

## ASK THE EXPERTS



### Q. What's the number-one area in the body where people feel pain? Can massage help?

**A.** There's not a universal answer to that question; people can feel pain in different areas on different days. But, overall, my clients' most common areas of complaint are the upper shoulders/neck and low back. Can massage help? Yes! But also, realistically, no; it depends on what's causing the pain.

Bodywork is incredibly helpful at reducing pain due to muscular tension, postural dysfunction, and other soft-tissue problems, but some injuries also need treatment from specialists like orthopedic doctors or physical therapists. Give your massage therapist as much information as you can about where you're feeling pain, what movements cause the pain, etc., so together you can determine the best treatment plan for your specific needs.



Massage Therapist/Educator,  
Kristin Coverly, LMT



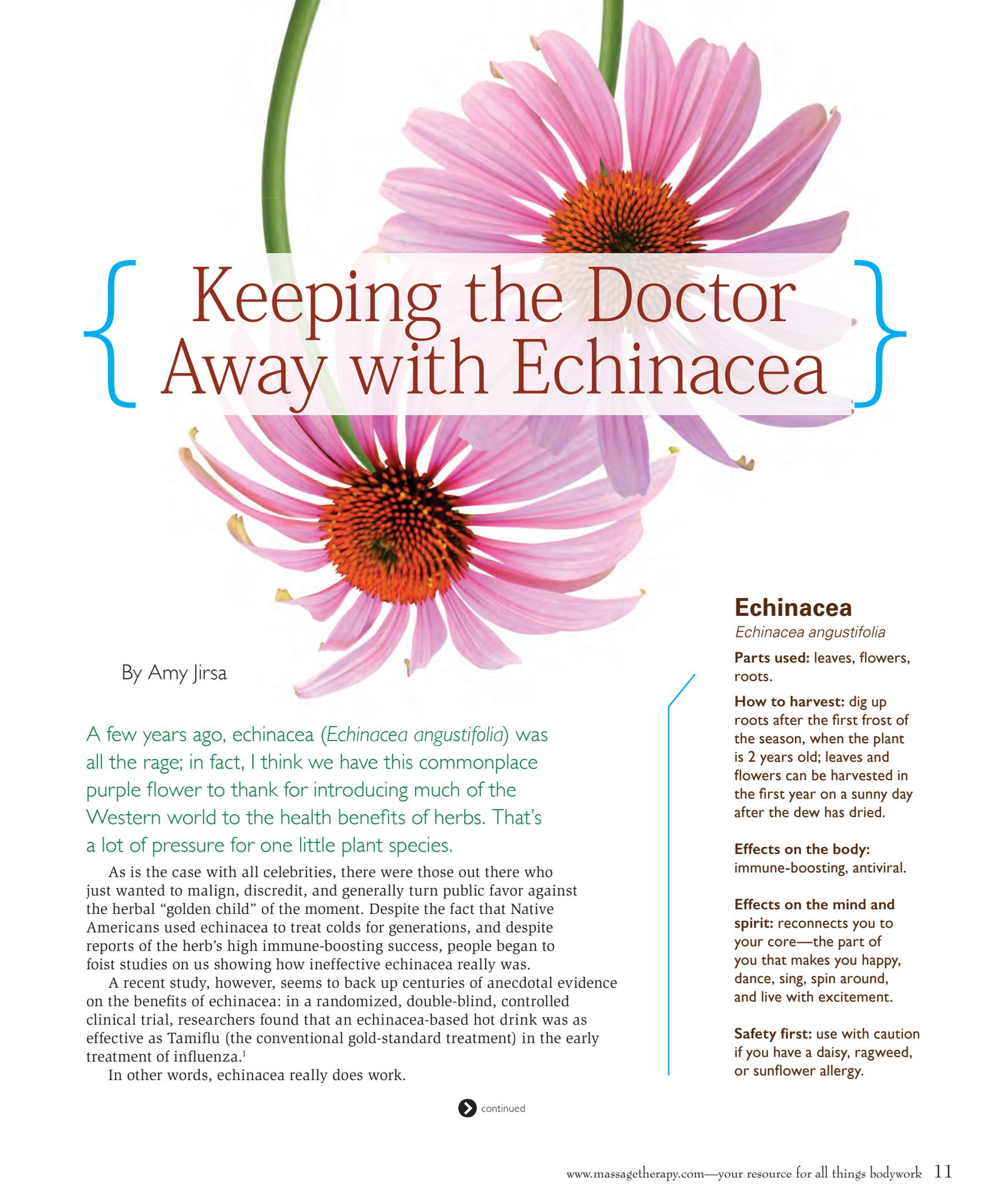
Skin Care Educator/  
Product Developer/  
Therapist/Author,  
Mark Lees, PhD,  
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### Q. What is the best plan for acne-prone teenagers?

