



"The almond tree is very warm and contains some moisture. Its bark, leaves, and sap are of little interest for remedies. If you feel lost, have a sickly complexion, or suffer from headaches, eat almonds that are inside fruit pits. Also, if you have weakened lungs or liver, eat raw or cooked almonds frequently."

## The Almond Tree

*Prunus Amygdalus* or *Amygdalus Communis*

At the time of Hildegard, the almond tree enjoyed an excellent reputation, not only for its taste and therapeutic qualities, because the tree was the symbol of love and virginity. It was, in fact, one of the only fruit trees whose flowers bloomed in winter, well before the leaves. Each branch was adorned with white or pink petals, like a wedding dress.

The almond is a nutty fruit reminiscent of a peach with velvet skin. There is a yellow woody shell on the inside. It is only by breaking the latter that we retrieve the one or two grains that are called "almonds." The almond is itself protected by a brown skin. A sweet almond (*Prunus dulcis*)—the one we eat—comes from a horticultural selection. The wild or bitter almond is toxic because it has a high cyanide content. The almond is very rich in unsaturated fatty acids, proteins, carbohydrates, and vitamins. Fresh almonds before a meal limit heartburn. The almond is used in perfume shops, candy stores, and bakeries—especially in Northern Africa and Provence. For example, calissons (traditional French candy) from Aix and briouate (puff pastry) from Agradir or Marrakech are mainly made from almonds and sugar. Almonds are used in energy cereal bars (almond bar) for or drinks those who are lactose intolerant. Essential almond oil is used in cosmetics and dermatology. It relieves eczema and reduces freckles.

The almond tree needs sun, light, and dry air. The tree withstands frost, but its flowers do not. It prefers Mediterranean regions. Plant it in the fall. Water it well at the bottom in dry conditions. Almonds are harvested in September and October.

*Amygdaleae.*



*Amygdalus communis* L.  
Gewöhnlicher Mandelbaum. ~



*"Dill is dry, hot, and moderate by nature. It aids digestion when it is cooked and dissipates the ensuing numbness."*

## The Dill

*Anethum Graveolens*

Dill is flavorful and is at once a liqueur, a pre-dinner drink, an antispasmodic drug, and a diuretic. Hildegard also recommended that the plant be used against nosebleeds and for one who wants to quench the "ardors and pleasures of the flesh." While we can doubt that the latter use is a priority among our contemporaries, but if this were desired, one should combine dill, the spurge (*Euphorbia lathyris*), and the iris before adding two portions of water balsam (*Mentha aquatica*) and then mixing it all in vinegar. The resulting condiment should season all the nutrients. The dill's reputation in the Middle Ages was such that it was systematically given to guests who had drunk too much at banquets. It was included in the list of Charlemagne's recommended crops in his royal domains.

Today, dill is a condiment for every dish all over the world. The fresh or dried leaves flavor salads, fish, cheeses, meats, sauces, and soups. Its flowers and grains are used to flavor wines, fruit preserves, and jams. True aromatic dill is on a par with cumin, mint, thyme, and rosemary. It is not only a plant with digestive properties. It helps with lactation among young mothers, calms epileptic crisis (it was one of the only remedies until the nineteenth century), and encourages sleep. Dill is an ingredient in many medicinal wines, as suggested by Hildegard. But we mostly consume its leaves and flowers as an herbal tea. The plant is 80 to 150 centimeters high and has indented leaves. Its flowers blossom into green-yellow umbels (clusters). Dill is also called a misbegotten fennel or false anise in vernacular French, and it is a cousin to these plants. Its flowers—in umbels—can lead to confusion, but not so its fragrance. The plant likes sunny terrain and well-drained lands.



*Anethum graveolens*



# **Part III**

## **Remedies and Recipes**

## A Sage Infusion

*“Whether it is raw or cooked, it is beneficial for the one who is weakened by harmful moods.”*

Sage is antibacterial, respiratory, digestive, analgesic, antirheumatic, calming, and antidepressive. It helps fight pain and all kinds of infections. It also regulates a female’s menstrual cycle. As a precaution, women should do without in case of pregnancy or breastfeeding.

### Ingredients

- 2 to 3 g (a little pinch) of sage
- 1 l of water

### Preparation

Put the sage in water. Slowly heat until the water boils, and then turn off the heat. Stir with a bamboo whisk or wooden spoon. Let it become tepid.

Filter if possible with a cloth or coffee filter. Absolutely avoid metal utensils.

Be careful not to be heavy-handed. Sage is powerful. If it is too strong, it is bitter. An herbal tea is especially recommended for women because sage, which is rich in phytohormones, regulates a female’s menstrual cycle. Men can drink it without being afraid of having their breasts grow — especially since sage is an aphrodisiac.

## A Nettle Infusion

### Ingredients

- 3 to 5 g (a pinch) of nettle
- 1 l of water

### Preparation

Put the nettle in water. Slowly heat this until the water boils and turn off the heat. Filter it and drink it.

The taste of the nettle infusion is not unpleasant, but rather ordinary. It can be combined with rosemary (5 g). It is one of the “panacean” plants. But it is particularly intended to accelerate healing and the calcification of broken bones.

## Fennel and Chervil Porridge

*“Take fennel — a little more nettle than fennel — and twice as much lovage than these two plants against the stomach’s bad moods. Prepare a food item by adding flour or bread. Eat this often.”*

### Ingredients

- 100 g of fresh fennel (roots or leaves)
- 50 g of fresh nettle
- 500 g of chervil leaves (or lovage)
- dry bread

### Preparation

Cook the fennel and chervil in water. Add the nettle just before you stop cooking. Skim this. Mix everything in a vegetable mill.

Add bread to thicken this, and crush it loosely. As Hildegard indicated, it is possible to replace the fennel with a mauve plant which has moisturizing qualities that are undoubtedly superior to those of the latter.

## Chamomile Porridge

*“If you have a stomachache, and when women have their menstrual periods, have them also eat this porridge.”*

### Ingredients

- 100 g of fresh chamomile
- 70 g of spelt flour
- 20 cl of olive oil
- 1/4 l of water
- salt, pepper (possibly galangal — that would please Hildegard!).

### Préparation

Cook the chamomile in water without boiling it.

Add the oil.

Gradually add the flour in the porridge to thicken it. Add salt and pepper to this.

It is to be enjoyed lukewarm.