics International)
- Yarrow Hydrosol (Aromatics International)
- Dried Organic Yarrow (Mountain Rose Herbs)
- Dried Yarrow, U.S. Grown Organic (Mountain Rose Herbs)
- Yarrow Seeds (Mountain Rose Herbs)

Botany

Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium)* is a hardy perennial, creeping herb that embodies both delicacy and resilience. Typically growing between 3 inches and 3 feet tall, it sends up slender, straight stems from a network of rhizomes that allow it to spread easily through meadows, fields, and forest edges.

In spring, the plant first reveals itself in a soft, feathery plume of green. The finely divided, lace-like leaves are among Yarrow's most distinctive features, each one intricately cut into countless tiny, serrated leaflets – earning it the name *"millefolium,"* meaning "thousand-leaved." There's truly nothing quite like a Yarrow leaf. The Anishinabe (Ojibwe) people call the plant "Squirrel Tail," inspired by the way the new leaves curl over themselves like the tail of a squirrel unfurling from the earth.

The leaves grow alternately along the stem, typically 3 to 4 inches long, and sometimes clasp the base of the stem. The stems themselves are angular and upright, supporting the plant's crowning feature: a flat-topped cluster of tiny, daisy-like blossoms. These flowering heads, technically called compound corymbs, are a modified form of raceme in which the lower flower stalks are longer than the upper ones — an elegant design that allows all the blooms to reach the same height, forming a level, sun-catching canopy.

Each cluster contains dozens of minute flowers, bone-white or occasionally tinged with pink. What appears as a single bloom is actually a composite, a hallmark of the Asteraceae, or Daisy family (which contains more than 32,000 known species). Each "flower" is an inflorescence made up of many smaller individual florets: central disk florets surrounded by five-petaled ray florets that resemble tiny daisies.

Yarrow's flowers are both aromatic and hermaphroditic, exuding the plant's distinctive fragrance while inviting a host of pollinators. Its scent is complex and unmistakable — a balanced blend of sweet and herbal tones with a faintly resinous edge, reminiscent of Chamomile touched with Pine.

Native Habitat & Distribution

There's an ongoing debate among botanists about Yarrow's true origins. Some sources describe *Achillea millefolium* as native to the temperate regions of the entire Northern Hemisphere, while others maintain it originated in Europe and later naturalized across North America (everywhere except the far South and Southwest). The North American counterpart, often referred to as *Achillea lanulosa*, is so similar that the two can only be distinguished by examining their chromosomes.

It's believed that European *Achillea millefolium* was brought over to North America during the colonial period, where it readily hybridized with native Yarrow already growing there. As a result, what we now call "native" Yarrow in many regions is likely a hybrid descendant of both lineages. The discussion remains open, with no clear

consensus on its exact heritage. Both *Achillea millefolium* and *Achillea lanulosa* are considered interchangeable in the herbal and aromatherapy realms.

What's certain, however, is Yarrow's adaptability. Whether native or naturalized, this resilient plant flourishes in sun-drenched fields, along roadsides, and in wild open spaces where few other plants thrive. Yarrow has this incredible go-anywhere attitude. It settles right into almost any landscape, whether things are wild and untamed or perfectly manicured. Dry hillsides or soggy meadows, breezy coastlines or high-elevation timberline, it doesn't seem to mind.

You'll spot those feathery leaves and clustered white blooms popping up in open forests, grasslands, meadows, rocky slopes, and even the scruffier disturbed patches that other plants ignore. Across the Pacific Northwest and throughout North America, Yarrow shows up like an old friend who knows how to thrive wherever life plants it.

Cultivation

Lots of cultivated Yarrow varieties show off gorgeous pink, red, or yellow blooms, though those ornamental types aren't the best choice for aromatic medicine preparations. For traditional therapeutic use, stick with the classic white-flowered Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium)*. According to herbalist Brigitte Mars, if you grow Yarrow in your garden, you might notice it helps other plants nearby be more disease-resistant, and adding it to a compost pile helps accelerate its breakdown.

Temperature & Humidity: Yarrow grows best in moderate warmth and fairly dry conditions. During its main growth season, it thrives around 60-75°F and can tolerate heat up to roughly 95°F while also surviving very cold winters once established.

Sunlight: Full sun. Yarrow can grow in partial shade, but it likely won't thrive there.

Water: Once the plant is established, water deeply but infrequently, typically only when the soil has dried out completely. It does best with low to moderate watering and is fairly drought-tolerant.

Soil: Well-draining soil. It prefers dry to moderately dry soils with good drainage, since excessive moisture or high humidity combined with poor airflow can lead to fungal issues.

Propagation: Yarrow is easy to propagate and gives you a couple of great options. You can start it from seed in spring, which works beautifully for filling in new garden spaces. It also loves to spread itself by sending out short rhizomes underground, popping up new plants nearby, and gradually forming small patches. (Nothing like the Mint family's garden takeover tendencies, just a tidy bit of expansion.) Because of this clonal habit, you can divide the roots of an established plant and replant the sections to quickly multiply your Yarrow and keep it thriving wherever you want it.

Harvesting: My favorite time to harvest Yarrow is on a dry, full sunny day when it's in peak bloom.

In his book, "Pacific Northwest Medicinal Plants," herbalist Scott Kloos shares: "For the most potent medicine, harvest the aerial parts just before or as the individual flowers open and before the flowers have been pollinated. Pay close attention because the flowers are long-lasting. Even after the disk flowers turn brown, the ray flowers may remain white. If you see little, yellow to orange colored, pollen-laden stamens in the center of the disk flowers, you will know that the flowers are in their prime. Flowers slightly past their prime may still make good medicine, taste and smell to be sure. Snip the stalks near the base, one or two from each clump, and discard brown or wilted leaves."

In "The Book of Herbal Wisdom," Matthew Wood writes: "The plant is more powerful when it is found growing on sandy, gravelly, stony, and light soils. I have it growing on my farm, but the soil is too rich, so I have to pick it elsewhere. Generally, if the plants grow above 3 feet high, they are too well nourished and should be avoided."

