

the Connecticut Thymes

CONNECTICUT HERB ASSOCIATION, INC.

WWW.CTHERB.ORG

JULY-SEPTEMBER 2008

Herbalism, The Business of Love

Rosemari Roast

I laugh when a new student or prospect asks about making a living as an herbalist. I laugh with care as I respond, "How *much* do you *really* love this Green world?" For love—absolute love—is essential to this business, even just to make the ends meet!

In the best of times being an herbalist is a business challenge. Whether we are growers, practitioners, product makers or teachers, Nature tosses challenge after challenge at us and we had better love her enough to be up for it! I teach a class on sprouting and tending a holistic/herbal business and I begin and end with the truth that, no matter what business you are in, you had better have real passion for it because—especially as a sole proprietor—you are everything to that business, even the parts you don't like or lack ability in. I also stress that love for your customers is as vital as love for your business. I chuckle too, because I've not yet met a financially wealthy herbalist (at least not with wealth realized from the herbal side of things), but I know so many herbalists who are wealthy with passion and joy for life. And that—to me anyway—is true wealth.

In hard economic times, small businesses especially tend to struggle, and tend to fold. This is as true for the herbal business as it is for any other. When witnessing or consulting during such challenges, I often go back to the passion and love and ask—again, "How much do you really love this Green world?" Those who are true to their true passion choose to stick with it and seek ways to sustain their bottom line through hard times. As for the others, they must ask themselves what their true passion really is and move toward that.

Through the hard times it is important to know and play our strengths and at the same time examine those places where we lack, and to take action to enhance them. Perhaps business analysis and planning are not your strong suit, or bookkeeping, or marketing, or basic customer service? Then seek support to build those skills. Investing in a workshop or sitting a few hours with a business consultant (especially one in your field) can be motivating, enlightening, and perhaps give you a spark to fire up some aspect of your business.

Another basic consideration during times of challenge is to consider just what are those aspects that make up your business. Often, diversifying, adding facets to what you already love or have skill for can encourage new customers. For instance, I love to share my experience with others and so "teaching" is a central facet of my herbal business. Yet, students come and go, so I also offer wellness consultations, healing, readings, I make herbal products, I create nature-inspired crafts and I even do holistic business consulting. All these facets glimmer in the gem that makes an herbal business that is sustainable for me.

In any time, "best" or "hard," it is those of us that have this green passion rooted so deeply in our very core that find the joy and motivation to sustain the business we love: The business of love. Ashe.

Of Roots and Reminiscences

Cynthia V. Baker

I received a call a few weeks back from a client whose mood was deliciously joyous. "My oncologist was all smiles today. My cancer has stopped growing." He continued on to relate the story of the happy though somewhat perplexed oncologist whose could not figure out why his chemo agents failed but some plant powders seemed to have enough of an effect to be noticeable on a PET scan. The client chimed: "He told me to keep doing whatever it is I am doing."

For those of who deal in the so called 'alternative' or 'out-of-the-box' school of thought it always makes me chuckle that educated health professionals know so little about the history of plants in medicine. Below is a great example of only one of the many times in the history of man that we have been called to think back to our roots (and barks and leaves and flowers!)

In a wonderfully detailed paper presented to the American Pharmaceutical Association in 1898, Joseph Jacobs, an Atlanta

pharmacist shares his distress about the shortage of drugs in the southern states during the Civil War and the use of plant medicines in their place. With wagon trains of supplies captured by the North and medicines and surgical instruments sorely lacking "home manufacture and blockade running" became the only source of medical supplies for millions of Southerners for four long years.

Mr. Jacobs relates his process: **"I perused my dispensary and called into requisition an old botanic practice which had been handed down as a relic of the past, but from which I confess to have received valuable aid and very many useful hints in regard to the medical virtues of our native plants."**

Although country doctors were first to return to the frequent use of plants in place of medication, even larger cities like Jackson, Selma, Montgomery, Huntsville, Atlanta, Raleigh, Charlotte, and Richmond finally turned to self manufacture of substitutes for things such as quinine which was going for a startling \$100 an ounce in 1862. You won't be surprised at Jacobs' recount of the usage of many plants as we continue their use in our practice today:

"Of that large class of medicines, so useful in surgery and so much in demand in war times, called antiseptics, I had but little else at my command except the cold-water dressing for wounds. From experiment I learned to improve on the plain old method, as I think, by employing a decoction of red-oak bark added to the water, which acted as a disinfectant, and by its stimulating and astringent properties promoted the healing process. When emollients were indicated, I used slippery elm and wahoo root bark, and solution of common salt often helped. In case of great pain I employed poppy heads, nightshade and stramonium.

