

# PENUMBRA

# OCCULT LORE

## HERBS by Chris Jones

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Wizards study their academic magicks in great halls of learning; Sorcerers discover their spells through innate talent; Clerics call upon the gods for a share of divine favor. But what of those magicusers who delve into the less well-charted realms of the mystic traditions? What of those who tap into the power of the heavenly spheres, or use the arts of alchemy and herbalism to distill potent magical concoctions? Those whose gift lies in drawing spirits or elemental forces to do their bidding, or who can explore the twisting paths of a dreamer's mind? What of those whose very presence tampers with the familiar magic of arcane and divine spellcasters?

All these find their place in Occult Lore, the sourcebook of ten new magical traditions from Atlas Games. The following bonus material is for use with the Herbalism chapter of Occult Lore, and gives descriptions of new herbs not included in the book, along with the mundane and magical concoctions that a character trained in the ways of plants can create with the Herbalism skill.

### Description & Climate/Terrain

The opening section of each entry gives a description of the plant in question, a discussion of its general uses and natural habitat, a glimpse into its history of use by sentient races, and other relevant information. Below it is a header giving the plant's common habitat. Many plants are adaptable enough that they can grow in other climates, but not without difficulty or some detrimental consequences. The raw herb's market price is determined by its habitat and rarity.

### Bindings

This heading lists the magic schools with which the plant shares an affinity. A rating indicating the maximum spell level that can be bound to a verdex made of the plant using the Plantbind feat follows each school name; bindings allow an herbalist to "store" spells. For example, Anise's bindings are: Conjunction 2, Transmutation 3. This means that anise has an affinity for the schools Conjunction and Transmutation, with spell level maximums of 2 and 3, respectively. As such, a spellcaster may only bind a 1st- or 2nd-level Conjunction spell or a 1st-, a 2nd-, or a 3rd-level Transmutation spell to an anise verdex.

### Traits

This heading lists the plant's medicinal traits, which describe the natural properties that can be harnessed by using the Herbalism skill. The number following each trait name is its rating, which is added to an herbalist's base DC 15 when she makes a skill check to create either a mundane or a magical concoction. It also determines the amount of time she must spend working on the material, with the amount of time being measured in hours for mundane concoctions, or days for magical ones, and equal to her Herbalism skill modifier subtracted from the trait rating. For example, Umeiko the Sorceress has the Herbalism skill at +16, and wants to turn berries from the henna plant into a type of enchanted ink for creating magic-storing tattoos. The plant's pigment trait rating is 20, giving her a DC of 35 to effect the change over the course of 4 days.

### Mundane Concoctions

Below the list of the plant's traits is a more in-depth discussion of a few of the natural effects inherent in the plant, and mundane concoctions that can be produced from each trait by using the Herbalism skill. Again, making a dose of one of these medicines requires an Herbalism check, DC 15 plus the trait's rating. At the end of each trait's information section is a brief note on which magical concoctions can also be made by awakening that trait; these are described more fully in the Magical Concoctions section immediately following.

### Magical Concoctions

Also included in each plant entry are numerous magical concoctions created from the plant by awakening its natural attributes. Each is the result of laborious experimentation and research performed over centuries, codified, and subsequently handed down as a standard recipe. Each magical concoction's information block contains its type, the trait from which it is made, as well as the base Herbalism DC to make one dose, and its market price. Also, unless otherwise noted, a concoction's bonuses do not stack with consecutive uses. In most cases, one must wait for the effects from previous uses to wear off for it work again.

# Broom

This shrub grows up to five feet in height. Its slender stems are green, sprouting tiny stalks that bear three oblong leaves each. In the spring and early summer months, bright yellow pod-like flowers blossom. Fragile black seeds follow.

The broom plant has been used for many centuries in broom making, unsurprisingly; its stems are dried out, tied together in bundles, and then attached to a stick. Witches of legend are notorious for using enchanted stems from the plant in their brooms, allowing them to fly through the night air at will as they gleefully spread terror and destruction wherever they go. While such tales of witch behavior are grossly exaggerated, it is true that the plant is moderately receptive to those kinds of spells. Broom flowers are also used in cooking, where they are either dried and powdered, or pickled before use. Many people add them to dishes as a caper substitute. It is also common for northern folk to use the immature green buds in ales and meads, especially if said beverages are on the verge of turning bad.

