



Shrooms for Your Skin

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Many of your favorite medicinal and culinary mushrooms can be extracted in oil and made into salves, lotions, infused oils, and other topicals.

Your skin is the largest organ on the body, and applying mushroom medicine to your skin is a fantastic way to bring mushroom medicinals into your life. These medicines are doubly effective if you use them both topically and internally, such as through a double-extracted tincture + mushroom salve.

Skin Supporting Shrooms

Here is a brief list of some local species of mushrooms that you can forage, cultivate or purchase to make into mushroom topicals by making an infused oil:

- **Amanita Muscaria** (*Amanita Muscaria* var. *Guessowii* / *Chrysoblema*): Anti-inflammatory, pain relieving, reduces swelling and redness, helps skin barrier recovery, addresses joint and nerve pain, anti-oxidant
 - *Amanita* is not psychoactive when applied to the skin
- **Birch polypore** (*Piptoporus betulinus*): Anti-inflammatory, anti-microbial, promotes wound healing, soothes irritated skin, anti-aging effects
- **Chaga** (*Inonotus obliquus*): Antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, UV protection, skin brightening and anti-aging
- **Cordyceps**: ^{*}(*Cordyceps* spp.) Improves skin hydration, reduces inflammation, supports skin elasticity, anti-aging
- **Lion's Mane** (*Hericum* spp.): Promotes nerve regeneration, scar healing, reduces inflammation, soothes sensitive or irritated skin
- **Oyster Mushrooms** (*Pleurotus* spp.): Antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, supports skin barrier repair, soothes irritation
- **Reishi** (*Ganoderma tsugae*): Anti-inflammatory, reduces redness and swelling, improves skin hydration, anti-aging, promotes wound healing
- **Shitake** (*Leninula edodes*): Brightens skin, reduces hyperpigmentation, anti-aging effect, hydrates skin



¹ Please note: this is a very short version of the course I teach on Mushroom Medicine! For more, visit www.paherbschool.com.

A Deeper Dive into Two Skin Supporting Shrooms

Amanita Muscaria (Amanita Muscaria var. Guessowii): Amanita was widely used medicinally in Northern Europe as medicine for the body and spirit. This psychoactive fungus is also demonstrating efficacy in a wide range of studies today.

Topical Medicinal Actions:

- **Anti-inflammatory and skin healing:**
Soothes the body's inflammatory response, which works both on skin issues like psoriasis and eczema as well as deeper tissue healing. The mushroom will also reduce redness and irritation
- **Pain relief (Analgesic):** Amanita Muscaria has been demonstrated to relieve pain when applied topically, especially nerve, joint, and muscle pain and conditions like neuropathy and arthritis.
- **Skin Barrier Recovery:** Amanita Muscaria works to help heal skin that has been damaged (particularly GABA compounds in Amanita).
- **Antioxidant:** Helps fight free radicals, which increase aging, including fine lines and wrinkles; can also protect against UV rays and other pollutants which can increase skin damage over time



Note: While the salve will contain ibotenic acid and muscimol, the rate of absorption on the skin is very, very low, and does not lead to psychoactive effects. (You have to take the mushroom internally for that, which is outside the scope of this workshop!)

Birch Polypore (*Piptoporus betulinus*,). Birch Polypore is a bracket fungus, growing on wood, and is found as a single, lateral attachment to all birch trees (black, white, yellow).

- **Fun fact:** Utzi the Ice Man is the 5000-year old frozen corpse found in the Alps in Italy—he carried Fomes Fomentarius (Tinder Polypore) and *Piptoporus betulinus* (Birch Polypore)
- **Topical Medicinal Actions:**
 - **Fights microbes:** Anti-bacterial, Anti-fungal, Anti-viral (fights microbes of all kinds), Anti-inflammatory (reduces swelling and inflammation)
 - **Wound healing and wound first aid:** Antiseptic (prevents infection when used on wounds), Hemostatic (stops bleeding)
 - **Anti-aging action:** triterpenoid that supports skin health and repair (comes from the birch tree the polypore grows on)
 - **Anti-inflammatory:** reduces inflammation; manage skin irritations and promote healing

Creating Your Infused Oil and Healing Salve

Salves can be made from any herbal ingredient that can be used topically. Because salves are oil-based, they are particularly good for cuts, minor burns, bug bites, skin irritations, dry and chapped skin, scrapes, bee stings, brush burns, and so on; inflammation and muscle soerness; and addressing skin health (fine lines, wrinkles, etc). You can also use many salves safely with animals (chicken combs and wattles, cuts on dogs or cats, etc.). To make a healing salve, there are two steps: making an infused oil and then making the salve from the infused oil. This is a fun activity to do with children or family members.

