



Rosalee de la Forêt:

If you've ever found yourself lying in bed at night with your mind just... running — replaying the day, making lists, worrying about things you can't do anything about at 11pm — I want to talk to you about one of my favorite herbs for exactly that moment.

Passionflower.

Passiflora incarnata. It's a stunning native North American vine — if you've never seen it in bloom, look it up, it's one of those plants that stops you in your tracks. You look at those flowers and you think, Is that real? It has a long history of use as a relaxing nervine, meaning it works directly on the nervous system to calm and settle.

What I love about passionflower is how specific it is. It's not really a general "stress herb," although you could try it like that. It's particularly well suited to that mental spinning quality — the kind of overwhelm that lives in your head more than your body. Where you're tired, but your thoughts just won't stop. Where you lie down and your brain apparently has seventeen more things it needs to process before it will let you rest.

There's actually an interesting study on this. A 2019 double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled trial looked at passionflower extract in adults with insomnia. There were 110 participants, they had two weeks of passionflower, with overnight sleep monitoring. The passionflower group saw a meaningful increase in total sleep time compared to the placebo group.

That's pretty cool. I always love the clinical studies showing that herbs work! But here's something I always find worth mentioning when we talk about herb studies: passionflower increased total sleep time in the treatment group, which is meaningful. But it didn't work for every single person. No herb ever does.



That's just the nature of plants — and honestly, of people too. We're not all the same, our nervous systems aren't the same, and an herb that's transformative for one person might be unremarkable for another. That's not a flaw in passionflower. It's actually an argument for getting to know your own particular constitution and what your nervous system specifically responds to.

Which is exactly the point I want to make.

Passionflower is a genuinely wonderful ally for wound-up, overthinking, and anything else that feels “bzzzzt” on your nervous system. I reach for it myself. I love a simple tea in the evening, one to two teaspoons of the dried herb steeped for ten to fifteen minutes, is a lovely way to start winding down. Tincture works well too, especially if you want something you can take right at that moment when your thoughts start spinning. I often reach for that tincture for those 3am thoughts that just won't stop!

But here's the thing I've come to understand over many years of working with herbs: yes, passionflower can take the edge off. What it can't do is change the underlying dynamic that has your nervous system so wound up in the first place.

If the pattern is chronic — if you're lying awake most nights, if you're running on fumes most days, if the overwhelm is just the water you swim in day after day — you can drink passionflower tea every evening and still wake up the next morning and get right back on the same hamster wheel. And that's not a failure of the plant. It's just the limit of what any single herb can do.

What actually shifts the pattern is working at a deeper level. Understanding your own constitution. Changing your relationship to stress rather than just cushioning yourself from it. That's the work that makes the herbs more effective too, because you're not asking them to carry everything alone.



HERBS
with ROSALEE

This is something I've been thinking about for a long time, and it's why I partnered with my friend Rebecca Altman to create something that approaches resilience from both directions at once.

To get started we're offering the Building Resilience Mini Course. It's fun, it's easy and it's completely free.

Here's how it works: it's for one week only. Each day, you'll make yourself a cup of herbal tea — we have recipes if you'd like, passionflower amongst them — and alongside that, you'll get simple daily prompts to help you start shifting your relationship to stress at a slightly deeper level. It's not overwhelming. It's a small practice a day, and it's a community of people doing it alongside you, which is really fun.

The commitment on this is intentionally low. What you walk away with tends to be incredibly useful.

If you want in, check out the link in the video description.

It's free, it's one week, and there's definitely going to be a lot of good tea.

I'll see you in there.