**Climate/Terrain:** Temperate woodland clearings

**Availability:** Common (6 cp per lb.)

**Bindings:** Transmutation 8

**Traits:** Blightpurge 12

## Mundane Concoctions

**Blightpurge:** Broom shoots from the young bushes can be cultivated and used by an herbalist to make a bland-tasting tea that promotes urination and aids with fluid retention. In some cultures, this tea is especially popular amongst women during menstruation. Anyone who imbibes said concoction must urinate a number of times per hour equal to 10 minus her Constitution modifier, with a minimum of 1. If the imbiber makes a successful Fortitude save (DC 22) when she consumes the tea, then she only needs to urinate half as many times per hour. This effect lasts for 2d3 hours.

The most common recipe for awakening broom stems creates a magical concoction called flying broom, which allows a person to fly. Contrary to legend, this isn't an enchanted broomstick. Really, have you ever tried sitting on a broomstick while in flight? It can't be done.

## New Magical Concoction: Flying Broom

**Type:** Special

**Trait:** Blightpurge DC 27

**Cost:** 960 gp

This is a bundle of awakened broom stems. When it is ignited with flame, the magic contained within the bundle is released and the stems become possessed with the power to fly. As soon as the enchantment is activated, the flames extinguish and the stems turn a bright golden color, emitting light of the same strength as a torch. Whoever is in contact with the bundle may control it. This essentially confers upon the wielder the ability to fly as per the spell of the same name as cast by a 7th-level sorcerer. One flying broom bundle may be used three times before becoming useless.

Many herbalists who frequently use flying broom tie the bundles to their arms or backs rather than attaching them to broomsticks, since flying around on a broomstick is decidedly impractical. If used in conjunction with a broomstick, the character doing the flying must make a Balance check (DC 25) each round or fall off.

# Bog Fan

This peculiar fungus grows on trees and rocks in the dankest, darkest marshlands and swamps. It is bright red with orange veins, fan-shaped, and grows to a radius of three and half feet. Once a year, usually during winter when the water is the lowest, mature bog fans explode, releasing thick clouds of spores into the air. The spores grow new mushroom colonies wherever they land. Bog fans are not edible by most creatures, and taste extremely rancid and bitter. Certain species of dinosaur do feed on them, though this isn't common.

In some human and orc cultures, bog fans are dried for a period of time no less than one year and then used as a food spice. If the mushrooms are dried less than a year, not all of the chemicals responsible for their awful taste and their adverse affect on the physiology will have been expunged. Drow elves fancy bog fans not for their taste or for the concoctions derived from them — though those are nice, too, in their opinion — but rather for their aesthetic appearance. Many a drow household has these mushrooms growing in it, which are sculpted and encouraged to grow into specific, artistic shapes. When the mushrooms are ready to release their spores, a special inhibitor brewed by drow herbalists is sprayed upon them.

**Climate/Terrain:** Any marsh and swampland

**Availability:** Rare (10 gp per lb.)

**Bindings:** Evocation 2, Illusion 4

**Traits:** Birr (Weyn) 10

## Mundane Concoctions

**Birr (Weyn):** Bog fan packs a double punch on those who consume it. It stimulates the body by dilating veins and arteries, which results in increased blood flow. Unfortunately it also creates excessive quantities of blood sugar as a by-product of the process. Characters who eat even a bite of bog fan either as part of a mundane concoction or in its natural state must make a Fortitude save (DC 18) or go into shock for 1d10 rounds. Each round in shock he takes 1 point of temporary Constitution damage. A character who survives an encounter with a bog fan immediately craves acidic foods and liquids, such as oranges or tomato juice. This is his body's way of telling him that his blood sugar is far too high. Additionally, for 2d4 hours following consumption, the affected character receives a -10 on all Concentration and Dexterity checks as the excessive blood sugar makes him somewhat hyperactive, unable to focus on anything for very long, and sick to his stomach. Healing magic can negate the effects of this trait.

Herbalists have recipes for two separate concoctions derived from this compound trait: a bitter pill called speedball that enhances magic, and a wicked poison called goblin snot.