History & Folklore

The common name "Yarrow" comes from the Anglo-Saxon word, "*gearwe*," while the Latin name, *Achillea millefolium*, has many roots: *"millefolium"* means "thousand-leaved," referring to the many segments of its foliage, and *"Achillea"* is dedicated to Achilles, the great warrior of the Greek army during the Trojan War and the star of Homer's "Iliad." According to legend, Achilles used Yarrow to staunch his soldiers' bleeding wounds on the battlefield.

In Greco-Roman lore, it was Chiron, the great healer and wise centaur, who taught Achilles the art of medicine. One tragic day, as Heracles fought a band of wild centaurs using arrows poisoned with Hydra's venom, Chiron was struck by mistake. Immortal and unable to die, he was instead condemned to unending agony. Even with all his

knowledge, he could not heal himself. His suffering became a lifelong teacher, shaping his ability to tend the wounds and pain of others with unmatched compassion. In the end, Chiron surrendered his immortality to be freed from his torment, a final act of sacrifice and wisdom.

Achilles himself embodies the archetype of the wounded warrior. His mother, Thetis, tried to make him invulnerable by dipping him in the sacred River Styx, but she held him by his heel, which remained untouched by the protective waters. That small, forgotten place became his single weakness. He fought with unmatched courage and strength, seemingly invincible, yet he carried with him a vulnerability that would one day lead to his death when Paris's arrow struck that very heel. (This is also where the name "Achilles heel" comes from.)

Because of these intertwined myths — Achilles the wounded warrior and Chiron the wounded healer — Yarrow carries a reputation that is both fierce and tender. It stands as a protector and a companion in the long work of healing. It is a plant that belongs to warriors and healers both, embodying the truth that even the strongest among us carry tender places that require care.

Other common names of Yarrow – like Staunch Weed, Bloodwort, Sanguinary, Soldier's Woundwort, and more – point to its long traditional use as a vulnerary and wound herb and its powerful ability to slow bleeding.

Due to its widespread native habitat, Yarrow has traditional use across many cultures in the Northern Hemisphere, from Europe and Asia to North America. Carol Schiller and David Schiller write in "The Aromatherapy Encyclopedia" that Native Americans have traditionally used Yarrow root for pain relief, swelling, itching, and insect bites, and the leaves for reducing fevers, inducing sweating, expelling worms, clotting the blood, and as a diuretic. The entire plant is traditionally used to heal burns and bruises, and for ear aches. Many Native cultures refer to Yarrow as "Life Medicine," and the Teton Dakota (aka Lakota) name for the plant is *tao-pi pezu'ta*, which translates to "medicine for the wounded."

The Schillers also note that "early Americans chewed the leaves to relieve an upset stomach, regulate menstrual flow, for fever, chills, and rashes, and to promote dreaming. An infusion of the leaves was used for colds and a chest rub made from the flowers to reduce congestion of the breathing passages." They also share that in Latin America, the plant is commonly used for wounds, muscle and joint aches, and as a blood purifier. In China, the herb is commonly used for animal and snake bites.

In old Scotland, long before hospitals existed, the monasteries served as both sanctuaries and healing centers. The priests there were not only spiritual guides but also herbalists and physicians, tending to the sick with a blend of prayer and plant medicine. Harvesting was considered a sacred act, and gathering a healing herb like Yarrow always began with spoken devotion. One Scots-Gaelic harvesting song for Yarrow translates as: “I will pull the Yarrow. I will pull it with my strength. I will pull it with the hollow of my hand.” (I loved the power of that prayer so much that I had it tattooed on my skin.)

Yarrow also appears in Scottish travel lore: before setting off on a journey, you tuck a sprig into your pocket and offer a prayer for protection, safe passage, and a safe return home. It’s a plant that has walked alongside travelers and healers for centuries, offering a kind of guardianship.

In “The Scots Herbal: The Plant Lore of Scotland,” Tess Darwin writes of a love charm involving sewing an ounce of Yarrow into some flannel and placing it under your pillow before going to bed, and repeating the following words to bring a vision of your future husband or wife: “Thou pretty herb of Venus's tree, Thy true name is Yarrow. Now who will my bosom friend must be, Pray tell thou me tomorrow.”

Aromatherapist Gabriel Mojay notes that Yarrow has long played a role in matters of the heart. It was traditionally put into the nose to stop bleeding, yet nosebleeds carried another curious association: a test of fidelity. According to old folk belief, if you suspected a lover’s wandering affections, you could recite, “Yarroway, Yarroway, bear a white blow, if my love love me, my nose will bleed now,” and trust the outcome to the plant’s mysterious wisdom.

Yarrow’s divinatory role also extends beyond love charms. Its dried stalks have been used for centuries in the ancient Chinese oracle known as the I Ching, or Book of Changes, one of the foundational texts of Chinese philosophy. Through the casting of 64 hexagrams, the I Ching offers guidance in navigating life’s crossroads and understanding the ever-shifting interplay of forces often described as yin and yang. Yarrow, in this sacred practice, becomes a bridge between worlds: a humble wildflower helping seekers discern the path ahead.

Herbalist Brigitte Mars shares some folklore full of enchanting beliefs about Yarrow: Holding a sprig over the eyes was said to sharpen second sight, helping one glimpse beyond the ordinary. And a bundle hung above a newlywed’s bed was believed to safeguard their love for 7 years. Druids watched Yarrow stems to read the weather’s coming moods. Medieval households scattered it across floors as a cleansing, protective strewing herb, and it even found its way into tobacco blends and snuff. The Schillers note

that in Nordic brewing traditions, Yarrow sometimes replaced hops to give beer its bite, while in parts of Germany, the seeds were added to wine to help preserve it.

In the British Isles, healers infused Yarrow into oil and blended it with tallow to craft powerful wound ointments, especially for damp, slow-healing injuries. Its drying and toning qualities made it a trusted herb wherever the body needed help tightening, closing, and restoring itself.

Nicholas Culpeper, an English botanist and herbalist of the 1600s, writes: "It is under the influence of Venus. An ointment of them cures wounds, and is most fit for such as have inflammations; it stops the terms in women, being boiled in white wine, and the decoction drank; as also the bloody flux [dysentery]; the ointment is not only good for green wounds, but also for ulcers and fistulas, especially such as abound with moisture. It stays the shedding of hair, the head being bathed with the decoction of it; inwardly taken, it helps the retentive faculty of the stomach."

