

Safety and Drop Dosage Botanicals

Howie Brounstein

Any plant that is potentially toxic internally at a standard dosage is considered a poison medicinal, drop dosage medicinal, or low dosage medicinal, depending on your political affiliation. These plants need special care during harvesting, processing, storing, and dispensing. This includes plants that are for external use like *Arnica*, *Delphinium*, etc., and plants that require drop dosages, like *Anemone*, *Aconitum*, etc.

Wash your hands after harvesting and/or use gloves. You can get the herb effect through your skin or in an open cut. If you rub your eyes later, you could get the herb in them.

Be very careful to clean all tools completely after harvesting or processing, or better yet have a separate set for low dosage medicinals. Do not use them for anything else before washing them.

Wash and label all vasculums as poison. It is best to have an extra set of vasculums solely for working with poisons.

Do not eat anything while dealing with these plants.

Do not put these in with the rest of your tinctures.

Always label "for external use" or "poison" clearly on the bottle.

It is best not to leave any poisonous plants lying around for someone else to accidentally eat. Be especially careful with small children. Even beautiful power objects on the car dashboard can be inviting to the little people that taste everything.

Once you start dealing with these strength herbs, you cannot have any unlabeled tinctures around. Previously, you could taste an unlabeled bottle of tincture to see what it was. Once you deal with poisons, all unlabeled tinctures should be thrown out untasted.

Drop dosage tinctures are often best made with pure grain alcohol. These types of herbs generally are small doses for an immediate effect. Pure grain alcohol enters the blood stream quicker.

When testing drop dosage tinctures, drop the tincture onto your hand and then lick to avoid accidental overdose. One cannot accurately gauge the number of drops in their mouth and I have seen numerous mistakes in this fashion.

I believe that it is inappropriate to give any herb to someone that you haven't tried yourself. This is even more important with these types of herbs. The potency of many low dosage preparations is determined in this way.

Always know the signs of poisoning and the antidote for any herbs of this type before using them.

Do not dispense these tinctures full strength. Always titrate before dispensing.

Insert the story about *Pedicularis groenlandica* poisoning in Northern California. See PBS series "Brother Cadfael" episode "Monkshood."

When you start using this strength herb, you are moving to a new realm of herbal medicine that requires a certain amount of responsibility. If you die from one of these intense Eclectic medicines, do not come running to me.

The difference between poison and medicine is dosage.