## New Magical Concoction: Speedball

**Type:** Comestible

**Trait:** Birr DC 25

**Cost:** 120 gp

Made from finely ground bog fan, this pasty, sticky orange ball is used by spellcasters to artificially augment their magic. The pill tastes extremely bitter, though it is mostly odorless, and when swallowed creates a humming, vibratory buzz within the character's body. If the imbiber is a spellcaster, then on the following round she

may cast any spell currently prepared as if fueled by the Quicken Spell feat, but without having to use a higher spell slot as the feat normally requires. If a non-spellcaster eats the pill, or if the spellcaster doesn't cast a spell, then on the following round he loses 1d4 hit points as the pent-up energy within him is forcibly released. A Fortitude save (DC 20) can reduce this damage by half.

Speedballs may only be used a maximum number of times per day equal to a character's Constitution modifier. Any more, and she takes 1d4 points of damage each subsequent time and does not reap the pill's benefits.

## New Poison: Goblin Snot

**Type:** Ingested DC 22

**Trait:** Weyn DC 25

**Primary Damage:** 2 Con per round for 2d4 rounds

**Secondary Damage:** 1 permanent Int

**Cost:** 120 gp

This bright orange liquid is thick, turgid, and smells like warm mulch. Assassins and ninja use it by placing four or five drops into a pomegranate dish, which masks the poison's bitter taste. In lands where the pomegranate is unknown but the poison isn't, it is typically mixed with honey mead. After drinking it, the victim must make a Fortitude save as his body begins to create copious amounts of blood sugar. As the poison inflicts its damage, the victim becomes hyperactive and spastic, and is unable to control his actions as an insane nervous energy fills him to the point of bursting. Those who die from goblin snot steadily leak orange-stained bodily fluids from their orifices for up to 12 hours afterwards. Those who survive the poison are usually bed-ridden for 2d4 weeks while their bodies repair themselves. Healing magic will negate the poison's effects, but the victim will still feel the insatiable desire to consume as much acidic food and liquid as he can get his hands upon.

Unless mixed with pomegranate, characters imbibing the poison gain a +10 circumstance bonus to any attempt to detect or notice it.

## Rowan

The rowan tree grows up to 30 feet in height and is characterized by its superficial similarity to the ash. Its leaves are serrated, growing in groups of seven on thin stems emerging from the tree's branches, and its bark is smooth with gray or gray-brown coloration. In the spring, white flowers and tiny clusters of green berries appear. As the berries ripen, they become bright red or orange in color.

Rowan is most famous as a hexward, used by peasants over the centuries to keep evil witches and vile spirits away. In some cultures, rowan twigs are tied to barn doors to protect livestock from wandering ghosts, ghosts, and goblins. The tree's berries also have many uses. Tonics made from them are designed to cure scurvy or to ease the pain of throat infections, while cooks typically use them as a jellied garnishes for meat dishes such as wild turkey or roast venison. The berries can also be fermented and made into a very flavorful wine. It is rumored amongst herbalists that the infamous Byron B. Baird once created an awakened form of rowanberry wine that was so potent it could affect even the gods, but because he couldn't come up with a satisfactorily alliterative name for it he abandoned the recipe. Grace Pigbail, a prominent modern herbalist and Baird biographer, asserts the rumors aren't true, however.

**Climate/Terrain:** Temperate, especially colder, high-altitude regions

**Availability:** Uncommon (1 sp per lb.)

**Bindings:** Abjuration 7

**Traits:** Ebbwither 5

## Mundane Concoctions

**Ebbwither:** If rowan berries are prepared by an herbalist by being picked fresh from the tree, mashed into a juicy pulp, and then applied to inflamed tissue (such as gargled in the throat or rubbed on the skin), they can cure 2 points of subdual damage. If this pulp is rubbed uniformly into a person's undamaged skin, its astringent quality causes his skin to tighten, hardening slightly in the process. As a result, he temporarily gains a Damage Reduction of 2/— for 2d3 hours. Rowanberries may only be used once per day in this manner.

Herbalists have a recipe for awakening rowanberries into Pigbail's countersting, which protects a person against certain types of magic. It is thought that there might be a variation on this recipe that allows the same concoction to take a solid form, which can be used to protect an area rather than a person. However, if the variant recipe exists no herbalist has yet discovered it and made it public.