The Schillers note that Yarrow was listed in the United States Pharmacopoeia in the 19th century and was commonly used to promote menstruation, among other traditional uses. According to herbalist Matthew Wood, Yarrow was used as late as the American Civil War. Aromatherapist Valerie Ann Worwood states that it was an ingredient in some pharmaceutical products for skin conditions, primarily for its high content of azulene, an anti-inflammatory agent.

William Cook, writing in 1869, described Yarrow as especially beneficial for the "alvine canal," his term for the digestive tract. He praised its ability to dry excess fluids and steady the bowels in cases of chronic diarrhea and dysentery. Cook also noted its usefulness in what he called a "feeble condition of the digestive organs," marked by a shaky appetite, loose stools, and the kind of nervous exhaustion that follows ongoing digestive distress. Reading his words now, it seems that he was describing a pattern very similar to what we know today as irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), long before that modern name existed.

Aromatherapy Uses

Yarrow tends to show up for those who carry both strength and tenderness in equal measure. It is the plant ally for the ones who rush in to help, who hold the line, and who absorb more than they probably should. People with big hearts and thin skin. Those who get "cut to the bone" by life, emotionally or physically, and still keep showing up.

Aromatherapist Gabriel Mojay notes that Yarrow's ancient reputation as a wound-healer mirrors its subtle energetic role: it protects the vulnerable places and strengthens the personal field around us, almost like stitching the aura back together. Many healers see it as a boundary-setting herb for sensitives and empaths who need help keeping their own energy distinct and safe when they're supporting others.

Its mythology reinforces this role. The story of Chiron shows that many healers become healers because they first had to survive their own wounding. Yarrow recognizes the parts of us that have been overlooked, dismissed, shamed, or left without proper care. So many people find their way to aromatic medicine and herbs only after being failed by the systems meant to protect them. They turn to the botanical world when no other answers remain. Through that search for relief and meaning, they learn not only how to mend themselves but how to support others with compassion and skill. This is the essence of the wounded healer: wisdom earned through suffering, then generously shared.

Yarrow honors that inner transformation. It reminds practitioners that to serve as a steady presence for others, one must continue tending to their own wounds, too. A healer who forgets themselves becomes brittle and unable to hold space for others. A healer who keeps growing stays trustworthy, grounded, and humble. Working with Yarrow encourages ongoing personal healing, emotional resilience, and spiritual evolution, because those processes are never truly finished.

On a soul level, Yarrow acts like a talisman for anyone walking the healing path. It supports boundary clarity, emotional repair, and the courage to keep going even when the heart has been bruised. It says: protect what is sacred, including yourself. It says: healing is not just something you give; it is something you live. Susanne Fischer-Rizzi, in her book "Complete Aromatherapy Handbook," describes Yarrow as a connector, allowing you to keep your head in the heavens and your feet on the ground – dream big, but stay grounded.

Scott Kloos writes: "Yarrow embodies opposites. It stops bleeding and moves stagnant blood, stimulates and relaxes, grounds and uplifts, and opens and enhances sensorial experience while providing energetic protection. In the same way it closes physical wounds, Yarrow also seals holes in the energetic body. If you feel overwhelmed when entering a room full of people, take small doses of Yarrow flower tincture to strengthen and firm your energetic boundaries. Small doses of the tincture also open the senses to enhance visual acuity and auditory perception."

Mojay notes it is for "deeply repressed anger and embitterment, and echoes symbolically the vengeful wrath of Achilles," indicating that Yarrow oil is "most appropriate for those is whom feelings of anger or rage are linked subconsciously with emotional wounding

and vulnerability. Easily offended, they tend to strike out furiously at every injury, at all costs, determined to keep hurt and 'weakness' hidden. On the other hand, the same basic problem may cause them to suppress their feelings of anger and annoyance, submerged as they are by the pain of past wounds. Yarrow's 'visionary' effect on an emotional level is one that helps those in depression release the bitterness of hidden rage; while in those who are habitually defensive and severe, it allows them to tap and relinquish their tears."

Traditional Medicinal Uses

Yarrow has a fascinating way of holding opposites in the body. It can stop bleeding, yet also move stagnant blood where circulation has become stuck. Old herbalists took note of this dual nature. In 1597, English herbalist John Gerard wrote that sniffing "Nosebleed" sometimes caused a nose to start bleeding rather than stop. Centuries later, herbalist Maude Grieve (1931) remarked in her book, "A Modern Herbal," that Yarrow "seems to act either way," acknowledging its ability to balance what has gone too far in one direction.

Herbalist Matthew Wood writes in his "Book of Herbal Wisdom" that "*Achillea* has a long history of use in folk medicine as a fever remedy. After more than a dozen case histories, I can offer a picture of the characteristic patient... When Yarrow is required, there is a suffused, reddish complexion showing congestion of blood, the pulse is usually full, non-resistant and rapid, and the tongue red (usually dry on the inside, wetter on the sides.

An interpretation of the symptoms will help the reader to understand the peculiar genius of *Achillea*. The fullness in the pulse gives the impression that the blood mass has been infected. The full, rapid pulse is seen in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) as an indication of heat invading the body and calls for pungent, bitter, cold herbs to expel heat. Yarrow is just such an herb. According to Chinese medicine, heat entering the blood causes it to become 'reckless,' resulting in hemorrhage. Yarrow is for hemorrhage with resulting fever, or fever which results in hemorrhage."

TCM considers Yarrow cooling and drying, similar to its relative Chamomile (also in the Daisy family). Both soothe spasms and calm inflammation. In Ayurveda, Yarrow is known for stopping bleeding both inside and out, while also reducing excess Pitta. That makes it helpful when bile and inflammation are driving digestive discomfort. It tones the mucous membranes, supports clearer perception, and strengthens the link between the gut and the mind.

In “Ayurveda & Aromatherapy,” Dr. Bryan Miller goes on to say that Yarrow is recommended to be avoided by high Vata, and writes: “In herbology, it is one of the oils which are known as ‘heal-alls,’ because of its many properties. It is one of my favorite oils when I need balance; very useful during menopause, especially when nothing else seems to work for emotional upsets. Very useful for fevers because it is a diaphoretic. It's a good regulator for the kidneys and the hair. It is one of the immune-building essentials that I reach for whenever I'm feeling sick.”

