Secrets of survival and disease prevention from 8 jungle plants—in a single capsule

by Kathryn Mays Wright

There’s a difference between running a business and living it. By “living it,” I’m not talking about the workaholic corporate executive sitting behind an enormous desk until 10 p.m. every night, although I know a lot of people like that in the alternative health world. But over the years here at HSI, we’ve found that the best products usually come from people who don’t mind getting their hands dirty—literally—to find and create their formulas. One of the best examples is HSI panelist and president of Raintree Nutrition, Leslie Taylor.

But Taylor doesn’t just run Raintree: This freckled, blue-eyed blonde actually treks into the jungle to pow-wow with indigenous shamans and healers to learn firsthand the therapeutic properties of various remote plants.

Obviously not the most conventional business model. So when I spoke to Taylor recently, I asked her how she went from being the female Indiana Jones to entrepreneur of a successful company.

Fact is, she’s a cancer survivor. Diagnosed in her mid 20s with mycoblastic leukemia, she spent two years enduring conventional treatments. “While the doctors gave up on me and sent me home to die, being the odd, determined, stubborn, rebellious individual that most people described me as, I didn’t give up. Fifteen years ago, it was even harder than it is now to access accurate information on herbs and alternative therapies. But you might say that I had a ‘dying need’ to know, and I began studying alternative health with a vengeance. With a combination of herbal medicine, diet and nutrition, and other natural healing modalities, I was diagnosed as cancer-free 18 months later.”

And not only was her cancer gone, but the damage that was done to her body by conventional treatments was healing too.

The success she had eventually led her to start Raintree—and to develop some of the most exciting and promising herbal therapies to date, including the cancer-fighting product Graviola, which we first told you about in the January 2001 issue of Members Alert.

Taylor’s latest product is called Amazon Vitality. And its name couldn’t be more appropriate. The blend of eight rainforest plants have all been shown to have protective effects on basically every part of the body—the skin, brain, liver, kidneys, gastric tract, heart, and immune system. The potential is almost limitless, but two of the most intriguing uses appear to be the possible prevention and treatment of Alzheimer’s disease and the ability to reverse sun-related skin aging.

Immune booster turned brain booster

Amazon Vitality is a proprietary blend of cat’s claw, calaguala, samam-
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jungle secrets of survival
(continued from page 1)

baia, chacra piedra, fedegoso, picão preto, gervão, and tayuya. These eight plants have emerged from under the rainforest canopy with an adapted knowledge of basic survival in one of the world’s most ruthless conditions. And these survival skills appear to translate to humans as well.

Taylor used cat’s claw as the backbone of her own healing regimen. At the time, she found a source of the herb extract in Europe and learned first-hand the impact greed has on alternative medicine. The price for importing this cat’s claw extract into the U.S. motivated Taylor to find her own source—in this case, the Amazon Rainforest of Peru, where she continues to work with indigenous, tribal shamans to document and learn what she describes as “their amazing empirical plant knowledge and natural plant remedies.”

Another part of Taylor’s job is to scientifically research and document these important medicinal plants so that she can teach consumers and practitioners how to positively affect their health with them. As for cat’s claw, it has become known for its immune-boosting potential. But beyond this application, it is demonstrating potential in DNA cellular repair. And this action may make Amazon Vitality a potential preventative for Alzheimer’s.

When oxidative stress causes disturbances in cellular energy (ATP) levels, it can result in the formation of plaque within the cell. Some newer research on cat’s claw indicates that it might reduce a specific type of plaque, called amyloid plaque, normally found in the brains of Alzheimer’s patients.

Herbal remedy prevents skin aging—and Alzheimer’s

But cat’s claw isn’t even the primary ingredient in Amazon Vitality. Two other plants, calaguala and samambaia, make up about 50 percent of the overall formula. These two herbs originally found their niche treating skin conditions. As Taylor explained to me, in the mid-1970s, rhizome extracts of samambaia were first reported to decrease the over-growth of skin cells and skin thickening and reduce the severity and extent of skin lesions in psoriasis patients. Then, in the early 1980s, a company in Spain developed and marketed a product made from samambaia called Anapsos. Now, Anapsos is sold as a prescription drug registered by the Health Ministry of Spain for the treatment of psoriasis.