(continued on page 2)

**Think back everyone,
not only to the roots of medicine,
but to the long-lost teachings
about food and lifestyle.** *CVB*

Roots and Reminiscences *(continued from page 1)*

In cases of pneumonia, pleurisy, catarrhal fevers, etc., I made local applications of mustard seed or leaves, stramonium leaves, hickory leaves, pepper, etc., warm, and gave alternately butterfly-root and sanguinaria, and continued to slightly nauseating, from day to day (no need of anything else). The two last-named remedies took the place of Dover's powder, quinine and all other diaphoretics, febrifuges and arterial sedatives.

Phytalacca or poke was another favorite remedy—the tincture when alcohol or whisky could be obtained; otherwise, tea of roots or berries. I used it in all cases of chronic rheumatism or neuralgia, enlarged glands, scrofula, syphilis, and all cases requiring alteratives, often combined with American sarsaparilla root, sassafras, alder and prickly ash.

Female complaints gave me some trouble, but I soon learned the use of the black haw, squaw-weed, partridge berry, etc. I had been taught in the use of old text-books that opiates in large doses would control some cases of threatened abortion, when the patient had not lost too much from hemorrhage. I found that the black haw root tea would absolutely stop this tendency, not only in cases where there was but little hemorrhage, but where large quantities had passed, and would relieve the most severe cases of dysmenorrhœa, especially when combined with squaw-weed, partridge berry or red shank.

In stomach and bowel diseases I found but little difficulty in obtaining plenty of substitutes for opiates, astringents and the like; in fact, I believe that an all wise Providence has especially provided the best antidotes in creation on the hills and dales, and by the vales and streams of our own Southland. In ordinary looseness of the bowels or diarrhœa, I gave an infusion of raspberry

leaves or whortleberry leaves (both of which act finely on the kidneys and bladder). Where there was nausea or sick stomach, a handful of peach leaves steeped in water and drunk will settle it, or what is perhaps better, the kernel of two or three seeds cracked and cold water drunk off of them. If stronger astringent is necessary, the inner bark of red oak, blackberry or dewberry root tea, or red shank root, are sure remedies.

Agrimony tea, and, as a last resort, the nut-gall or ink-ball made into what, from its color, I called black wash (made by squeezing the juice out and adding a little copperas). This black wash is not only a splendid ink, but is a destroyer of syphilitic sores, warts, corns, ringworm, and old ulcers and excrescences of nearly every kind, much superior to lime water and calomel. Weakened properly, it is good in obstinate bowel diseases, and which they consigned to immortality under the name of the 'Diseremus Pill.' It was amusing, despite the sadness of the scene, to watch the doctor and his assistant, each with their cup full of their invention, going out to meet the weak and melancholy throng, who, in answer to the surgeon's call, emerged from their tents, morning after morning, and in single file marched wearily and languidly along, each in turn receiving in his feverish palm a dozen or more of 'Diseremus Pill,' with the laconic instructions to 'take two after each loose operation'; and even these instructions, when the tongue of the doctor grew weary with their constant repetition, was shortened into a sort of ejaculation as the pills were dropped, 'two after each loose,' this grew into a sort of by-word about the camp."

Read the full paper presented at the American Pharmaceutical Association held in Baltimore, Maryland, in August, 1898 <http://www.civilwarhome.com/drugsshsp.htm>

Book Reviews

The Earthwise Herbal by Matthew Wood
Reviewed by Pam Quayle

I've recently acquired a copy of Matthew Wood's new book. Wow! I have to say I haven't read a book by Matthew Wood that I didn't love, but this one is different from the others and I find it very exciting. I have a lot of herbal books and I notice that the few that are good for reference end up closest to the desk and too many of the others drift to the far corner seldom to be opened. This book will definitely be in the former category. This hefty volume lists Old World medicinal plants – can't wait for the next one on New World plants.