Herbalist Brigitte Mars states: “Yarrow opens the pores, purifies the blood, soothes inflammation, circulates Chi, regulates liver function, relaxes spasms, strengthens the venous system, and calms the nerves. It also helps relax peripheral blood vessels, thereby improving circulation.” Mars notes that its constituents include beta-carotene, B-complex vitamins, vitamin C, vitamin E, choline, calcium, copper, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, essential oils (azulene, borneol, camphor, cineole, eugenol, linalool, pinene, thujone), salicylic acid, flavonoids, coumarins, and tannins.

Reproductive System (Uterus)

Yarrow has a long history as an emmenagogue, meaning it encourages balanced menstrual flow and helps relieve uterine discomfort. Traditionally taken as a tea or even decocted in wine, it has been traditionally used as a go-to for easing cramps and moderating excessive bleeding.

The plant’s famous “amphoteric” nature shows up here in a very clear way. Yarrow can dry and tighten tissues to slow heavy bleeding, yet it also thins and moves stagnant blood. That dual action makes it helpful for painful, clot-filled periods, pelvic congestion, endometriosis patterns, or situations where blood feels “stuck” in the lower body, such as heaviness in the legs from portal vein backup. Essentially, Yarrow supports the uterus in doing what it needs most: release what is congested while protecting against too much blood loss.

Ayurvedic physicians Dr. Light Miller and Dr. Bryan Miller note that Yarrow is indicated for menorrhagia, dysmenorrhea, menorrhea, vaginitis, menopause, and pelvic infection. Herbalist Matthew Wood adds that Yarrow is helpful for easing uterine congestion with excessive or lack of bleeding, menstrual cramping, endometriosis, uterine fibroids, inflammation of the ovaries, and uterine prolapse.

In “The Book of Herbal Wisdom,” herbalist Matthew Wood shares a story: Many years ago, a woman came into the herb store and sat down by the stove for a talk. She recounted how she had missed her period for 3 months that summer. She knew she was

not pregnant. One day, she was walking in a field on the north shore of Lake Superior. She sat down and, in a few minutes, noticed that her period had started. She looked around and saw she was seated in a clump of Yarrow. For many years, I just remembered the story as an odd fact; eventually, I saw how it fit into the profile of this medicine plant. I also learned that some of the most potent Yarrow grows on the hardscrabble soils along the Superior shoreline."

Because Yarrow has such a strong affinity to the blood and bleeding, it is an important remedy for uterine issues. It works both ways, to staunch excessive bleeding and to break up stagnant blood. In addition, it tones the mucous membranes of the uterus and reins in heat and restlessness associated with hormonal episodes. He goes on to explain that uterine fibroids are considered to be a form of stagnant blood in both Chinese herbalism and Native American medicine, and perhaps Yarrow could be of benefit here.

The late Maria Treben, an Austrian herbalist, recommended that every woman from age 13 to 90 take a cup of Yarrow tea every once in a while as a general safeguard. She explained that Yarrow can help bring on a suppressed period, staunch menstrual flooding, and help stir up stagnant blood in the gynecological tract. She praised Yarrow for irregular menstruation, mental restlessness, inflammation of the ovaries, uterine fibroids, vaginal discharge, and many other conditions. (To address uterine fibroids, Treben recommends a sitz bath about two times a week.)

Urinary System

In ancient times, Yarrow was traditionally used to staunch bleeding or oozing from the genitourinary system. It is considered a tonic antimicrobial astringent for the mucosa of the genitourinary system, supporting the mucous membranes, making it especially helpful in cases of recurrent urinary tract infections. Aromatherapist Gabriel Mojay notes that as a urinary antiseptic, Yarrow can help soothe cystitis and urethritis, and it benefits frequent, scanty urination thanks to its soothing diuretic actions. According to herbalist Brigitte Mars, Yarrow is indicated for cystitis, incontinence, irregular menses, and urethritis.

Digestive System

As a pungent, bitter herb, Yarrow helps stimulate digestive secretions, clearing stagnation in the digestive system, and supporting the mucous membranes. According to TCM, Yarrow's antispasmodic actions help stimulate the liver and regulate the flow of

Qi, indicating its ability to soothe indigestion, intestinal colic, irritable bowel, and insufficient bile production. For these reasons, Yarrow makes a great addition to a gut-healing tea blend.

Herbalist Matthew Wood writes that Yarrow has a strong affinity for the digestive tract. As a hemostatic, it stirs up stagnant circulation in the portal vein, draining the intestines. This cleans out the tract from the bottom layer up, since it opens the drain and allows decongestion through the bloodstream. Yarrow may also be a catalyst for digestion. As a bitter tonic, it tones the mucosa of the tract, increasing cellular activity and secretion. According to Wood, Yarrow is indicated for congestion in the digestive tract, portal vein, liver, and abdominal viscera; lack of appetite; bloating; digestive cramps; colic; dyspepsia; colitis; diverticulitis; and hemorrhoids.

Ayurvedic physicians Dr. Light Miller and Dr. Bryan Miller add that Yarrow is commonly used for gastritis, enteritis, stomach ulcers, and gallbladder inflammation. According to herbalist Brigitte Mars, Yarrow is also helpful for digestive issues like diarrhea, dysentery, dyspepsia, flatulence, hyperacidity, jaundice, and stomach aches.

William LeSassier, the renowned American herbalist and acupuncturist, emphasized Yarrow's remarkable ability to clear damp stagnation in the digestive tract, especially where inflammation or tissue breakdown is taking hold. That makes it helpful for conditions such as diverticulosis, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), colitis, or Small Intestinal Bacterial Overgrowth (SIBO). He also recommended Yarrow for diarrhea. Its astringent, toning actions help firm things up and slow the loss of vital fluids, restoring balance where everything feels a bit too loose and irritated.

Cardiovascular & Circulatory System

Herbalist Matthew Wood affectionately calls Yarrow the "master of blood," and the nickname fits. It works on circulation from every angle: helping blood clot when it's needed, loosening congestion when it isn't, and supporting the neurovascular system so the tiny vessels at the surface can open or close with precision. Thickening, thinning, moving, or containing blood, Yarrow seems to have a knack for restoring balance. That is why it shows up again and again for wounds, bruising, hemorrhage, stuck circulation, and any fiery, acute inflammation where blood has pooled or become stagnant.