**A.** Ideally, teens should use the following products in their home-care regimen for about two weeks:

- A rinseable facial wash designed for oilier skin. Usually in gel form, these cleansers traditionally include salicylic acid (1–2 percent) or benzoyl peroxide (2.5 percent).
- A toner that has an alpha and/or beta hydroxy acid to apply after cleansing.
- A gel acne treatment with benzoyl peroxide or salicylic acid to be lightly applied all over the face to help loosen impactions and prevent new microcomedones from forming in the follicles. Eye areas should be avoided. This should be used at night and can also be added in the morning if necessary, and if the skin can tolerate it. The gel should be applied in five or six small dots across the face and then spread in small circular motions until absorbed. The product should absorb very quickly; if not, the client is using too much product. Individual lesions can be treated after the initial application to the entire face.
- A noncomedogenic matte (non-oily) sunscreen to be worn daily.
- A noncomedogenic lightweight hydrator if the skin feels or appears dehydrated.





# Keeping the Doctor Away with Echinacea

By Amy Jirsa

A few years ago, echinacea (*Echinacea angustifolia*) was all the rage; in fact, I think we have this commonplace purple flower to thank for introducing much of the Western world to the health benefits of herbs. That's a lot of pressure for one little plant species.

As is the case with all celebrities, there were those out there who just wanted to malign, discredit, and generally turn public favor against the herbal “golden child” of the moment. Despite the fact that Native Americans used echinacea to treat colds for generations, and despite reports of the herb's high immune-boosting success, people began to foist studies on us showing how ineffective echinacea really was.

A recent study, however, seems to back up centuries of anecdotal evidence on the benefits of echinacea: in a randomized, double-blind, controlled clinical trial, researchers found that an echinacea-based hot drink was as effective as Tamiflu (the conventional gold-standard treatment) in the early treatment of influenza.<sup>1</sup>

In other words, echinacea really does work.

## Echinacea

*Echinacea angustifolia*

**Parts used:** leaves, flowers, roots.

**How to harvest:** dig up roots after the first frost of the season, when the plant is 2 years old; leaves and flowers can be harvested in the first year on a sunny day after the dew has dried.

**Effects on the body:** immune-boosting, antiviral.

**Effects on the mind and spirit:** reconnects you to your core—the part of you that makes you happy, dance, sing, spin around, and live with excitement.

**Safety first:** use with caution if you have a daisy, ragweed, or sunflower allergy.

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## HOW IT WORKS

So, the question you are asking now is, how does echinacea work in the first place? Your body has a protein found in the blood serum called *properdin*. This protein, when triggered, signals the immune system to hurry up and arm itself because there's been a slew of viruses and bacteria reported in the system and it's time to get serious. Echinacea increases the levels of properdin in the body, making your body more efficient, organized, and all-around dangerous to invading organisms. As an antiviral herb, echinacea is also good at fighting off a cold, flu, and even herpes viruses.

The trick with echinacea is you have to take it at **the first sign** of cold, flu, or viral outbreak. That means you need to take it at the first unusual sneeze, cough, sniffle, or itch, or even take it before then if anyone in your general day-to-day vicinity is ill. You can take it a few days into a full-blown illness, but it's much more effective if you take it right away. Try 900 milligrams daily in a tincture or tea.

Besides being antiviral and antibacterial, echinacea is also anti-inflammatory and antifungal. So, no matter what's wrong with you—from a sore or scratchy throat to a stomachache, from a urinary or kidney infection to a cut or scrape (internal or external application)—echinacea is a good way to go. Of course, I'd be remiss if I didn't add that if you have an autoimmune condition, consult a physician before using echinacea. You may also have a sensitivity to it if you're allergic to daisies, ragweed, or sunflowers, because they come from the same family. 📖

### Note

1. Karel Rauš et al., "Effect of an Echinacea-Based Hot Drink Versus Oseltamivir in Influenza Treatment: A Randomized, Double-Blind, Double-Dummy, Multicenter, Noninferiority Clinical Trial," *Current Therapeutic Research* 77 (December 2015): 66–72.



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## Tea for Boosting Immunity

This tea is for short-term use (two or three weeks at a time is fine, so your system gets stronger and is able to fight colds and flu on its own). Note: avoid sarsaparilla if you are pregnant.

3 cups water

1 tablespoon dried and chopped echinacea root

1 tablespoon dried sarsaparilla root

1 teaspoon dried ginger root or 2 teaspoons grated fresh ginger root

1 stick cinnamon

Combine ingredients in a small saucepan and simmer for 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and strain out the roots. Add a little water back to your decoction until you again have 3 cups. Decant 1 cup into a mug, sweeten with honey, stevia, or maple syrup, and add nut or soy milk, if you like. Drink a cup a day when you feel ill or when those around you are ill.