The first two chapters give a very concise and clear explanation of the energetics and actions of traditional western herbalism followed by a chapter called "Putting it All Together: The Art of Herbal Practice". He has a wonderful gift of using words to put a lot of information in a concise and comprehensive form that is easy to understand – all of this is within the first 50 pages. The rest of the book (571 pages) is dedicated to a material medica that gives latin and common names with a brief history followed by text that "consists of a description of the plant uniting its diverse properties and uses into a whole profile that makes sense, empirically, intuitively, and pharmacologically. The greatest effort has been made to bring out the essential nature, personality or logic of the plant. When this is understood

the disparate traditional uses, modern uses, and physical properties usually form a unit that makes sense." Some case histories and anecdotes are included.

The text description is followed by the following classifications: taste – based on a template of flavor, temperature and humidity and impression, tissue states on which an herb acts, organ affinities, specific indications, preparation and dosage, cautions and references.

The information is based on experience, his own, that of other current herbalists, and the best literature of past practicing herbalists and it is all thoroughly referenced. It takes a historical view based on his extensive study of the old masters, refreshingly combined with current understanding of conditions and the experience of today's practitioners using the herbs.

Since my main interest is in growing and preparing the herbs I use – keeping it local and knowing the plants – I found the listing of many common and easy to grow herbs especially tantalizing. I highly recommend this book to those beginning their herbal journey and experienced herbalists.

Michele Maclure recommends the following:

The Art of Spiritual Rock Gardening by Donna E. Schaper
Medicine Women, A Pictorial History of Women Healers
by Elisabeth Brooke

Opportunities

Sunday, September 14, 2008

2008 Taste! Organic Connecticut

Sponsored by NOFA and the Willimantic Food Coop, from 10 am to 4 pm rain or shine at Topmost Herb Farm, 244 North School Road, Coventry. Organic Farmer's Market, Children's Activities, Educational Workshops, Music, Craft Vendors and Food! Food! Food! Admission \$5 ages 12 - 80. <http://www.ctnofa.org/events/Taste/taste2008.html> to see complete program. CHAI is in need of members to staff the information table. Email Michele Maclure or Gail Nogas with an offer to spend a couple of hours at the table. michelemaclure@hotmail.com or sagewand1@aol.com

Saturday, September 27

Third in our series of three CHAI Nature Walks

Local CHAI member Pam Quayle will lead us on a walk through the Bamforth Land Trust Preserve in Haddam. This preserve is being developed to enhance bird habitat. The field is planted with a variety of native grasses for nesting birds and along the forest edges invasive plants are being removed and native trees and shrubs encouraged or planted to increase biodiversity for bird habitat. Native plants with herbal uses abound in the variety of sunny grassland, forest edge and wetland areas. Contact Pam Quayle for reservations and directions. herbgatherer@hotmail.com

Saturday, October 25

Dr Jody Noe to lecture on Cherokee Medicine

Bring a potluck dish to share for lunch, as this will take place from 10 am to 2 pm. Location has not yet been secured. Current plans are to request a donation of \$15.00 for non members, with the event being free for CHAI members. Details are being worked out, notices will be sent when finalized.

Classes offered by Rosemari Roast

Classes are held at Walk in the Woods in Winsted and pre-registration is necessary at least 3 days in advance Call Rosemari at 860-738-1608 to register.

Fermenting Wellness

August 23, 12-3pm, \$45

Food as Medicine

August 30, 10am to noon, \$35

Herbal Tea Blending and Tasting

September 13, 10am to 12:30, \$40

Fermenting Wellness in Your Kitchen

September 20, 12 to 2:30pm, \$45

Cynthia V. Baker, RH, AHG, Nutritional Consultant

www.sattvavitalhealth.com

Cyndi has a private practice in Plantsville and Hartford

Contact her at 860-276-3833

Notes From the Membership Chair

Pam Quayle

Your membership entitles you to Member-2-Member discounts which are offered by several of our business members. The list of members that offer the discount will soon be on the 2008 directory of members in the members only area of the website and the password will be sent to you. The directory will be on the website sometime in September.

Our organization is all volunteer and therefore is only as strong and exciting as our members make it. We hope that you will participate and share your experience and knowledge with the rest of us. Some of the ways you can do that are:

- Write an article for the newsletter. It is published four times annually, mailed to members and is available on our website. Please respect that the work to put the newsletter together is done by busy volunteers - edit and run a spell check on what you write before sending it off.
- Join a committee.
- Organize or host a program.
- Send information on programs you are sponsoring or other events that would interest our members for inclusion in the newsletter, egroup or website.
- Share your ideas of speakers or programs that you would like to see or present. What herbs or topics would you like to see discussed at the monthly meetings?