## New Magical Concoction: Pigbail's Countersting

**Type:** Ointment

**Trait:** Ebbwither DC 20

**Cost:** 275 gp

This concoction was first brewed by Enrick Pigbail, contemporary and sometime competitor of Byron B. Baird. It is clear liquid substance, and oily to the touch. Fine black particles swirl around inside it. When the vial in which it comes is unstoppered, the scent wafting out of it is reminiscent of pepper. In order to use this concoction, a person must rub it into his skin, covering as much exposed flesh as physically possible. As he applies the oil, he feels as if a million minute needles are pricking his flesh. When the feeling fades, the enchantment kicks in. For the next hour, any time a spell is cast against the oiled character the spellcaster must make a Will save (DC 20) or receive 1 hit point of damage per effective caster level for the spell in question. If damage is done to the spellcaster, then the oiled character spontaneously self-heals a corresponding amount of damage, though he may not exceed his hit point maximum. After application, the oil lasts for 2 hours.

## Sage

The sage bush grows up to two and half feet in height, with multiple branching stems that are purple-green in color and often covered in a fine white down. Its leaves are green bordering on gray in color, oblong and hairy on the undersides and velvety on the surface. At the end of summer, purple, whorl-shaped flowers blossom at the ends of the plant's stems. This is one of the most common spices used in cooking. It grows in temperate climates quite easily, making it a popular garden herb since it requires less effort to maintain than other spice plants. It is pungently aromatic and strong, oft times bitter, in flavor, especially when dried, complementing just about any meat dish to which it is added. In some cultures, it is used as a ceremonial cleansing herb or for purposes of divination. In other cultures, the herb is used to make a dark brown or black hair dye. It also has some healing properties. In fact, it was originally a medicinal herb and once was (incorrectly) thought to be a key component in a legendary alchemical concoction that granted the gift of immortality.

upon the imbiber. Orcs use sage as part of their necromantic rituals, claiming that the herb originated in the lands of the dead and grew in the eye sockets of those slain by the orc god.

There are many varieties of sage. This entry describes the most common.

**Climate/Terrain:** Any temperate

**Availability:** Common (4 cp per lb.)

**Bindings:** Divination 7, Illusion 4, Necromancy 2

**Traits:** Heallac 5, Onslep 3, Pigment 1

## Mundane Concoctions

**Heallac:** Sage's innate antiseptic qualities make a good herb for fighting bacterial infections. Its leaves are often used as a tea for soothing sore throats, or made into a fragrant salve for applying topically to infected tissue and wounds. It's also used quite often for cleaning the teeth and gums and curing bad breath. When used in a mundane comestible or potable made by an herbalist, sage confers a +2 Fortitude save bonus against disease for a period of 24 hours. If used in tandem with the Heal skill, however, then it confers a +2 skill check bonus for treating wounds or a +3 skill bonus for treating diseases.

The awakened form of this trait makes spirit smoke, which can be used to cleanse a divine spellcaster's soul.

**Onslep:** Tea, tisanes, infusions and other potables containing sage flowers are used to help relieve anxiety and induce sleep. If a character drinks an herbalist-prepared mundane potable made of the flowers of this herb, she must make a Will save (DC 17) or become drowsy. Drowsy characters suffer -1 to all checks for 1d3 hours. Sleeping for 1/2 hour will alleviate this penalty early; otherwise it runs its course normally.

Herbalists are able to awaken this trait to make the mildly psychotropic dream dust.

**Pigment:** Sage stems contain a light pigment. When an herbalist crushes and steeps the stems in boiling water for at least an hour, they create a dark purplish-black dye often used as a hair colorant. It is not robust enough to be used for staining linens or as writing ink. The only known recipe for awakening this trait creates an improved hair dye called ozmane.

## New Magical Concoction: Spirit Smoke

**Type:** Special

**Trait:** Heallac DC 20

**Cost:** 80 gp

This is a pouch of dried sage leaves used for purifying the soul of one who "bathes" in its smoke when it is burned. Shamans often place a handful of the leaves in an inverted turtle shell, light it, and then use their hands to pull the smoke toward themselves, symbolically washing their bodies with it. Doing this once per day purifies the character's soul. If it is used during a divine spellcaster's daily prayer, then he may memorize one additional 1st-, 2nd-, or 3rd-level spell.