Recent research also shows that Anapsos has another skin application—protection from sunburn and skin damage, including the aging that often comes from too much sun exposure. Its protective effect is reported to be due, in part, to an antioxidant effect, as well as its ability to protect and increase the amount of elastin in skin cells.

A 1999 study of hairless mice conducted at Harvard showed that when the plant extract was applied topically it helped to avoid skin damage and sun-associated skin aging and reduced the number of UV-induced skin tumors in mice. And in 2004, Harvard researchers published a human study showing that samambaia demonstrates “substantial benefits of skin protection” to prevent sunburn and skin aging when taken internally. Other research reports that low doses may not only protect against sun damage and skin
aging, but that higher dosages may actually “reverse the loss of normal elastic fibers associated with intrinsic aging of skin.”

These effects make sense when you consider that the extract was taken from a plant that grows in harsh rainforest conditions. It has developed specific techniques to protect itself and to survive its environment. And these actions seem to work for people too. But Anapsos also appears to have another, completely different benefit—one that the plant itself would never need.

Apparently psoriasis patients in Europe taking Anapsos who also happened to have Alzheimer’s disease started reported an amazing side effect—improvement in their Alzheimer’s symptoms. In response, the manufacturer funded a clinical trial on its use for brain disorders. In a double-blind placebo-controlled human trial, researchers reported that patients with senile dementia improved their cognitive performance, increased the blood supply to the brain, and also increased the electrical impulses in the brain. Results were better for patients with Alzheimer’s or mild dementia than those with severe dementia and extensive brain cell degeneration.

And considering that the same ingredient in Anapsos, combined with the other brain-boosting herb callaguala, make up roughly half of Amazon Vitality, it didn’t come as much of a shock when Taylor told me she’s already getting reports from people who have tried Vitality that their thinking is clearer in as little as three to five days.

Liver supporting herb doubles life span in cancer-stricken mice

All the above effects are only based on three of Amazon Vitality’s ingredients—there are still five more, all with equally impressive research and unique uses behind them. The next herb on the list is chanca piedra. You might recognize this herb from our September 2000 issue where we covered its benefits for breaking up kidney stones. It’s also a potent cell protector—especially for your liver. And several animal studies suggest that it is effective against liver damage from chemically induced liver toxins. At least one human clinical study reports that chanca piedra provides liver protective, liver repair, and liver detoxifying actions in children and adults with hepatitis and jaundice.

Plus, Taylor also told me about one animal study, which documented that chanca piedra almost doubled the life span of mice with liver cancer. A different research group tried to induce liver cancer in mice that had been pre-treated with a water extract of chanca piedra. Their results indicated the chanca piedra extract dose-dependently lowered tumor incidence, levels of carcinogen-metabolizing enzymes, levels of liver cancer markers, and liver injury markers. Both of these studies suggest that the plant has the ability to prevent cancer.

The possibility of cancer prevention may lie in chanca piedra’s documented ability to stop cells from mutating. One study indicated that it inhibited several enzyme processes peculiar to cancer cells’ replication and growth, rather than a direct toxic effect of killing cancer cells.

Inoculation against cancer

Amazon Vitality also incorporates the herb fedegoso. According to studies provided by Raintree, fedegoso has been the subject of clinical research for applications involving the liver and immune system. Animal studies indicate that it has the ability to protect the liver from various introduced chemical toxins, normalize liver enzymes and processes, and repair liver damage. Some of this research has also reported significant immunostimulant activity by increasing humoral immunity and bone marrow immune cells in mice and protecting them from chemically induced immunosuppression.

In other words, after treatment with fedegosa scientists could not give mice cancer—they had, in theory at least, become inoculated.

The next ingredient is picão preto, which has general antioxidative and cell-protective actions. One research group in Spain found that the extract reduced the amount of pro-inflammatory immune cells in human blood. Other research has demonstrated that picão preto extract can inhibit chemical processes in the body like the formation of prostaglandins and arthritis-inducing cyclooxygenase (COX).