Wood also notes that this decongesting, blood-moving intelligence extends to the cardiovascular system as a whole. Thick blood becomes more fluid, peripheral vessels release their tension, and the heart gets a break from pushing through resistance. Maurice Mességué, the well-known French herbalist, praised Yarrow for its calming

effects on the heart and circulation. He recommended it especially for those dealing with angina or tight, uncomfortable sensations in the chest.

Aromatherapist Gabriel Mojay notes that Yarrow oil's actions extend to both the heart and kidneys, and as a gentle cardiotonic, it is indicated for poor circulation and low blood pressure. Yarrow is also well known for its diaphoretic actions, and due to its ability to encourage sweating, it has a long tradition of use for supporting the fever process and breaking a fever. Mojay recommends blending Yarrow with oils of Lavender, Cypress, and Lemon to soothe symptoms of influenza characterized by strong fever and headache.

Ayurvedic physicians Dr. Light Miller and Dr. Bryan Miller note that Yarrow is indicated for colds, fever, and measles. Herbalist Brigitte Mars adds that Yarrow is traditionally used in cases of Bright's disease, catarrh due to allergies, coronary thrombosis, flu, hayfever, pneumonia, typhoid, and tuberculosis.

Integumentary System

In ancient times, Yarrow was commonly applied to the skin to help staunch bleeding and reduce excessive discharge, supported by its astringent and anti-inflammatory properties. Its antimicrobial constituents further reinforce the skin's natural defenses, helping lower the risk of infection while tissues repair.

In TCM, Yarrow is traditionally used as an analgesic to break through "painful obstructions" like sprains, rheumatism, and neuralgia, according to aromatherapist Gabriel Mojay. It can also help ease inflammation (thanks to the anti-inflammatory qualities of chamazulene) for conditions like neuritis, prostatitis, and arthritis.

According to herbalist Brigitte Mars, Yarrow is an excellent herb to promote tissue repair. A poultice of fresh leaves is commonly used to help stop the bleeding of wounds, and fresh leaves are placed in the nose to stop a nosebleed. Yarrow can also be prepared as a compress to address blood blisters, hemorrhoids, migraine, toothache, and varicose veins.

A steam inhalation of Yarrow is traditionally used to soothe asthma symptoms, as well as fevers, and can be useful for clearing up oily or blemished skin. Yarrow is also commonly used as a wash for acne, blemishes, oily skin, and eczema; as a hair rinse for hair loss; as a bath herb for skin complaints; as a sitz bath for uterine issues; and as a mouthwash for inflamed gums.

In “The Book of Herbal Wisdom,” herbalist Matthew Wood shares several remarkable examples of Yarrow’s wound-healing powers. One of his students, Pam, became particularly skilled in using Yarrow as both an anti-hemorrhagic and wound remedy.

Her first experience came unexpectedly during a family trip to their cabin up north. Her 12-year-old son fell from a swing, cutting his lip badly and developing a large blood blister on the outside, with minor bleeding inside. Pam had been harvesting Yarrow that very morning, so she quickly applied a poultice of the fresh plant to his lip. To her amazement, the swelling began to go down before her eyes. When it started to return an hour later, she applied another poultice — after that, the healing was complete. By the next morning, her son’s lip showed no swelling or discoloration, only a faint mark where the injury had been.

An even more dramatic case came from Pam’s husband. While cutting wood with a chainsaw, a birch sapling snapped back and struck him hard across the nose, knocking him to the ground and briefly rendering him unconscious. When he came to, blood was pouring from his nose in all directions. Fortunately, the chainsaw had missed him, and remembering his wife’s work with Yarrow, he applied a compress of the plant immediately. By the next day, there was only a faint mark left, and when he returned home, Pam didn’t even notice he’d been injured.

According to Wood, Yarrow is indicated for lacerations, bruises, active hemorrhaging, and old, hardened bruises. Ayurvedic physicians Dr. Light Miller and Dr. Bryan Miller add that Yarrow is commonly called upon for varicose veins, neuritis, hemorrhoids, gout, dermatitis, cellulite, acne, and sunburn.

Aromatic & Herbal Preparations

Drying Methods

After harvesting Yarrow leaves and flowers, tuck them into a brown paper bag, roll the top closed, and secure it with a clip. Store the bag in a cool, dark place with good airflow, giving it a shake once or twice a day to keep air moving around the plant material. The bag contains any crumbling pieces while preserving the aromatics far better than hanging the plant to dry in open air. After about 5 days, or when the leaves feel crisp and the stems snap cleanly instead of bending, your Yarrow should be fully dried and ready for oil infusion or storage.

Essential Oil

Yarrow essential oil is produced by steam distillation of the plant's flowering tops and aerial parts. During this high-heat process, a chemical transformation takes place that gives the oil its striking deep blue color. This vivid, ocean-blue hue comes from chamazulene, a powerful anti-inflammatory compound.

That said, not every batch of Yarrow oil will turn blue. Its chemistry varies with growing conditions, sunlight, soil, and even the plant's stage of growth when harvested. Sometimes the essential oil may be clear rather than blue, and that doesn't diminish its value. It simply indicates a lower presence of chamazulene, while the rest of Yarrow's therapeutic properties remain fully intact. According to aromatherapist Gabriel Mojay, most of the world's Yarrow oil is produced in Eastern Europe: Albania, Hungary, and Bulgaria in particular.

Suggested Uses:

I personally don't diffuse Yarrow essential oil – it feels far too precious to me. I prefer to use it as a base note in botanical perfumes, as an oil-based roll-on natural perfume applied to pulse points, or even as anointing oil paired with a personal mantra.

Some people enjoy using it diluted topically on the skin, especially to address oily, congested, or stagnant skin issues, where its powerful anti-inflammatory properties can help soothe irritation. However, because Yarrow essential oil can be irritating to some individuals, it's wise to perform a patch test before using it more broadly on the skin.

