

Bach to basics

Alexandra Bacon, a registered Bach practitioner, counsellor and well-being consultant, explains how Bach™ Original Flower Remedies UK helps people to manage their emotions and fulfil their potential.



Bach flower remedies can help to transform negative attitudes and emotional issues into positive ones, helping to maintain good health and stimulate the body's potential to heal itself and recover from illness and stress. The remedies originate from the work of Dr Edward Bach, a Harley Street doctor and homeopath, who had become disillusioned with the side effects of conventional medicine.

Seeking a simpler and more natural approach to human disease and distress, he turned his research to the potential healing power of nature. An interest in Hahnemann's theories of homeopathy¹ inspired Dr Bach and influenced the development of his homeopathic vaccines now known as the seven Bach nosodes.* In 1928 he began researching the healing properties of flower

remedies, which led to the formation of the complete system of 38 remedies – a system that is based upon the principle that emotions and mental outlook can influence our health and happiness.

What they are and how they work

Each of the 38 remedies were categorised by Dr Bach according to the specific type of emotional issue or imbalance they were intended to treat, spanning across the whole spectrum of emotional states - from fear to loneliness. The remedies help to address emotional factors such as depression, anxiety and trauma, which are thought likely to impede healing and cause physical illness, and may then help to support the patient's fight against illness.

Dr Bach believed that disease manifested first on an emotional level through negative emotions such as fear, hatred and anger, and eventually on a physical

level, if left unresolved or untreated. Dr Bach's philosophy was to 'treat the patient, not the disease', and that it was the underlying emotional state of the individual, not the nature of the ailment or disease, that indicated the treatment required. No two individuals are exactly alike in their reactions or moods and would respond differently to the same disease, and would therefore need different remedies to help restore them to full health. Dr Bach believed that 'disease is both preventable and curable', and that once the cause was removed, harmony and balance could be re-established in the person's energy system, allowing the possibility of transformation to occur.

Bach flower remedies are made from freshly picked flowers, plants and trees, most of which are still grown in the cottage garden at Mount Vernon, Dr Bach's home in Oxfordshire, which is now the International Bach Centre. Each remedy is made from an individual flower (whole) or tree, apart from Rescue Remedy, which is a combination. Grape alcohol is mixed with the flower essences to form the 'mother tinctures', which are then diluted to produce the remedies. The flowers and plants used are produced using a potentiation process, either through the sun or boiling method to extract the quality of the life force or energy into the water. This process is thought to imprint the energy from the original substance onto the diluting liquid, which is then transferred into the body to trigger a self-healing reaction that improves health and well-being.

Scientists have proven that our bodies and everything in our environment is made up of energy,² and vibrational medicine – a concept that Dr Bach himself referred to – is based upon the idea that each of the plants possess a different energy or 'vibration', which have an affinity with positive states of mind. The energies in Bach flower remedies are equally subtle – though powerful in action – and work on our consciousness at a level to affect the way we are feeling, enabling us 'to blossom into ourselves, rather than becoming somebody different'.³

Who and what they may benefit

Bach flower remedies are gentle in action, and can work safely with children, babies, the elderly and for women during pregnancy, to assist with the different stages of birth, e.g. to help ease physical or emotional symptoms (morning sickness), or reduce anxiety



about giving birth. Children respond very well to Bach remedies, such as a fearful child who can find courage, or a screaming or impatient child who is calmed. They can also be used effectively with animals at times of distress or illness, and with plants, to help restore energy and vitality to sick, dying or drooping leaves and flowers.

The flower remedies can potentially help to address emotional conditions such as depression, anxiety and trauma, as well as the physical illnesses that these can potentially lead to. In particular, I have found the Bach remedies useful with clients suffering from depression, when emotions and issues can be deep seated. They can also be used at times of emergency, such as when a person is going through a crisis; when someone is suffering from a specific emotional or physical problem; and for the many people who feel generally tired and unwell without a specific medical diagnosis.

The role of the practitioner and what a typical session may involve

The role of the Bach practitioner is to help clients identify any underlying emotional issues and to suggest the most suitable flower remedies at that particular point in time. Clients can choose and use the remedies at home, but it is often useful for them to seek professional help for the first time, or if they are unsure about which remedies are appropriate.

A consultation lasts for approximately 60 minutes and normally the practitioner would ask the client to discuss how they have been feeling before selecting the remedies accordingly. The process is client-centred and non-intrusive, and the practitioner uses their knowledge and intuition to advise the client about which remedies may help to treat their emotional state. The practitioner often invites the client to discuss the choice of remedy and to see whether they felt it was appropriate for their current situation.