2 Amazon herbs offer defense and offense against killer conditions

Next up on Amazon Vitality’s ingredient list is gervâo. This might be one of the formula’s biggest powerhouses with the most wide-ranging potential. In laboratory studies, three of gervâo’s primary phytochemicals—verbascoside, scutellarein, and hispidulin—have been documented with brain cell protective, antiviral, antibacterial, liver protective, heart protective, and antitumor activity.

And finally we have tayuya, typically used for pain, arthritis,

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Years ago, Padma was formulated in Tibet to battle the effects of overconsumption of meat, fat, and alcohol. Basically, a remedy for the wealthy—the only ones who could afford the sort of lifestyle that would result in such indulgences. But in the middle of the 19th century a Tibetan doctor took the recipe through Poland to St. Petersburg, where it developed into an effective treatment for intermittent claudication, a painful condition in which a decrease in the flow of blood to the legs brings about a reduction in oxygen to your lower extremities. And this is the use we first reported on back in the June 2000 issue of Members Alert. But now, this ancient recipe has revealed yet another use—improved mood.

As we’ve seen time and time again, the discovery of Padma’s new benefits came about by accident. Patients taking part in a clinical study on Padma for intermittent claudication began reporting an unexpected side effect—improved mood. Based on these results, researchers in Germany sought to unravel the mystery with their own study. I read the results of it, and, to be honest, my first reaction was that it was really small—we’re talking three people. Yet the scientists managed to create a study protocol where they produced nine different findings (each test was carried out in triplicate).

**Padma helps increase nature’s antidepressant**

I wanted to get some more answers about this study and potential next steps in reaction to these findings, so I contacted the exclusive U.S. distributor—Econugenics—and spoke to company representative Kerry Hughes, M.Sc.. She explained that in this study, scientists took blood samples, then stimulated an inflammatory environment within the samples, while keeping unstimulated controls for comparison. Blood that’s in an inflammatory state has increased levels of a chemical called neopterin. And in the presence of elevated neopterin levels, tryptophan levels are decreased or inhibited. What the researchers found was that when they introduced Padma to the stimulated/inflamed cells, there was a decrease in neopterin and a subsequent increase in tryptophan. In fact, the tryptophan concentration in stimulated cells reached almost 90 percent of that of unstimulated cells.

It’s a fairly well-established fact that major depression is associated with low levels of serotonin—the key mood-regulating hormone. And the body uses tryptophan to make serotonin. So if an inflammatory response prevents the body from making tryptophan, it also can’t make enough serotonin. But reported weight loss, which may be due to the liver detoxification properties in several of the herbs.

And according to Taylor, there haven’t been any reports of contraindications or drug interactions.

If you decide to try Amazon Vitality, Taylor recommends that you take one capsule twice daily if you weigh up to 150 lbs, and two twice daily if you weigh more than 150. In either case, you should take it with food—specifically a meal containing carbs, since the active phytochemicals from the plants found in Amazon Vitality are absorbed better with starch.

Citations available upon request and on HSI website
And another thing...

...Stroke risk rises sharply for middle-aged men with a high body mass index (BMI), according to a long-term study of more than 7,000 subjects. The “low-normal” range of BMI is 20-30. Researchers found that men with a BMI over 30 had nearly twice the risk of stroke in their later years compared to those who qualified as low-normal.

...Study after study confirms that regular exercise is the key to optimal health. In a nine-year study of more than 8,000 men, researchers found that those who exercised intensively at least two times each week lowered their risk of untimely death. Sedentary men (defined as burning 500 or fewer calories through exercise per week) were found to be at highest risk of death due to any cause.

...Tennis shoes, sneakers, athletic shoes, walkers—whatever you might call them, they’re the safest footwear for people over the age of 65. When researchers monitored the incidence of falls among more than 1,300 retirement-age subjects over two years, they found that subjects who regularly wore sneakers significantly reduced their risk of taking a spill. Falling risk was highest among those who mostly went barefoot or wore only socks around the house.

