



Presenting June's Plant Ally:

Mimosa

Common names: Mimosa, Silk Tree, Persian Silk Tree, Happiness Tree (Tree of Happiness)

Botanical name: Alibizia julibrissin

Family: Fabaceae

Energetics: Cool, neutral

Taste: Sweet (flowers), bitter & tannic (bark)

Parts Used: Flowers & bark; please note that *the seeds are poisonous*

Actions/Functions: Alterative, dispersive, gentle anti-depressive, mild sedative, relaxing nervine

Mimosa is one of the blooms I most look forward to come late Spring here in North Carolina... the little pink puffs line every highway & dapple every corner with their abundant soft tufts & gentle, intoxicating scent. Once you learn to identify the Mimosa tree, I promise that you will see it everywhere & become buoyant in its presence. It is a tree which attracts & is frequented by many other creatures as well, including many pollinating insects like bees & butterflies, even hummingbirds have been known to zip in & out of their sweet, silky flowers.

The common name, *Mimosa* describes many different plants in the same family, the Fabaceae (or pea family) & even specifically describes an entire genus, which this tree used to be part of. It is important to distinguish this so you know which plant you are working with, as it does share this common name with many different plants!

The name Mimosa is derived from the Greek *mimos* meaning “actor” or “mime,” + the ending *-osa* means “resembling,” which is thought to describe the sensitivity of the leaves. The genus of this tree is *Alibizia*, derived from the name of the Italian nobleman, Filippo degli Albizzi, who was the first to introduce this tree to Europe from its native habitats of southwestern & eastern Asia, specifically Iran, China, Japan, & Korea. The species, *julibrissin* is Persian for “silk flower” which does so perfectly describe the feel & texture of this tree’s globular inflorescence. Though the leaves of the Mimosa tree aren’t as sensitive to the sun or touch as other plants bearing the same name, they do fold in at night & during lots of rain. It is this characteristic which inspired the Persian name *Shabkhosb* meaning “night sleeper” + the Japanese *nemunoki* which means “sleeping tree.”

I personally love to make a tincture of fresh Mimosa flowers with brandy (to enhance their sweet flavor) in June. I love the medicine of Mimosa for its qualities as a gentle nervine: relaxing yet uplifting the spirit, calming the nerves that are standing on edge. I find the flowers’ medicine to be shimmering & soft, very alive when you take it. In my experience, Mimosa has immediately brought a smile to the faces of those who take even a few drops of the tincture or sip upon the tea. It does have this incredibly soothing, yet uplifting quality about it — as if you are being held by a cloud. I often notice that people’s faces will relax entirely when taking Mimosa. The flowers, like bright pink & white little pom poms that wave with graceful ease in the breeze, almost taste like prosecco or strings of honey. Sweet, light, soft. In many ways, this illustrates how Mimosa seems to act in the body, that it allows us to let things blow over us, wash over us, but also helps us to maintain & hold onto our core. It makes us feel connected to ourselves, as well as a larger sense of community. The silky tickle of the flowers help us to release tension, especially through the act of laughter. This plant makes us bubble up, let loose, to find pause, & to celebrate in even the most mundane of things.

The other form of Mimosa I most often use is the flower essence which I made at night on a full moon in Sagittarius whilst living in Savannah, Georgia. I find that this essence is about honoring sensitivity in all of its forms. Mimosa is open, full of possibilities. It has all of its feelers out all of the time & is in constant connection. The essence helps us take notice of the world around us & to connect those threads to our own internal worlds.

It is an intoxicating, beautiful, strange & soothing remedy that teaches us to be aware & shows us how to sit with discomfort, with situations that are weird or make us uncomfortable as opposed to trying to escape them. I also like to use it for releasing fear. Especially for people who fear going to sleep at night, whose nerves are keeping them awake, & can't seem to let their eyes rest, as if they are constantly searching for something to pop out from the dark.

Though my own personal use with this plant specifically surrounds the flowers, there is also a fair amount of therapeutic qualities in the bark as well & some people even use the leaves. In stark contrast to the flowers, the bark of this tree is extremely *bitter* & amazingly astringent. I remember when my dear friend brought home a bottle of Mimosa bark tincture from the market she worked at. We were both so excited to try it & then immediately blown away by its potent, musky, almost inky flavor. Needless to say, the bark is extremely grounding & has a much more serious overtone than the flowers do... which I think speaks a lot to its long history of use as an anti-depressant, which is a specific indication from practitioners of Chinese medicine.

Again, I cannot speak too much for the medicine of the bark or leaves as I personally have not worked them. There is a wealth of information about its uses, especially as an anti-depressant, through Michael Tierra which you can find [here](#).



A Mimosa Ritual ::::::::::

Find a dark night, one where there is little to no moon. Walk outside & stand with your bare feet firmly planted into the ground. Take a few deep breaths in & out to allow the soles of your feet to press even deeper, as if you are becoming sturdy & stable as a well-rooted tree. When you feel you are steady enough, allow yourself to acknowledge a fear or perhaps a set of fears that you have been holding onto. Bring your palms together to form a cup. Bring this cup to your mouth & speak your fears into it. Fold your palms together & bring your fingers into a fist — the heels of your palms will still be touching & it will almost look as if you are making a heart with your hands. When you are ready, bring your fists away & stretch your arms out past your body, up towards the stars. Close your eyes & release your fists, spreading your fingers wide apart as you continue to stretch out into the night. Let the wind blow through your hands, lifting the fears you spoke away, away from you. Let the night hold you, the warmth wrap around you. Let yourself continue to breathe as you feel the release of that which you've been frightened of wick away. Do this for as long as you feel you need to. When you are ready, bring the tips of your fingers together & guide your palms to rest above your heart & lungs. Breathe in knowing you can do this ritual as often as you need, as many times as it takes. May this bring you a restful, deep sleep.

*Lovingly yours /
Chanelle + Mimosa tree*