Make Your Infused Oil

Recipe:

- 1.5 parts high quality olive oil
- 1 part fresh or dried mushrooms
- 1 part fresh or dried herbs of your choice (optional)
*I say “part” here – part can be 1 cup, 2 cups, etc. Just make sure you have this ratio.

Instructions:

1. Start with fresh or dried chopped or ground mushroom material (dehydrate at 100 degrees or leave on counter for a few days).
2. Cover your mushrooms and herbs with olive oil (or another carrier oil of your choice like almond, coconut, etc).
3. You will now need to let the mushrooms (and herbs) “macerate” or infuse their medicine into the oil. There are different approaches to this:
 - Place in a warm place, like on top of your fridge, for a week. You can also put in a warm attic. Put a cheesecloth over it or a paper towel with a rubber band over the lid to let the oil breathe.
 - Use a double-boiler on a low setting for 8 hours, then let rest for 12-24 hours*. When you are using heat with fresh mushroom/plant matter, keep the lid off.
 - Put inside a jar and put that in a cast iron pot in the sun for a day (I don’t recommend directly infusing in cast iron as the oil will take on an iron smell).

Some people use crock pots, but I find them too hot for most mushrooms.

You want to keep your mushrooms **below 120 degrees F** (which would be very hot to touch, almost scalding). *DO NOT LET YOUR MUSHROOM OIL BOIL as this destroys much of the medicine).*

4. After you have macerated (soaked) your mushrooms and herbs for a period of time, strain your herbs carefully and get out the mushroom material.
 - You can use a cheesecloth, a single ply paper towel, and/or a wire strainer. Several steps are often needed.
 - Use a wire strainer and strain out the large bits
 - Run through a very fine strainer or jelly bag.
 - Let oil settle in a clear mason jar and see if any final bits settle to the bottom. Pour these off.
 - You can still use what settles, just pour it off into something special so you use it first.

- Any bits left over in your final preparation will **considerably reduce shelf life**.
 - i. Return the mushrooms to the land or compost them, do not dishonor the medicine by throwing the mushrooms in the trash.
 - ii. You want to ensure that all of the mushroom material is out. If you are using fresh plants, also beware of any water content in the oil—you will notice looking like bubbles on the bottom of your pot.
- 5. You can store your infused oil in a cool, dark place for 1-2 years or turn it into salve—make sure you label it properly.

What to do with infused oil? 1) store your infused oil for later use; 2) use it as is (massage oil) or 3) or use it to make a different product (like a salve or lotion).

Make Your Salve!

- 1 cup infused oil
- 1 -2 tbsp beeswax (more makes a firmer salve)
- 6-10 drops essential oil of your choice (optional)

Instructions: To make your, salve, start with an infused oil and put into a double boiler. Add shaved beeswax to your oil to thicken it into a salve. Test the consistency by dropping a tiny bit of oil onto an ice cube and see how hard it gets. Right before pouring your tincture into tins and small jars, you can add essential oil for additional healing (only add skin safe oils). Let your salves cool and then label them. These make wonderful gifts!

Mushrooms for your Skin Recipes

All Purpose Mushroom Wound Salve

- Olive oil (2 cups)
- **Mushrooms:** 1 oz sliced or ground Birch Polypore
- **Herbs:** A combination of 1/2 – 1 oz of any of the following wound healing herbs (or add your favorites): Plantain (*Plantago major*); Calendula (*Calendula officinalis*); All heal (*Prunella vulgaris*); Chickweed (*Stellaria media*)
- Will add 3 TBSP beeswax when finished

Anti-Inflammatory and Muscle Relaxation Pain Salve

- Carrier oil: Coconut oil (for cooling property) – 2 cups
- Herbs and mushrooms:
 - ½ oz sliced or ground Birch Polypore
 - ½ oz dried Lion's Mane
 - ½ oz dried Reishi
- Optional Anti-inflammatory herbs to add:
 - Black Birch, Wintergreen, Willow (Methyl Salicylate containing plant, pain relief)
 - Goldenrod (great anti-inflammatory; especially leaves and budding tops)
 - Turmeric (will make your salve orange)
 - Kava Kava (pain relief, muscle relaxation)
 - Cannabis (CBD and THC for pain relief and relaxation)
- Optional: A mint essential oil (in very small amounts, about 20 drops) can provide a nice cooling effect (icy hot effect). Don't use too much!