...Eating consistently throughout the day may help regulate insulin resistance and

Popular immune booster and exfoliant formulas back on the market

We were outraged when a U.S. district court stopped the sale of three very popular natural therapies: BeneFin, SkinAnswer, and MGN-3. (See the July 2004 issue for our original article.)

At the time, LaneLabs voluntarily stopped selling two additional products, SunSpot ES and Noxylane4, but the company just informed us that they’re bringing both products back.

Noxylane4 immune booster contains patented arbinoxylane, clinically shown to triple natural killer (NK) cell activity. SunSpot™ ES glycoalkaloid gel helps exfoliate rough, raised, scaly skin patches, commonly called sunspots. For more information on these products, see the May 1998 and the May 2004 issues of Members Alert. You can access them free on the HSI website (www.hsiindia.com). Just sign on with the username and password listed in the Member Source Directory on page 8.

These products are only available on-line. For more details, visit www.noxylane4.com or www.sunspotes.com.

Padma’s anti-inflammatory effects appear to allow the body to keep more tryptophan, which means it produces more serotonin. And that translates into a better mood.

So in addition to its already established benefits—providing immune support and promoting healthy circulation—Padma may also offer a natural way of restoring emotional balance. The research is only in the very preliminary stages though, so only time and experience will tell for sure.

Padma’s unique blend of 19 different herbs (including Bengal quince, allspice, marigold, Indian costus, Iceland moss, red sandalwood, and knot grass) is now manufactured in Switzerland and is sold under the brand name Padma 28 in Denmark, Austria, Italy, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Poland, and Lithuania. In the U.S., the basic formula is the same, except it’s called Padma Basic. But by any name, Padma touts more than 50 published research papers supporting it as an anti-inflammatory and antioxidant supplement.

Padma is best taken on an empty stomach, one-half hour before mealtime. And if you feel any discomfort after taking the tablets, try taking them along with your meal. According to Hughes, no interactions between Padma and drugs have been reported. However, if you’re taking any medications, Econugenics advises waiting one and a half to two hours after taking it before taking your medication.

The tablets can be chewed or swallowed whole with a glass of water. If you have difficulty swallowing tablets, let them dissolve in a glass of warm water and then swallow the mixture.
Beat Alzheimer’s with my top 11 brain-protecting strategies

by Martin Milner, N.D.

Alzheimer’s is not a normal part of aging. It’s a disease that destroys brain cells and robs you of your mind and your memories.

You may have heard the recent reports that cholesterol-lowering statin drugs have shown potential in lowering the risk of Alzheimer’s disease. But I have some serious doubts and concerns about this theory. It’s important to understand that cholesterol is not only important to your brain—it IS your brain.

Your brain is made up of 60 to 70 percent cholesterol by weight. So reducing your cholesterol levels with statin drugs will cause more problems than it could solve. In fact, my approach to Alzheimer’s includes plenty of dietary cholesterol, along with some specific supplements shown to enhance brain function. First, though, let’s take a look at how this cholesterol-lowering theory came to be.

Cholesterol makes your brain function

Last January, a study published in the Archives of Neurology demonstrated a strong link between high cholesterol levels and Alzheimer’s disease. This study focused specifically on a mutation occurring in a particular enzyme called CYP46, which is responsible for cholesterol metabolism in the brain. Another known risk factor for Alzheimer’s disease is mutation of the gene that makes a specific type of lipoprotein that carries cholesterol from the blood into the brain. This process is thought to accelerate the formation of plaques in the brain and increase the risk of Alzheimer’s. Based on these concepts, researchers hypothesized that lowering cholesterol levels may be the key to preventing the disease. My question is, how can an organ that’s 70 percent cholesterol maintain health with extreme cholesterol restriction? Furthermore, lipid peroxidation and oxidative stress have been implicated in Alzheimer’s disease for years. For all we know, the oxidizing of cholesterol and lipoproteins in the brain could be more of the problem than the ratio of lipoproteins themselves.

Studies aren’t real life

But let’s not talk studies and theories—let’s talk people. While the FDA has approved statin drugs as safe and effective, consider that most of the studies were conducted over only a six to 12 month period. But in real life, real problems often develop over a much longer period of time. Many of my patients who are on statin drugs don’t develop problems with concentration and memory until they’ve been using them continuously for two to four years. These problems are even more pronounced if their cholesterol levels fall below 180 mg/dl.