## New Magical Concoction: Dream Dust

**Type:** Powder

**Trait:** Onslep DC 18

**Cost:** 165 gp

Superficially, this resembles other kinds of sleep dust. However, when spread on the ground and subsequently trod upon, it has a much different effect. Creatures who fail to make a Will save (DC 18) experience waking dreams for the next 2d4 rounds. These dreams not only induce a lethargic drowsiness in the victim, conferring a -1 circumstance penalty to all checks, but also create vivid, sometimes surreal "dreams" in his mind. These visions generate a random effect based on their specific nature, which lasts for the dust's duration. Roll 1d8 and consult the table below to determine the exact effect:

1d8 Die Roll	Effect
1	Nightmare Fear: -2 to all Will saves
2	Nightmare Pursuer: +2 to all Will saves
3	Waking Dream: -1 Initiative bonus
4	Lucid Dream: +1 Initiative bonus
5	Temporal Drift: -2 to all Reflex saves
6	Temporal Acceleration: +2 to all Reflex saves
7	Carnal Inadequacy: -2 to all Fortitude saves
8	Carnal Stamina: +2 to all Fortitude saves

## New Magical Concoction: Ozmane

**Type:** Ointment

**Trait:** Pigment DC 16

**Cost:** 30 gp

This ointment is so thick that it is almost a salve. It is made from sage stems and is used by the fashion-conscious to dye their hair. Unlike other cosmetic dyes, this is magically adaptable. Immediately after application, the character can change her hair color, length, and straightness at will; this change then lasts two to four weeks. As might be expected, thieves and spies love this concoction as it gives them a decided advantage when making disguises for themselves. Any character using this ointment in tandem with her Disguise skill gains a +2 competence bonus to her check.

# Zucher

Zucher trees superficially resemble weeping willows, with the key difference being that they only grow up to twelve feet in height, maximum. Their bark tends to be rough, mottled, and a gold-tinged greenish white in color. Leaves are pale yellow, sprouting directly from the whip-like branches that give the tree its characteristic mop-headed appearance.

The most astonishing thing about the zucher tree is that it is one of the few plants in the world possessed of a natural antimagic quality. This doesn't become evident, however, until its bark is pierced and its sap exposed. When this happens, any spellcasting creature that makes contact with the sap suddenly loses its ability to cast magic from a specific school of magic. Non-spellcasting creatures, on the other hand, become immune to a specific school of magic. In cultures where magic is common, wizards tend to seek out these trees and burn them to the ground, offended by their very existence (and, truthfully, afraid of what could happen should zucher sap get into the wrong hands). While wizard-killing assassins pay good money for the sole concoction derived from the tree's inner juices, morally upright herbalists don't often make it, as they themselves are also spellcasters and know just how insidious the tree really is.

**Climate/Terrain:** Any temperate  
**Availability:** Very Rare (2000 gp per lb.)  
**Bindings:** Conjunction 5, Enchantment 5  
**Traits:** Antimagic 20

## Mundane Concoctions

**Antimagic:** Zucher sap contains a natural antimagic property. If a creature makes contact with the sap it must make a Will save (DC 24). A spellcasting creature that fails its save may not cast spells from one specific school of magic for a period of 24 hours; this school is chosen randomly – roll 1d8 and consult the table below. A nonspellcasting creature, on the other hand, cannot be affected by spells from a randomly chosen school of magic for a period of 24 hours. Removed from the tree, the sap remains viable for approximately 2d20 minutes before its antimagic quality dissipates. Multiple exposures to the sap before the initial exposure has run its course have no additional effect on a creature.

### 1d8 Die Roll School of Magic

1	Abjuration
2	Conjunction
3	Divination
4	Enchantment
5	Evocation
6	Illusion
7	Necromancy
8	Transmutation

Herbalists can awaken the sap to make it into a substance truly feared by spellcasters — the infamous mana chains magical concoction.

## New Magical Concoction: Mana Chains

**Type:** Ointment or Infusion  
**Trait:** Antimagic DC 35  
**Cost:** 18,000 gp

This milky white liquid has no odor or taste. When it makes contact with the skin of a spellcasting creature, that creature must make a Will save (DC 30). If it fails its saving throw, every spell the creature subsequently casts is turned back against it regardless of the target. The ointment's effect wears off after 4d6 rounds, unless it is introduced into the creature's bloodstream; in this case it only wears off after a total of 25 spell levels have been cumulatively reflected back at the creature. Spells cast at the creature by others are unimpeded by the ointment.

As might be expected, assassins who specialize in murdering wizards often coat their weapons with this substance in order to significantly weaken their prey and give themselves a huge advantage. One vial contains enough of the concoction for four uses. Mana chains has no effect on mundane creatures.

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