Our website is www.ctherb.org

Our eGroup is <http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/CHA/>

Contact information for all officers and committee chairs is on the website and in the newsletter. Please contact us with any ideas, comments, questions or concerns. I hope to see you at an upcoming event.

CHAI Needs You

There are many opportunities and challenges in store for the membership in 2009. It may well prove to be a very auspicious time...new beginnings, new ideas, perhaps even new directions, but always the same mission! As our November annual meeting rapidly approaches, so does the time to select our officers for the coming year, as terms expire in December. Gail Nogas has agreed to maintain her current position as Treasurer and Michele Maclure, our Vice President, has offered to accept the position of President. Thanks to both of these hardworking ladies for their time and dedication.

Currently, the positions of Vice President and Secretary are awaiting candidates for the coming year. Please email either Michele: michelemaclure@hotmail.com or Gail: sagewand1@aol.com if you are willing to serve. Please be mindful also, that several committees will need willing staff, and some will need chairpersons.

The next issue will be the last one for this editor. Certainly someone out there is willing to take on this responsibility. Also, Sandy Gallup wishes to turn over the responsibility for the mailings to someone else. Email Carole Miller at topmost@worldnet.att.net

Our membership chair, Pam Quayle reminds us that dues which were payable in June, are still being accepted by our Treasurer, Gail Nogas. You may also visit the CHAI website, and submit them via PayPal. Incidentally, have you seen the lovely new look the website has? Thank you, Deb Pouech!

Random Ramblings

True short stories from my family

Michele Maclure

Deadheading Pansies When I was about 5 years old, my family always visited by grandmother in Proctor, Vermont. My grandmother loved flowers as was evidenced by her big flower garden in the back yard. She also had window boxes filled with red geraniums and walk ways lined with pansies. My grandmother taught me how to dead head pansies, she bent down and showed me the pansies that were wilted and looking like they fainted were the ones to dead head. My reward for doing my new job was I could pick a bouquet of flowers of my choosing from her big garden. Wow, to pick a bouquet of blue delphiniums, pale pink peonies, whiter than snow hydrangeas, and the scent, just heavenly. To this day I can't resist dead heading pansies, it's instinctive and still gives me a rush of sweet memories of grandma.

Fernin' My Aunt Rosie and Nanny (another grandma) told me this story about how they earned a bit of extra money in the summer. They would go fernin'. My Aunt Rosie lived in the last house a top a mountain in Stamford, Vermont. You could see three states from her house; Vermont, New York and Massachusetts. She and Nanny would save newspapers and wet them before they headed out. They would pick ferns throughout the mountain side. Local florists paid them 10 cents a bunch. The morning would be filled with picking ferns, talking about the family and of course a bit of gossip thrown in for entertainment. They would be home before lunch in order to fix a meal for the men coming in from the hay fields.

Weeding Weeding is an interesting chore if one wants to think it is a chore. Sure it needs to be done, but as I was on my hands and knees this evening I began to think of what other ways we can look at it. W: weeding, wonderment, (what plant is hiding behind the weed) E: excitement of getting the job accomplished, E: enhancement it makes your plants look fabulous, D: demands your attention, I: intriguing, which weed is a useful one, N: noticable, ladies thumbnail, wood sorrel, crab grass, unknown weeds, and finally G: gardening, glory, golly gee it's done.

New Friends in My Yard

Kat Conte

The plants in my yard became lush and abundant with the late spring rains. During my daily walk, while visiting my plant friends I was pleasantly surprised to find several new ones:

Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*) multiplied in leaps and bounds in my woodland garden, more than I could count.

Solomon's Seal (*Polygonatum multiflorum*) moved into the front yard. There are now three nice clumps looking healthy and happy.

Great Mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*) decided to pop up near the herb garden. Now it is ready to bloom with its soft buttery yellow flowers.

St John's Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*) snuck in on the edge of

the lawn and also to my great surprise, right in the middle of my labyrinth.

Yellow Dock (*Rumex crispus*) and **Burdock** (*Arctium lappa*) are growing profusely near the edge of the woods.

The **Evening Primrose** (*Oenothera biennis*) showed up in the garden.

Last but not least the universe decided I was somehow worthy to have a beautiful crop of **Morel** (*Morchella esculenta*) mushrooms appear in the leaf debris near a fence.

I cherish all of my plant friends new and old. Keep your eyes open, you never know what you will find and never underestimate the love and power of Mother Nature.

