

DR. CHRISTOPHER'S
Herbal Legacy Newsletter

Cabbage Part I

December 2, 2009

by Dr. John R. Christopher

A Dr. Blanc in 1881 wrote the following: "About 1880, a cart driver in a small French village fell off his wagon and - a frequent accident in those times - one wheel rolled over his leg. Two physicians agreed that amputation was necessary; a surgeon was called into consultation, he concurred, and the operation was booked for the next morning. But at 5 p.m. that day the parish priest, Loviat of Saint-Claude, advised the patient's mother to cover the injured leg with cabbage leaves. Under the influence of this simple dressing, the man slept all night. When he awoke, the family and one of the physicians who arrived to prepare the patient for surgery saw that he could move his leg. The cabbage leaves were removed to reveal a leg without swelling and with improved color. Eight days later, completely well, the man returned to work."

The common cabbage has been of vital importance to mankind over the 4,000 years of its cultivation. The medical use of cabbage, empirical for centuries, is based upon precise scientific considerations. Hippocrates once remarked that physicians shouldn't hesitate to borrow from folklore that which can be useful in medicine. We now know, with sound proof, that the folklore of cabbage has stood the test of time and scientific experimentation.

Two other accounts of the medicinal use of cabbage might be of interest: A watchmaker suffered for a year with a painful eczema of both hands, preventing him from working. The lesions were acutely inflamed, and the fingernails were separating, about to fall off. Applications of cabbage leaves twice daily for a few days brought relief from pain, as clear fluid drained onto the dressing. With continued treatment healing took place within two months.

In 1875 a 75-year old man suffered arteriosclerotic gangrene of the lower right leg and foot. The skin was black and the front of the lower leg was decayed. Following the local application of cabbage leaf dressings, the skin changed from black to brown to red, and then returned to its normal healthy color. Three weeks later, writes doctor Blanc, there was a considerable improvement.

It has not yet been discovered why the cabbage leaf has such remarkable healing properties. We only know that the cabbage leaf has a particular affinity for disease-causing fluids, forcing them from the tissues. It even seems that treating small areas of extensive disease benefits the whole, as distant toxins are removed, the cabbage promotes healing and scar tissue, thus preventing complications.

The long history of cures obtained with cabbage, concern many different diseases, including simple and complicated injuries, rheumatic pains, facial neuralgia, headaches, leg ulcer, anthrax,

DR. CHRISTOPHER'S
Herbal Legacy Newsletter

and many others. Cabbage - raw in salads, juiced, or steamed - has incomparable virtues in the most diverse maladies.

Hippocrates had a peculiar affection for this vegetable. Should one of his patients be seized with a violent colic, he at once prescribed a dish of boiled cabbage with salt. Erasistratus looked upon it as a sovereign remedy against paralysis. Pythagoras, and other learned philosophers, composed books in which they celebrated the marvelous virtues of the cabbage. Cato claimed that this plant infallibly cures all diseases; and that he used it as a panacea to preserve his family from the plague, which, otherwise, would not have failed to reach them. It is to the use the Romans made of it, he adds, that they were able during six hundred years to do without the assistance of physicians, whom they had expelled from their territories.

The Romans used cabbage externally and internally for various illnesses, as a purgative, disinfectant, and poultice; Roman soldiers applied cabbage leaves to their wounds for healing.