

## Arnica Gel

by Jan de Vries

Some years ago I lost six friends in a relatively short period of time, six people who had been very influential in my life. My closest mentor, Alfred Vogel, was one of those friends, and we last met one week before his death. During that visit we reminisced as he looked back on a long life of many marvellous experiences. Although he was ninety-four years old he was still mentally alert, and he spoke of the many times we had gone to visit the gypsies in the mountains. We never failed to be impressed by their knowledge of herbs, plants and roots.

I remember that on one of these trips Vogel inadvertently trod on a plant, looked carefully at it and told me to take note of the way that the plant immediately recovered. His interpretation of this plant's characteristics was that the plant called out to be used in cases of trauma. This plant was Arnica. Its main characteristic, indeed, is that it helps people to recover from frights and shocks in the same way as it recovers quickly itself, just as it had bounced back when he stepped on it.

Traditionally Arnica is used as a poultice to treat sprains, bruises and wounds and low fevers and paralytic conditions. It is the most wonderful remedy, trusted through the ages and has been of great benefit to many people. However, research has shown that the herb also gives excellent results when used externally for arthritic conditions, as it is a potent anti-inflammatory.

In Canada, one in seven adults suffer from some form of arthritic and rheumatic condition. Inflammation is a common symptom, often causing intense pain and leading to further symptoms such as sleep loss. Inflammation is the body's natural response to injury causing an increase of blood flow to the tissues of the affected area. The area reddens and becomes painful. A. Vogel's Absolut Arnica gel is best applied thoroughly to the required area and massaged gently into the skin two to four times daily to help reduce the inflammation and in turn relieve the pain of arthritis. Arnica, (Leopard's bane; Mountain tobacco) is a perennial plant native to central European woods and mountain pastures, and in some parts of Europe it is protected. The plant has long green leaves orange-yellow flowers and dark brown roots, it is the fresh flowers that are used.