The practitioner would then prepare a mixture bottle for the client to take home. The standard preparation includes two drops from each chosen flower remedy in a 30 ml (1fl oz) dropper bottle, which is filled three-quarters with natural spring water and topped up with brandy or cider vinegar for preservation. Normally a maximum of six or seven remedies are added to the mixture, though sometimes only one or two can suffice,

depending on the individual. If too many remedies are added however, this can have the effect of 'clouding the issue' and often 'less is more' with Bach. The mixture is taken orally by mouth, either through drops on the tongue or in a drink, and the recommended dosage is at least four drops, four times a day. The remedies are most effective when taken regularly and frequently, rather than consuming all 16 drops at once. A bottle normally lasts approximately three to four weeks, and after this time, the combination is usually reviewed by seeing how the client has progressed. If it is still helpful, the remedy is repeated, but if a new condition arises, an appropriate flower remedy can be added to the combination, or the remedy may be revised entirely if there has been no change.

The client is advised that the flower remedies may aggravate a person's symptoms for a short time as issues come to the surface and emotions are released in order to be resolved. It is normally suggested that clients persevere with taking the remedy to allow the emotions to be processed and improvements to occur.

Safety matters

Bach flower remedies can form a standalone treatment, as well as be used safely and effectively in conjunction with other treatments - allopathic and complementary. If a client is already receiving medical treatment or medication for a condition, such as asthma, it is normally suggested that the practitioner seeks GP permission before proceeding with treatment. Clients are encouraged to seek medical advice and diagnosis where appropriate, and should not use Bach, or any other complementary or alternative treatment, in place of treatment advised by their GP. The other note of caution is that with stock remedies, the parent/caretaker should be advised to dilute them when used with children, and with recovering alcoholics, they may prefer to apply the remedies externally on pulse points.

Case studies

Case study A:

Client A was suffering from anxiety and panic attacks. I prescribed aspen for her state of general nervousness, mimulus for her specific fear of going into meetings at work, and white chestnut for her recurring pattern of thoughts and disturbed sleep.

She took the four drops of the remedy, four times a day, and within two days, she noticed an improvement – a reduction in her anxiety and she felt calmer. The remedies worked vibrationally by helping to bring these emotional states back into balance, for example, bringing fear back into a state of calm and ease. It is all about working with an individual's life force and energy, so that they can enter a positive state of mind and realise their full potential. The client carried on with treatment subsequently for another month, by which point she felt she could face her fears with

courage. She was able to go into meetings and feel comfortable and at ease.

Case study B:



Mimulus helps people to face their fears

Client B was suffering from long-term depression and poor body image, which were affecting her relationships and work. She turned to Bach as she felt she had been held back by her lack of self-esteem and wanted to move forward.

She was treated with a mixture of flower remedies including pine to combat feelings of inferiority; crab apple to improve self-image; and mimulus to overcome the fear of not getting better. I also used gorse to help boost her positivity and bring some sunshine into her life.

Within two days of taking four drops, four times a day, she reported feeling much brighter both physically and emotionally as well as having more control over her usually strong hormonal mood swings and PMT. She also had a profound sense of well-being and a much more positive outlook.

She continued with maintenance treatments for another four months, as these were such deep seated issues. I kept the remedy the same, as the crab apple helped to balance her feelings of dislike for her body, pine helped her to achieve self-acceptance; and mimulus helped to resolve her fear of not getting better.

We are natural beings by nature and it can be useful to use natural remedies to help re-create the balance that modern life can disturb. Bach can help to open up a path toward better health, enabling us to restore harmony in mind, body and spirit, and bring us closer to achieving our highest potential.

* The seven Bach nosodes were Proteus, Dysentery, Morgan, Faecalis alkaligenes, Coli mutabile, Gärtner and Bacillus No. 7, and these were thought to help people with certain conditions. The Morgan nosode was indicated for individuals with depression, anxiety and nervousness. The Proteus and Faecalis alkaligenes were considered useful for people who suffered irritability, anger, impatience and nervous strain. The Coli mutabile was intended for changeability and vacillation, and the Bacillus No. 7, non-alertness and sleepiness.

