

The Basic Plant Stone

Many authors of alchemical books have written on this, and almost each one has a slightly different method of creating a Plant Stone. It has a number of uses. One, it acts as a medicine, having all the same properties as the fresh herb, only to a much greater degree and effect. Two, it serves as practice for the much more difficult mineral alchemy. Three, the alchemist also benefits from the subtle effects the Plant Stone exerts on his/her psychic body. These effects can vary significantly between different herbs. In its composition, the Plant Stone is nearly the same as the plant Elixir, described in another section, in that the way we separate out the three alchemical Principles is the same, only the way everything is recombined is much different, even tricky, and hence takes more skill to carry out properly. Throughout all the different variations there are in making a Plant Stone, the following is common to all.

Gather at least a kilo of the fresh or dried herb of your choice. First, you will need to treat your herb in one of two ways depending on whether it has a high content of oil or not. Examples of herbs rich in oil are rosemary, lavender, ginger, and caraway.

If your herb is rich in oil, proceed in the following way. Set aside one or two hundred grams of unused herb to be used later. For the rest, extract the essential oil using an essential oil steam distillation. The oil constitutes your Sulfur. Save this in an amber bottle to be used later.

Next you will need to calcine the solid herb from the steam distillation, then leach it at least three times to obtain your Salt. Store this in an airtight container. Rather than doing all your calcining now, you could wait until your tincture is finished and add the remaining herb from that and calcine both together. I find, though, that this wet herb tends to form mold very quickly, and smells pretty bad. I just calcine as I go along, but you could put it in the fridge or freezer and calcine it all later.

Next you will need to obtain the Mercury of the herb. There are two ways of doing this. The first is to brew your own wine using the spent herb soup from the steam distillation (see Basic Processes section), or use spirit of red wine (in this case it must be red, as red grapes are ruled by the Sun, and being of a Solar nature can be used with any other plant).

You should have enough alcohol to cover the remaining unused herb you set aside (which should be finely ground) to a depth of two or three fingers. Seal this and incubate for at least two weeks. An alternative is to use a soxhlet extractor over the course of a day. When this is done, filter your tincture, calcining the solid matter for more Salt. Then, using a water bath at 85C, extract out the alcohol until the tincture becomes a thick honey. The distillate is your Mercury, while the thick and dark honey should be calcined and leached for Salt of Sulfur. Now you

have separated out all your alchemical Principles out and can proceed to your Recombining phase described below.

If your herb is low in essential oil, you can extract both the Mercury and Sulfur at the same time. There are two ways of doing this.

The first is to simply use a quantity of spirit of red wine, enough to cover the ground up herb to a depth of two or three fingers. Seal and incubate for at least two weeks. Alternatively, you can use a soxhlet extractor for this over the course of a day. Filter the alcohol. This contains both the Sulfur and Mercury of your herb.

The second option is to split your quantity of herb in half, using one to make a wine of that herb, and the other to make a tincture using the alcohol gained from the wine.

At this point you should calcine all the solid matter and leach to obtain the Salt.

For your tincture, you can use as is, or you can put it through a distillation using a water bath at 85C to obtain the Mercury (the distillate) and the Sulfur (the runny honey-like liquid left behind in the boiling flask).

You now have the Salt, Sulfur, and Mercury of your herb, and can proceed to the Recombination of the Principles.

If you have Salt and Salt of Sulfur separate, combine them now, mixing well, and grind them together. Obtain a glass jar or flask (I use test tubes), such that the total volume of the Salt will occupy 1/4 - 1/3 of the volume of the glass container.

On the day of the week that corresponds to the ruling planet of that herb (see Resources section), start by imbibing the Sulfur. Only go to the point of saturation, no further. You should be able to just see the surface stay wet. If your Sulfur and Mercury are combined, imbibe that the same way. Close the jar with a rubber stopper and incubate at 38C for a week.

Every week on this same day, imbibe the Sulfur. When after a week it still looks wet, proceed to imbibe the Mercury the same way. When after a week it still looks wet, continue the incubation for as long as you feel is necessary; weeks, months, even years.

The dose of this Stone is a pebble about the size of a wheat kernel. I call this Stone a plant Stone of the First Degree, because you can go further with this. A lot further - to the point where you can perform plant Transmutation.

If you desire this, take whatever amount of your Stone you wish to do this with

and calcine your Stone until it is white or very light gray. A temperature of about 600C is sufficient. Do not go above 850C or you will sublime your Stone into nothingness. Then imbibe with the Sulfur and then Mercury as before. Repeat this cycle until, during the calcining, your Stone liquefies. Be very patient, as this could take up to 50 cycles to accomplish.

When your Stone liquifies, pour it onto a warm copper plate. When it is heated it should not release any smoke. Take a small grain of the Stone and see if it dissolves in water; if it doesn't, your Stone is complete; if it does, repeat the cycle until it doesn't. When you are successful, you now have a plant Stone of the Second Degree, capable of plant Transmutations.

To perform a plant Transmutation, do the following. Obtain a large glass vessel of approximately 2 liters. I would suggest using a very large erlenmeyer flask. Stuff in to about three quarters full an herb of your choice (nope, doesn't have to be of the same herb your Stone was made from). Cover the herb with distilled water. Tie a non-coloured cotton string around your Stone and suspend it in the middle of the water and plant material. Depending on the strength of your Stone, it will extract the Quintessence in an oily substance in anywhere from a couple minutes to about a day. This will be seen to be floating on top of the water, and can be siphoned off using a syringe. This is used as a medicine, a few drops taken in wne once a day. Your Stone can be dried and reused indefinitely for this purpose.

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