

## A "debate" of the Rhubarbs: Turkey vs. Indian

A cup of Ojibwa Tea of Life (essiac) mix contains only about 1/2 teaspoon of rhubarb but there is controversy about which should be used -- Turkey rhubarb (*Rheum palmatum*) or Indian rhubarb (*Rheum officinale*).

Rene Caisse tried Indian rhubarb and switched to Turkey rhubarb "because it was more palatable and easier to locate" during her time. "Nevertheless, below are interesting discussions/ intellectual arguments by others that will be of additional interest.

### Commentary from others ...

**Peg :**

As to your questions about the *Rheum officinale* vs. *Rheum palmatum*. From all that I have read there is basically no difference between the two of the as far as potency goes. I went through my rather full library of Herb books and found that their really is no difference other than some visual characteristics, and where they originate. *Rheum palmatum* is from the higher and colder elevations of China and Tibet. *Rheum officinale* is normally grown at lower elevations, yet it is grown in China also.

*Rheum rhaponticum* is English rhubarb and does not have the medicinal potency of the two listed above. I prefer to use the *Rheum officinale*. I did at one time use the *palmatum* and the resulting product did not seem to be as effective.

### Some advocates of Turkey rhubarb (*Rheum palmatum*):

1. **Caitlin :**

I live in Ontario and I am very friendly with Mary McPherson, who knew Rene Caisse very well. According to Mary, when Rene Caisse could no longer get out and about, she would have Mary purchase the rhubarb herb for her. **Rene instructed her to purchase Turkey rhubarb** for the making of the formula. Rene apparently did use Indian rhubarb at one point, but later changed to **Turkey rhubarb, claiming that it was less bitter and more palatable.**