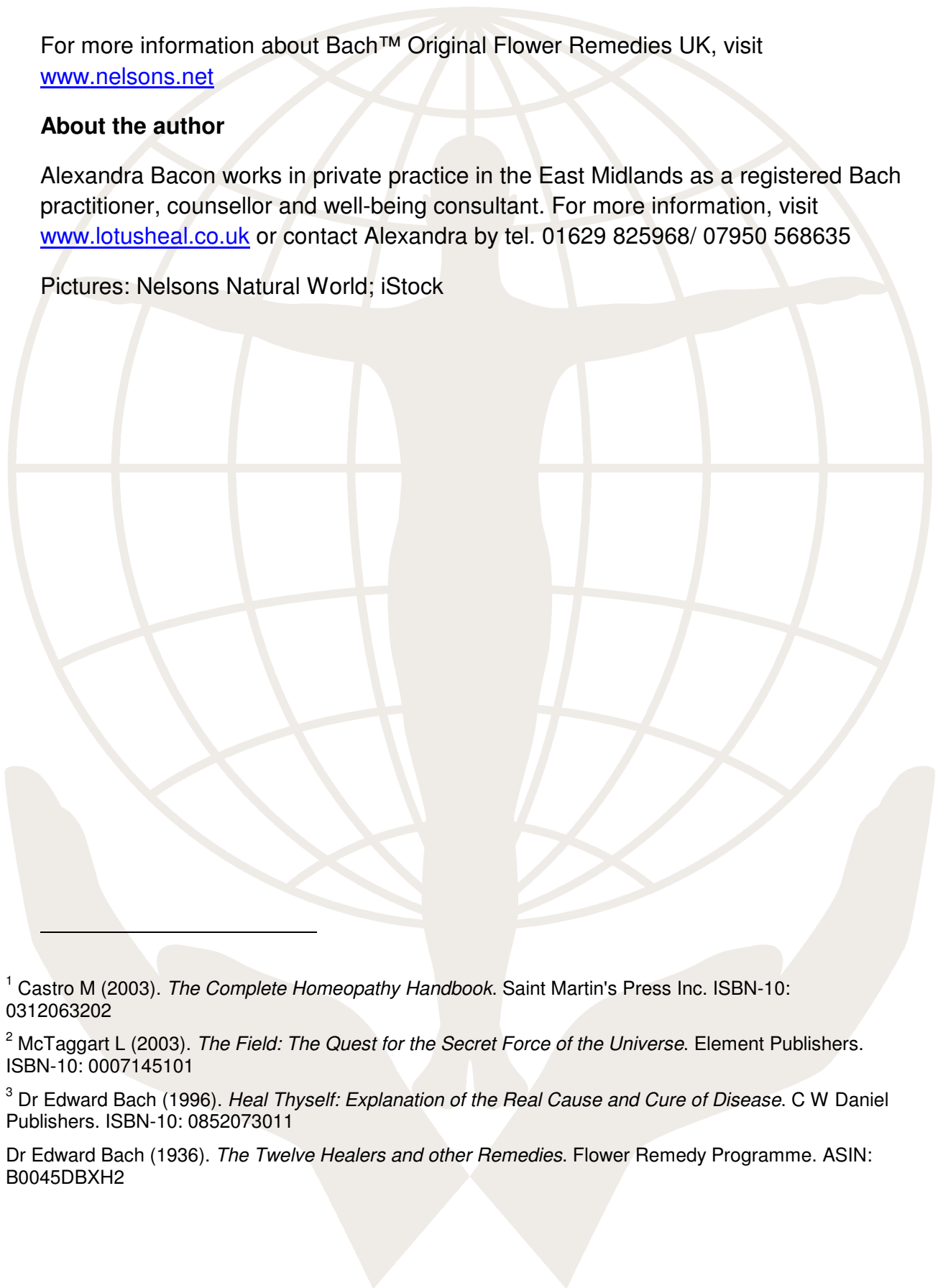
Further information

For more information about Bach™ Original Flower Remedies UK, visit www.nelsons.net

About the author

Alexandra Bacon works in private practice in the East Midlands as a registered Bach practitioner, counsellor and well-being consultant. For more information, visit www.lotusheal.co.uk or contact Alexandra by tel. 01629 825968/ 07950 568635

Pictures: Nelsons Natural World; iStock



¹ Castro M (2003). *The Complete Homeopathy Handbook*. Saint Martin's Press Inc. ISBN-10: 0312063202

² McTaggart L (2003). *The Field: The Quest for the Secret Force of the Universe*. Element Publishers. ISBN-10: 0007145101

³ Dr Edward Bach (1996). *Heal Thyself: Explanation of the Real Cause and Cure of Disease*. C W Daniel Publishers. ISBN-10: 0852073011

Dr Edward Bach (1936). *The Twelve Healers and other Remedies*. Flower Remedy Programme. ASIN: B0045DBXH2