

# PORTLAND ASHWAGANDHA



Portland Ashwagandha Farm's goal is to nourish, restore, and fortify members of the community in body and spirit by cultivating and processing ashwagandha and other herbs into tinctures and providing guidance on how to use them. Ashwagandha is a favorite plant of the Ayurvedic tradition, which is a natural system of medicine that originated in India thousands of years ago. PAF recommends ashwagandha for its grounding and centering properties. They receive testimonials from Vancouver Farmers Market patrons who say that ashwagandha assists issues with sleep, stress, anxiety, and hormone balance.

The business took root (pun intended) in 2012 as Rising Stone Farm, a CSA-style operation that also grew ashwagandha for a small group of community members in Southeast Portland. In 2015, PAF founder Jeff Johnson turned his attention to ashwagandha and began focusing on creating healing tinctures.

Portland Ashwagandha Farm grows ashwagandha root, tulsi, blue vervain, yarrow, and other herbs on about an acre at Dancing Roots Farm in Corbett. They also hand-forage plants native to the Cascadia bioregion, along with the red-belted polypore mushroom, for inclusion in their tinctures. On the farm, they follow biodynamic practices that take into account the larger ecosystem the crops are growing in, including the richness of the nutrients of the soil and the other plants nearby. They plant seedlings in accordance with the moon cycle, propagate them in a greenhouse on-site, and plant them out into the field. They don't use pesticides, and work to be water-conscious.

Each October, they organize a work party to harvest all of the ashwagandha. Then they clean and chop the ashwagandha and let it macerate (a fancy word for steep) in organic cane alcohol. It is then pressed and bottled. PAF recommends you take the tincture under the tongue, allowing the mucus glands in your mouth to absorb the medicinal compounds straight into your bloodstream, bypassing the digestive system and allowing for superior bioavailability. "It's like a liquid plant if there ever was one," said Guyar Vial, PAF's operations manager.