How to make herbal glycerites

Glycerites are liquid herbal extracts that use vegetable glycerin as the medium to extract the medicinal properties from medicinal and aromatic plant material. After the plant material has soaked in the vegetable glycerin for 4-6 weeks, the plant material is pressed out, and the remaining glycerin is called a **glycerite**.

What is glycerin?
Glycerin is a colorless, odorless, viscous, sweet tasting liquid. It is derived as a by-product of the soap making process when the fat molecules in fixed oils, like olive, almond or coconut, are split via the process of saponification.

Glycerin can be either derived from plants or animals, but in our work using botanicals we only use vegetable glycerin, solely derived from plant sources that are GMO-free and ethically sourced.

Why add glycerites into aromatherapy products?
Vegetable glycerin can be found as an ingredient in a variety of skin and body care products. Its function in a formulation is primarily that of **a humectant**, which means it encourages moisture absorption. Glycerin actually attracts water from the air to help restore the moisture balance of the skin, It can also draw moisture up to the surface of the skin and make it more emollient. Glycerin has self-preserving properties as well as the ability to help solubilize essential oils during the water phase of the formulation procedure (e.g. cream making).

Glycerites can also capture the aromatic compounds of plant materials. The aromatic components could contribute to the medicinal and therapeutic properties of the formulation as well as be one of the harmonizing elements.

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The best plants for making herbal glycerites

Here are some of our favorite herbs for making glycerites:

German chamomile flowers
Calendula
Echinacea sp.
Fennel
Ginger
Hawthorn berry
Elderberry flowers
Lavender
Monarda
Mullein leaves
Nettle
Milky Oats (*Avena sativa*)
Plantain
Rose petals
Turmeric
Yarrow

To make a fresh plant glycerite, follow these steps:

1. Harvest plant material (on a day when there has been no rain and the plants are dry).
2. Fill chosen container to about 2/3 to 3/4 of jar with prepared plant material.
3. Cover plant material with 100% glycerin.
4. Now comes the tricky part, you will want to pour the mixture of plant material and glycerin into a blender.
5. Allow blender to run until all ingredients are well combined. (We used a vitamix blender.)
6. Pour mixture into appropriate sized clean and sterilized glass jar. Cap jar and label with contents. (see below for what to put on your label)
7. Let the glycerites macerate for two to four weeks. Shake daily.
8. Once glycerites is ready, press it out using 2 or 3 layers of cheesecloth and a potato ricer or herb press.
9. Bottle in clean sterilized glass bottle.
10. Your glycerite is now ready to use. Glycerites can be used internally or externally in body care products!

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What's on the label?

Name of Plant: Common name and Binomial (Include where it was from: e.g. garden, farm, etc)
Menstruum used: Vegetable Glycerin and/or Water
Date glycerite was made: _____
Date glycerite can be pressed: _____

How can a herbal glycerite be used?

Each glycerite offers a number of unique properties that can be used in product formulations for:

- Creams and lotions
- Gels
- Facial or body exfoliants
- Cleansers

What is the shelf life of a glycerite?

The average shelf life of herbal oils is 1-2 years when stored properly. Whether you are making glycerites or purchasing them, they should be stored in a cool and dark cabinet.

What is the best way to store glycerites?

Glycerites are best stored under the following conditions:

- Store in cool location away from direct sunlight.
- Store in dark, tightly closed bottles.

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