For more information on properly diluting essential oils, refer to your "Essential Guide to Essential Oils" in the Bonus PDF Guides section of AMG. *Always dilute an essential oil before topical use. Essential oils are only to be used topically, never internally.*

Aromatherapist Valerie Ann Worwood shares that Yarrow blends well with Cedarwood, Chamomile, Cypress, Geranium, Ho wood, Juniper berry, Lavender, Marjoram, Palmarosa, Rosemary, Rosewood, Sweet Orange, and Tea Tree. If I don't have any Yarrow essential oil on hand that I distilled myself, I use my favorite Yarrow EO here (from Aromatics International).

Hydrosol

Yarrow hydrosol, distilled from the flowering tops, often carries a lovely pale blue tint, just like the essential oil, indicating the presence of the anti-inflammatory compound chamazulene. A hydrosol is the aromatic water that remains after steam distillation of plant material – essentially a gentler, water-based essence that captures many of the plant's therapeutic properties.

Due to its gentle nature, I use Yarrow hydrosol frequently, especially when working with clients for cleansing, protection, or energetic support. It's particularly effective for skin care, helping to soothe congestion, support healing, and balance heavy or oily skin without the intensity of the essential oil. You can find my go-to Yarrow hydrosol source here at Aromatics International.

Incense

Yarrow makes a wonderfully deep and rich incense when burned, offering a warm, slightly sweet aroma that fills a space with grounding energy. Both the leaves and flowers can be used, though I personally prefer the flowers for their fuller fragrance. Smoldered on charcoal, Yarrow's scent carries a sense of depth and stability, making it ideal for energetic protection and boundary-setting. It resonates particularly well for empaths or anyone who identifies with the archetype of the wounded warrior or wounded healer, supporting emotional resilience while creating a sacred, fortified space.

Try sprinkling Yarrow flowers on incense charcoal to experience its beauty and depth as an incense. I also enjoy grinding it into a powder and adding it to loose incense blends or natural incense cones. To learn how to make your own incense, check out the Traditional Incense Crafting Course offered at the NW School of Aromatic Medicine.

Oil Infusion

Oil infusions are a classic herbal and aromatic preparation in which vegetable or animal fats are used to draw out fat-soluble compounds from herbs and aromatic plants. There are several methods for creating these infusions; I prefer using the heat extraction method or the alcohol intermediary method for Yarrow. The alcohol intermediary technique uses high-proof alcohol to help extract constituents that are otherwise difficult to draw out with oil alone, resulting in a richer, more complete infusion.

When I make Yarrow-infused oil, I always use dried leaves and flowers (since fresh plant material may introduce water into the oil and greatly reduce shelf-life), and sometimes incorporate the alcohol intermediary method. It's a slightly more complex process, but I find it really enhances the aromatic depth of the oil. Instructions for both approaches are outlined below. For more details, visit your *Oil Infusions* lesson in the Core Teachings section of your AMG Portal.

How to Make Yarrow-infused Oil – Dried Plant Alcohol Intermediary Method*:

Tools & Ingredients:

Dried Yarrow flowers and leaves
Carrier oil
100-proof alcohol or vodka
2 clean glass mason jars with lids
Blender or coffee grinder
Small kitchen scale
Medium glass bowl with lid
Measuring cup
Funnel
70% grain alcohol or isopropyl alcohol (for sanitizing tools)
Fine mesh stainless steel strainer and/or cheesecloth or muslin/nylon cloth
Label & pen
Notebook

Instructions:

- For this method, it's generally recommended to use a 1:7 ratio (1 part herb to 7 parts oil). Weigh the dried herb material in grams using your kitchen scale. This will give you the 1 part herb number.
- Multiply this number by 7 to calculate how much carrier oil you will need. Measure out this volume of oil. (For example, if you have 100 grams of plant material, you will need 700 mL of oil.)
- Using a blender or a dedicated coffee grinder (that's clean and doesn't smell like coffee!), grind the plant material to a fine powder.
- Mix 1 part by volume of at least 100-proof alcohol into the dried herb until it is completely but lightly covered. For example, if you started with 100 grams of plant material, you would use 100 mL of alcohol. Use just enough alcohol to moisten and rehydrate the herb – you don't want it to be soaking wet.

- Place the alcohol-moistened plant material in a medium glass bowl and cover it with a lid to retain moisture. Let it sit for at least 2 hours, or up to 12 hours overnight. Keep the bowl away from the high airflow areas, heaters, and direct light.
- Then, place the moistened herb material in a clean blender, and cover it with your measured carrier oil. Blend until the blender starts to warm.
- Optional step: Kami McBride recommends keeping the oil and herbs in the blender for 48 hours, and blending for 3 minutes (or until the blender gets slightly warm) at least 5 times evenly spread throughout the next 2 days.
- Place a few layers of cheesecloth or muslin cloth in a funnel and strain the oil into a clean glass mason jar.
- Squeeze the cloth or use an herb press to try to get most of the oil out of the plant material.
- Optional step: Scott Kloos recommends allowing the jar of oil to sit overnight to allow any plant debris to settle to the bottom of the jar, then carefully decanting the oil by pouring it into another clean jar. Once you begin to see streams of sediment nearing the lip of the jar, stop pouring and discard the remaining material.
- Be sure to label your infused oil jar and store it in a cool, dark place.

**Adapted from Kami McBride, Michael Moore, and Scott Kloos*

How to Make Yarrow-infused Oil – Dried Plant Heat Extraction Method:

Tools & Ingredients:

Dried Yarrow leaves and flowers
Carrier oil
Cutting board and knife
Clean glass mason jar with lid
Small kitchen scale and measuring cup (optional)
Stove pot or crockpot
Trivet
Spoon
70% grain alcohol or isopropyl alcohol (for sanitizing tools)
Fine mesh stainless steel strainer and/or cheesecloth or muslin/nylon cloth
Label & pen
Notebook

Instructions:

- Using a cutting board and knife, chop the plant material into smaller pieces to maximize the extraction potential.
- For this method, it's generally recommended to use a 1:5 ratio (1 part herb to 5 parts oil). If you'd like to be precise, you can weigh the dried herb material in grams using your kitchen scale. This will give you the 1 part herb number. Multiply this number by 5 to calculate how much carrier oil you will need. Measure out this volume of oil. (For example, if you have 100 grams of plant material, you will need 500 mL of oil.)
- If you'd like to use the "folk method," simply place your dried plant material in a clean and sanitized glass mason jar, filling the jar up about ⅕ of the way with herbs.
- Then pour in your oil, completely filling the jar, while leaving about 1 inch of space between the oil level and the lip of the jar. Make sure the herbs are completely covered with oil. Gently stir the mixture to eliminate any air pockets. Let the mixture sit for a few minutes to ensure all the plant material is fully submerged in the menstruum.
- Screw the lid tightly on the jar.
- Place a trivet at the bottom of a crockpot or pot of your heat source and fill it up halfway with water. If you don't have a trivet, you can use a small washcloth or the metal rim of a canning jar.
- Place the jar in the pot on top of the trivet. Ensure the water level aligns with most of the ingredients in the jar for even heating. Feel free to add more water to the pot or crock pot if needed. If the jar floats, remove some water or switch to a smaller jar.
- Set your heat source to low heat, around 120°F to 130°F. Make sure the temperature does not go above 150°F, as overheating may damage the oil and herbs.
- Allow the oil to infuse for 10 to 12 hours (or longer if you prefer – some herbalists recommend infusing the oil with heat for several days). If you're using a crockpot or double boiler, check on the water levels periodically and add water as needed if it evaporates.
- Turn off the heat and remove the jar from the water bath. Allow the oil to cool down to room temperature.
- Strain out the herbs using a fine mesh strainer and/or cheesecloth or muslin cloth into a clean and sanitized glass jar or bowl. I like to use both types of strainers to finely strain the oil, depending on the size of the plant material.
- Using clean hands, gently squeeze the oil out of the plant material through the bag. (If there is leftover sediment in your oil, you can allow the jar to sit for several

hours so the sediment settles to the bottom of the jar, then decant the oil into a new clean glass jar using a standard coffee filter.)

- Be sure to label your storage container, and enjoy your oil!

Storage: Store your oil in a dark amber glass jar or glass jar away from direct light and heat in a cool, dark place.

Shelf Stability: 6-12 months (depending on the oil). Look out for an off-sour smell, which indicates rancidity.

Suggested Uses:

Yarrow-infused oil is a wonderful ally for protection and connecting with the energy of the wounded warrior or wounded healer. Traditionally in the British Isles, it was infused in tallow to create ointments for boggy or overly moist wounds, where its drying and toning properties helped staunch oozing and support healing. That said, wound care in herbalism requires nuance — very wet conditions, like active eczema, may respond better to a hydrosol rather than an oil, as the water-based preparation can help dry and soothe without trapping excess moisture. It's generally not recommended to put oil or salve on any open wound.

Topically, Yarrow-infused oil excels in supporting circulation. It can be used as a massage oil for bruises, varicose veins, or other areas of congestion, and can also be incorporated into salves for similar purposes, helping the body restore balance while gently promoting healing.

Herbal Infusion (Tea)

When it comes to internal herbal preparations of Yarrow, I believe that water and alcohol are the best solvents for this plant. I rarely drink Yarrow tea on its own (though I recommend you try it at least once to experience a pure Yarrow infusion!) I generally recommend blending Yarrow with other herbs to balance the bitter flavor. This herb works well as a supporting herb in tea blends for the digestive, genitourinary, circulatory, and immune systems. For more details, visit your *Teas, Herbal Infusions & Decoctions* lesson in the Core Teachings section of your AMG Portal.

How To Make a Standard Yarrow Herbal Infusion

Tools & Ingredients:

1 tsp dried herb or 1 TBSP fresh plant material
1 cup of filtered water
Teapot, heatproof jar, or mug with a lid
Fine mesh strainer
Knife and cutting board (optional)

Instructions:

- Due to its bitter flavor, it's generally recommended to use 1 tsp dried or 1 TBSP fresh leaves and flowers when brewing a standard infusion of Yarrow.
- If you're using fresh plant material, start by chopping it into smaller ¼ - ½-inch pieces using a knife and a cutting board.
- Bring fresh, filtered water to a rolling boil.
- Place your herbs in a teapot, heatproof jar, or mug. Pour the hot water over the herbs, ensuring they are fully submerged.
- Cover your container to capture the essential oils and volatile compounds. Let it steep for about 20 minutes.
- Strain out the plant material and pour your infusion into a teacup.
- Drink slowly and mindfully, enjoying the aroma and flavor of the herbs.

Adjust steeping time and herb quantity based on taste and potency preferences. Store any unconsumed tea in the refrigerator and use it within 24 hours of preparation.

Suggested Uses:

Yarrow tea works well as a tonic, antimicrobial astringent for the mucosa of the genitourinary system, and in support of recurrent UTIs. I also love incorporating Yarrow into immunity tea blends. My favorite is something called EPY tea, which is equal parts Elderflower, Peppermint, and Yarrow. EPY tea is typically recommended during a cold or flu to bring comfort and support the body in getting rid of the virus. Yarrow is also great in digestive teas for toning, supporting, and balancing the digestive system. According to herbalist Brigitte Mars, drinking Yarrow as a hot tea increases body temperature and produces sweating, while drinking it cold has more of a diuretic effect.

Alcohol Herbal Extract (Tincture)

For internal herbal preparations, I find that water and alcohol are the most effective solvents for Yarrow. I rarely use Yarrow tincture on its own; instead, I usually blend it with other herbs to balance its bitter flavor. It's especially useful as a supporting herb in tincture blends for the digestive, genitourinary, circulatory, and reproductive systems.

Whenever possible, I recommend using the fresh plant – both leaves and flowering tops. For tinctures, a 1:2 ratio (1 part fresh herb to 2 parts alcohol) with 75% alcohol works best. For more details, visit your *Preparing Liquid Extracts* lesson in the Core Teachings section of your AMG Portal.