And, to make matters worse, mental function may be worsened by combining statins with other drugs including selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors for depression, like Prozac or Paxil, or beta-blockers like Propranolol or Atenolol.

That brings us back to the protocol I use in my practice to ward off Alzheimer’s and combat these problems in the process.

Simple tools for maximum mental power

As I mentioned above, I start with increasing cholesterol intake by having the patient eat more foods containing it—especially unheated forms. Eggs are one of the mainstays, in varieties like poached, soft-boiled, or even raw, blended into smoothies.

Then we move on to brain-protecting supplement formulas. There are a number of effective products I use in my practice, and I choose from the list based on each particular patient’s needs. I suggest you work with your doctor to determine which ones are right for you. But to give you a good foundation to start building your Alzheimer’s prevention program, I’ll list them all.

1.) Meta Lipoate is a premium-grade preparation of alpha-lipoic acid (ALA). It extends the beneficial activity of vitamins C and E and coenzyme Q10, promotes accelerated glutathione synthesis, and directly scavenges free radicals. Meta Lipoate also supports the health and function of neurological tissue, especially peripheral nerves, and boosts the production of cellular energy (ATP).

2.) Ceralin is a comprehensive brain support formula that addresses multiple pathways
involved in neurologic health, including healthy cytokine and oxidant balance, mitochondrial function, and endocrine balance. It also contains resveratrol, lutein, N-acetylcyctiste, acetyl-L-carnitine, thiamin, and mixed carotenoids for antioxidant and mitochondrial protection. Ceralin also contains unique forms of folate and vitamin B₁₂ to support healthy homocysteine metabolism for optimal brain function.

3.) Cenitol supports a healthy mood and overall nervous system function with its main ingredient, inositol. Inositol is an important, naturally occurring component of all cell membranes.

4.) Oxygenics is a combination of mixed carotenoids for balanced antioxidant protection, as well as milk thistle, quercetin, turmeric, and grape seed extract. It may help protect against most types of free radicals, such as superoxide, hydrogen peroxide, hydroxyl, peroxyl, hypochlorite, and singlet oxygen.

5.) Phyto Complete is a nutrient-rich superfood formula that naturally delivers a comprehensive blend of vitamins, minerals, essential fatty acids, and amino acids to the brain. It also provides broad spectrum antioxidant protection and phytonutrients that support liver detoxification and contains the herbs ginseng and schisandra, which are adaptogens that pitch in wherever the body needs help—in this case with brain function.

6.) Ultra Potent-C 1000 is a vitamin C formula that is designed to provide high levels of vitamin C in a short period of time.

7.) Ginkgo-RoseOx is a formula designed to support healthy brain function by combining ginkgo biloba with a unique extract of rosemary leaf known as RoseOx®. Based on my observations, it supports memory, alertness, and mental sharpness; promotes healthy cerebral circulation, which is important for the delivery of oxygen and vital nutrients to the brain; provides antioxidant support to help protect delicate neuronal cells and other tissues; and enhances learning performance.

8.) EPA-DHA Extra Strength EE Enteric-Coated provides concentrated levels of the omega-3 essential fatty acids eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA). Both of these fatty acids are critical in helping your brain keep the fat it needs to function at peak performance.

9.) GLA Forte is another fatty acid formula that contains borage seed oil, an essential fatty acid that is converted in the body to DGLA (dihomo-gamma-linolenic acid), the direct precursor of beneficial series 1 prostaglandins. Series 1 prostaglandins dilate blood vessels, reduce clotting, lower LDL (bad) cholesterol levels, raise HDL (good) cholesterol levels, and have anti-inflammatory actions.

Once we establish an individualized protocol from the above list of supplements, I also have every patient take a quality multiple vitamin/mineral complex without iron.

I’ve found that, taken in combination, these nutrients support essential nutrition while optimizing antioxidant brain protection and preventing dietary cholesterol from oxidizing. The

And another thing...

