

Bach Flower Essences Therapy

Flower essences are dilute extracts of various types of flowers and plants that are used to treat animals and people. They are similar to homeopathic remedies in that they are diluted and potentized to make them more effective than just using the original flower as a herbal extract.

The person who first developed the original flower remedies was Dr. Edward Bach, a famous English physician. He developed the Bach Flower Remedies when he was working as a homeopathic practitioner and devoted the last years of his life to researching and developing his remedies, from 1930 onwards. He wanted to find a simpler form of treatment that would not require anything to be destroyed or altered.

Dr. Bach believed that diseases of the body come about as a result of imbalances or negativity at the level of the soul, and by correcting the problem here healing would result and the body would heal on all levels. The flower remedies act to balance inharmonies in the emotional and spiritual body, and bring about gentle healing by bringing the body back in balance with itself. They act almost as catalysts to cause healing. There were originally 38 Bach Flower Remedies Dr. Bach felt would correct all imbalances that were possible. For example, the remedy Holly heals the state of anger, and open the heart. There are also remedies that deal with a variety of other emotions from lack of confidence to over enthusiasm and impatience.

Animals respond just as well to Bach Flower remedies as people, and seem to have similar emotional imbalances that can be corrected with the appropriate remedy.

Flower essences are a good choice for animals, especially when owners feel that there may be an emotional part to the illness. It is a safe, effective and natural way to help animal companions lead a healthier and happier life.

In our animal companions, Flower Essences have their greatest benefit in the treatment of emotional or behavioral problems, such as:

- Fearfulness
- Excessive vocalization
- Separation anxiety
- Hyperactivity
- Elimination problems
- Recovery from injury, or surgery
- Excessive grooming, licking, chewing, or feather-picking
- Failure to adjust to environmental changes
- Jealousy and aggression
- Stress from boarding or confinement
- Grief from loss of human or animal companion
- Travel anxiety
- Training difficulties
- Dealing with chronic illness
- Performance (in show, narcotics sniffer dogs)...and many others!

How are flower essences relevant to us and our animal companions' lives?

Dr. Bach was a deeply religious man whose spirituality was reflected in his work. He believed that each of us has a divine mission on earth that can be discerned through listening to our own instincts, wishes, thoughts, and desires. He also believed that all diseases are the result of disharmony between the soul and mind. This occurs by allowing other people to interfere with the true course of our lives. It is not that such interferences are in themselves evil or bad, but it is our response to them, the "permission" we give them to disturb us that causes the problem.

In terms of Dr. Bach's philosophy, it is easy to see how animals are similarly diverted from their "true course." Animals are forcibly weaned, taken from their families and trained to exist with their human companions by altering or suppressing natural behaviours. Certainly though, we are not being mean or arbitrary when we insist that our animal companion use the litter box or refrain from biting, scratching, bucking, or flying out the window. However, we often vaccinate them or feed food that is far from their natural diet. These are necessary accommodations that our animal companions must make to share our lives.

We know that mental and emotional upsets in humans can have deep and lasting physical effects, far beyond what used to be referred to as "psychosomatic illness". Animals too have an active mental and emotional life and can manifest behavioural and physical problems that have their roots in emotional trauma. The flower essences basically correct underlying negative emotional states by 'flooding' the patient with the opposite positive quality that is the essence of the flower. For example, the essence of Holly is love. You can use Holly in any situation where there is a lack of love, such as anger, jealousy or rage. Similarly, the essence of Rock Rose is courage: it is used in cases of deep fear, panic and terror.

The flower essences are safe and compatible with any other treatment. They cannot be overused or misused and you can administer more than one type at a time. Even if you use the wrong remedy, it will not have any negative effect on your companion. This allows us to use flower essences in food and water bowls, even when they are shared by several animals. They can be given by mouth, added to food or water, applied topically or used in a spray bottle to infuse a problem area (carrier, car, room, cage, trailer or stall).