How To Make Yarrow Tincture

Tools & Ingredients:

Fresh Yarrow leaves and flowers
75% alcohol
Knife & cutting board or blender
Clean glass mason jar with lid
Fine mesh stainless steel strainer and/or cheesecloth or muslin cloth
Label & pen

Instructions:

- Chop up your plant material using a knife and a cutting board to maximize the extraction potential and fit the plant material in the jar. (Optional: If you want the plant material more finely chopped, you can mix it in a blender with the alcohol. Just make sure the plant material isn't too fine to strain later!)
- Place your plant material in a glass mason jar, filling it about ½ way with herbs, then pour in 75% alcohol to completely cover the plant material, leaving about 1 inch of space between the lip of the jar on the alcohol level.
- Then, screw the lid on the jar. Be sure to label the jar with the ingredients, date made, and strain by date.
- Set it in a cool, dark place and return every day to gently shake the mixture and check on alcohol levels. If the herbs are no longer completely covered, you may add more alcohol to top it off. You always want the herbs to remain covered with alcohol to avoid spoilage!

- Allow your tincture to infuse for 2-4 weeks, then strain out the herbs using a fine mesh strainer and/or cheesecloth or a muslin cloth. I like to use both to finely strain the tincture.
- Make sure to label the tincture with its name, ingredients, and date. Enjoy your tincture!

Storage: Store your tincture in a dark amber glass jar in a cool, dark place away from direct light and heat.

Shelf Stability: Up to 5 years

Suggested Use: Dosage varies depending on the herb, individual, and situation. Always consult a qualified health practitioner before consuming herbs.

Flower Essence

A flower essence is a subtle form of plant medicine that works metaphorically rather than physically, capturing the energetic qualities of a flower to support emotional and energetic balance. Yarrow flower essence, in particular, is considered deeply protective, offering "warrior energy" for those who are highly sensitive or easily influenced by their environment. It's especially helpful for empaths or anyone who feels delicate in the face of external pressures, providing a kind of energetic shield while still nurturing openness and receptivity. Flower essences open the door to working with plants that call to you — even those not commonly used in aromatherapy or traditional herbalism — allowing the medicine of the metaphor to guide personal growth and resilience.

How to Make a Yarrow Flower Essence

Tools & Ingredients:

Fresh Yarrow flowers
Pure spring water
High-quality brandy
Medium-sized glass bowl
Large, clean, dark glass bottle
1 or more 1-ounce amber or cobalt dropper bottle(s)
Label & pen

Instructions:

- Plan to make the flower essence on a clear, sunny day, when there are no clouds in the sky. It is also important to check in with yourself as preparing a flower essence should feel like a magical experience, not a mechanical one. Tune in to your mind, body, and spirit and see if you can be completely present in the moment. Make sure you are in the right place energetically to put good intention into the flower essence-making process. If astrology is important to you, you may want to consider those aspects as well when choosing the day to make your flower essence.
- When picking the flowers to use, it's traditionally recommended to use a leaf from the plant to cover your fingers so you don't touch the blossoms. Try to avoid using clippers or tools. This is not required, but suggested, so that your body's energy or other sources of energy do not transfer into the flower essence.
- Make sure the plant(s) you choose to pick from are organically grown. If wild crafting, choose a place where the plants grow in abundance and are not exposed to pollution. Choose fresh, vibrant blossoms from the plant, and pick flowers that grow in profusion. Only pick a few blossoms from each plant to ensure the plant can live a healthy life after your harvest.
- Fill a glass bowl with spring water. (If you do not have access to a spring, bottled water is okay to use. Avoid distilled water because some believe the ionization process destroys the water's life force necessary to hold the flower's essence.)
- Place the flowers on top of the spring water in the bowl until the entire surface of the water is covered. Place the bowl in direct sunlight where no shadows will cross over it (including your own) for 3-4 hours. During this time, the essence of the flowers will be infused into the water through the energy of the sun. (You may also choose to do it overnight on the night of a full moon to infuse the moon energy into the flower essence instead.)
- When the infusion is complete, skim the flowers off the water using a leaf or stem from the plant, if possible.
- The water left in the bowl is now called the "mother essence." Pour this into a clean, amber glass bottle, filling the bottle halfway with the mother essence and halfway with brandy (or any alcohol that is at least 25% alcohol*). The final mixture in the bottle should be half mother essence and half brandy. The brandy is used as a preservative and an anchor to hold the subtle essence vibrations in the water.
- Don't forget to label your bottle! Write Yarrow mother essence, the date, ingredients, where it was made, and any other important information on the label.
- Store it in a cool, dark, dry place. If made well and stored correctly, mother essences and stock bottles should retain their potency for 6-10 years.

Note: Use brandy that is at least 80-proof alcohol or any alcohol that is at least 25% alcohol. If you would like to avoid using alcohol, you may use apple cider vinegar or vegetable glycerin instead. However, it should then be stored in the refrigerator, and this will shorten the shelf life to 1 year.

Suggested Use:

The mother essence is to be diluted and never consumed directly. To dilute it, place 1-10 drops of the mother essence in a 1-ounce amber or cobalt bottle with a glass dropper and fill the remainder of the bottle with half brandy and half spring water. This is called a "stock" bottle. From this stock bottle, traditional use is to take 2-4 drops under the tongue, up to 4 times a day, as needed.

That said, flower essences are incredibly versatile. You can take them directly under the tongue, blend them into tinctures, add drops to your teacup, apply them to pulse points or temples, add them to a bath, or incorporate them into topical body products. They are gentle, safe, and offer a beautiful opportunity to build a one-on-one relationship with a plant that truly resonates with you.

Yarrow flower essence is especially supportive for the nervous system when processing trauma, offering strength to the wounded healer within. Herbalist Brigitte Mars notes that Yarrow essence helps protect against negative environmental influences. It is particularly beneficial for those who spend long hours under fluorescent lighting or in front of screens, easing the stress and overwhelm of modern living.

Safety/Contraindications

- **Topical Use:** Some individuals can get skin irritation with the topical use of Yarrow and/or Yarrow essential oil (this could be due to an Asteraceae plant family allergy, which happens to some folks, or other reasons). It's generally recommended to perform a skin patch test before widespread topical use to see how the skin reacts.

  Always dilute Yarrow essential oil in a carrier oil before topical use. Do not use more than a 2% dilution ratio. Some sources state that topical overuse may result in photosensitivity.

- **Pregnancy:** Avoid use in pregnancy or while breastfeeding.

- **Children:** Avoid use with children under 2 years old.

- **Epilepsy:** Avoid use with epilepsy or fever, according to aromatherapist Gabriel Mojay.

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