(continued from page 5)
reduce LDL cholesterol, according to a small study of women. Researchers also noted improvements in cardiovascular disease risk factors among those who followed a set pattern of frequent meals compared to those whose meal patterns were erratic.

And, in case you didn’t see it in the e-Alert...

...If you’re trying to make a weight-loss diet work, you can start by getting enough sleep. A 10-year study of nearly 18,000 subjects found that an average of five hours of sleep per night increased their obesity risk by 50 percent compared to subjects who slept seven to nine hours each night. After an average of six hours of sleep per night increased obesity risk by 23 percent.

...If you’ve ever opened a bag of freshly dry-cleaned clothes and recoiled at the pungent aroma, you were on the right track. That aroma is a chemical called perchloroethylene, or more simply: “perc.” One study found that dry cleaning left inside a car for 15 minutes permeated the air with 350 parts per million of perc. Just one problem: perc is toxic. So it’s best to air out your dry cleaning before putting it away in a closet.

...Want to control your blood pressure? A high intake of fruits, vegetables and olive oil was significantly associated with lower systolic and diastolic blood pressure in a Greek study

(continued on page 8)
that examined the effects of the Mediterranean diet on more than 20,000 subjects. Olive oil consumption proved to have the dominant beneficial effect on blood pressure.

...FDA officials have announced new initiatives designed to “refine the direction” of the agency in regulating dietary supplements. One of these initiatives is to send inspectors into retail stores, looking for supplement labels that bear unsubstantiated claims. So don’t be surprised if you see an Inspector Clouseau type lurking around the supplement aisles in your local health food store. He just might be an undercover agent for the FDA.

To your good health,
Jenny Thompson

For FREE access to urgent health information, sign up for the HSI e-Alert update service. The e-Alert is delivered to your e-mail inbox five days a week and covers the late-breaking health news too urgent to wait until the next issue. Visit our website at www.HSIbaltimore.com today to enroll.

While you’re there, check out past editions of the e-Alert, search for specific topics from back issues of Members Alert, and find out what other members are saying on the HSI Forum—all absolutely FREE.

brain protecting strategies (continued from page 7)
result is increased concentration, memory, and mental clarity. Generally, I go by the recommended dose listed on the label, but you may need to work with your doctor to adjust your dose if you weigh over 200 lbs. or if your symptoms are severe. See the Member Source Directory below for product information.

MEMBER SOURCE DIRECTORY

Amazon Vitality, Raintree Nutrition; tel. (800)780-5902 or (775)841-4142; fax (775) 841-4022; www.rain-tree.com. HSI member price is US$24.95 plus shipping for a bottle of 120 capsules (650mg each). Regular retail price is US$29.95, so be sure to identify yourself as an HSI member. For online orders, use the coupon code “HSI.”

Cenitol, available through the Center for Natural Medicine Dispensary; tel. (888)305-4288 or (503)232-0475; fax (503)232-7751; www.cnm-inc.com.

Ceralin, available through the Center for Natural Medicine Dispensary; see above for contact information.

EPA-DHA Extra Stength EE Enteric-Coated, available through the Center for Natural Medicine Dispensary; see above for contact information.

Ginkgo-RoseOx, available through the Center for Natural Medicine Dispensary; see above for contact information.

GLA Forte, available through the Center for Natural Medicine Dispensary; see above for contact information.

Meta Lipoate, available through the Center for Natural Medicine Dispensary; see above for contact information.

Oxygensics, available through the Center for Natural Medicine Dispensary; see above for contact information.


Phyto Complete, available through the Center for Natural Medicine Dispensary; see above for contact information.

Ultra Potent-C 1000, available through the Center for Natural Medicine Dispensary; see above for contact information.

HSI website log-on info (MARCH):
Username: march  Password: wind

Please note: HSI verifies all product information when the Members Alert is written; however, pricing and availability can change by the time the issue is delivered. We regret that not all products are available in all locations worldwide.
The above statements have not been evaluated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. These products are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease.

Correction: In the December 2004 issue of Members Alert, the telephone number for Osteophase listed in the Member Source Directory was incorrect. The correct number is (866)778-2646. We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.