

HERBAL HAIR THERAPY

Discover the best herbs for your top tress troubles | by Sherrie Strausfogel

Herbs have been the go-to treatment to keep hair healthy for thousands of years. Through trial and error, people from all corners of the planet have discovered that indigenous herbs can strengthen hair, restore shine, stimulate growth, treat a flaky scalp, and even help prevent grays.

Your hair is slightly acidic, with a pH level of between 4.5 and 5.5. This natural hair acidity prevents bacteria from adhering to the hair and/or scalp and keeps the cuticle closed (which protects strands from damage). Most drugstore shampoos and conditioners contain strongly alkaline (pH of 7.1–14) ingredients that disrupt hair's natural pH and can cause the hair cuticle to open (exposing it to potential damage).

Herbal-based shampoos and conditioners are a smarter way to go when it comes to cleaning and conditioning your hair, as they restore the hair's pH level naturally. There are herbs that benefit all types of hair, healing hair and scalp problems without affecting the hair's structure. Botanicals also form a protective coat around the hair shaft to prevent further damage. (See the box on p. 30 for a list of top herbs for hair.)



« Tame frizz, add moisture, increase body in thinning hair, and treat dry scalp inflammation with **ACURE Moroccan Argan Stem Cell + Argan Oil Shampoo and Conditioner**. The duo provides lasting hydration, shine, and body with organic argan oil, argan stem cells, CoQ10, aloe, and sea buckthorn oil. The shampoo and conditioner are ideal for treating severely dry and damaged or thinning hair, and are free of toxic chemicals, parabens, gluten, synthetic fragrances, sulfates, phthalates, and harmful preservatives.



« Gently cleanse and condition hair with **Nature's Gate Herbal Daily Shampoo and Conditioner**. The shampoo formula was created more than 40 years ago using hand collected rainwater blended with natural herbs. Today, it still relies on herbs such as sage, lavender, rosemary, and thyme to purify and revitalize hair, and chamomile and yarrow to soothe and tone. The conditioner combines chamomile, nettle, and burdock root for soft, silky, easy-to-manage hair.



« Revitalize dry or treated hair with **Ecco Bella Vanilla Moisturizing Shampoo**. Organic aloe vera, organic extracts of calendula and chamomile, and rice protein leave hair soft, shiny, and manageable. This lovely vanilla-scented shampoo is also pH-balanced and gluten-free.

» Control your flaky, itchy scalp with **Pure & Basic Tea Tree & Rosemary Natural Anti-Dandruff Shampoo**. Paraben- and sulfate-free, this shampoo controls dandruff and conditions the scalp with rosemary extract, tea tree oil, and Canadian willow, as well as 2% salicylic acid. Safe for color-treated or permed hair.



12 HERBAL INGREDIENTS FOR HEALTHY HAIR

- > **1. ALOE** stimulates new hair growth, fights frizz, and works as a natural conditioner.
- > **2. ARNICA** treats dry scalp and prevents further scalp problems, including dandruff. It also promotes hair growth and provides nutrition to the hair shafts.
- > **3. BURDOCK ROOT** treats scalp problems, including itching and dandruff. It also improves hair strength, increases shine, and reverses thinning.
- > **4. CHAMOMILE** conditions damaged and dry hair, helps restore shine, and brings out natural highlights for blondes. It also helps strengthen hair to prevent breakage, tangling, and split ends.
- > **5. HORSETAIL** is a rich source of silica, which strengthens hair at its core and leaves hair shiny and manageable. It also stimulates hair growth by boosting scalp circulation.
- > **6. MARIGOLD** moisturizes oily, fine, and dry hair, and can help lighten color and increase shine.
- > **7. NETTLE** is anti-inflammatory and astringent, and remedies oily hair and scalp as well as dandruff.
- > **8. PARSLEY** acts as a hair tonic for thin and dandruff-prone hair.
- > **9. ROSEMARY** stimulates hair growth, nourishes flaky and dry scalp, restores luster to hair, and may even slow premature graying.
- > **10. SAGE** treats scalp infection, dandruff, and oily hair, as well as lessens hair loss and fights grays.
- > **11. TEA TREE** is a natural antibacterial, antiviral, and antifungal that helps reduce dandruff and other infections of the scalp.
- > **12. WITCH HAZEL** improves the scalp's blood circulation, which stimulates natural hair growth.



Sherrie Strausfogel is the author of *Hawaii's Spa Experience: Rejuvenating Secrets of the Islands*. Her work, which includes articles on beauty, spas, health, cuisine, and travel, has appeared in more than 100 magazines, newspapers, guidebooks, and websites. Strausfogel is based in Honolulu.

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