HerbFest 2008 a Resounding Success!

The weather cooperated, attendees were pleased, workshops were well attended, the day flew by too quickly and is now part of our history. The admission table counted 489 paid admissions; if we consider the fact that senior citizens and kids under 12 were admitted free, and add to that the number of volunteers, worker bees and vendor families, we can safely assume that our attendance topped 700. We were also financially secure, and a complete accounting will be presented at the annual meeting. Following is member Dr. Stacey Munro's account of the day: "Herb Fest was a welcome sight for this new-timer. It reminded me of the feel-good festivals from my days as a 1990's hippy; smiling, loving people, the earth cradling us in her green lap. The day started with a drum circle. Talk about stirring those primal instincts. The morning passed while I worked the entrance booth. We checked out the many vendors in their colorful booths. Lunch was Indian food-yummy! Karen and I spent the hottest part of the day chilling in the "Red Tent." We sat on cushions while a light breeze filtered in through the gauzy red tapestries. I missed the talks, but I did go on an herb walk with Rosmari and Pam Q. which was

amazing. These ladies really know their stuff. This was a wonderful, magical day. Thanks to Carole, her family and friends, and the coordinators of HerbFest!"

Our committee chair, Pat Lavery deserves a huge vote of thanks for an outstanding job. She sends along this message: "An era of Herbfest has come to an end. As you'll see in the following article, Carole Miller has decided to end her participation in Herbfest. We're going to miss Carole who is a workhorse on this committee, and Topmost and Herbfest are almost synonymous. Thanks to Carole and her whole family for making this event a success year after year. What do we do next? Herbfest is CHAI's major money maker. And our mission has always been first and foremost education and second a showcase for our member's and Connecticut herbalists' businesses and products. If we are to continue with Herbfest, we need volunteers for a new committee and a new location for the first Saturday in June. If you have any ideas about what we should do next, please attend any business meetings of CHAI or email me galavery@snet.net."

Topmost Bids Farewell

It has been an exciting 10 years participating in the growth of HerbFest but it's time for it to be passed back to you as Topmost Herb Farm and I retire from the committee. The success and good reputation of this annual festival is due to the hard work of a dedicated committee which holds planning meetings through the whole year. The membership of the committee sometimes fluctuates, but the majority are core members, having offered 10 years of service to CHAI. Over the years some found it necessary to resign due to other more pressing commitments, and occasionally we would gain a new member. Meetings centered around a potluck supper, for which absolutely no planning existed. Our portfolio of stories is legend. and they improve with age.

The structure of HerbFest evolves with time, but the basic mission has always remained: herbal education and awareness. This goal has been well met, as evidenced by our increasing admissions regardless of weather, and particularly the attendance at this year's workshops. Another factor to consider is the consistent high quality of our presenters, who graciously agree to teach for a very minimal fee. Through the years we have tried to showcase our members' talents and expertise while also attracting popular and informative speakers from outside the membership. At a meeting early in the year, the committee brainstorms to suggest speakers, then Marylou Amenta picks up the job from there.

Our vendors are an integral part of the mix, as this is a marvelous opportunity to showcase herbal products and crafts. Pam Brundage, whose spreadsheets are legend, has always strived to offer an eclectic blend of lovely artisan ware of the highest quality. From beating the bushes ten years ago, potential vendors now contact us. The vendor list of 30 to 35 is finalized by the end of February, but Pam's work has just begun. Both she and Marylou spend time contacting vendors and presenters by phone and email, mailing out contracts, reminding beforehand, designing the vendor layout, marking the field, and meeting and directing on the day.

Lori Macri and Sabre Duke, familiar faces at the CHAI Bake Sale tables, spend the whole day between there and the kitchen, making coffee and herbal tea, packaging baked goods, and over-seeing sales. They maintain the supplies and have one of the most

difficult of all jobs - soliciting baked goods from the membership.

Ann Harford's name and email address always appears with a plea to volunteer, and she maintains lists of jobs as well as personnel and their contact information, particularly those outside of CHAI. Volunteers are checked in on the day of the Fest, given badges and a thank-you, and directed to their jobs.

So many kindnesses to remember...Rose Roast always agreeing in a heartbeat to open HerbFest with a drumming session. Roy Maynard putting up and taking down the signs for the day at major intersections and crossroads in the area. Nate Petley's availability to run, lug, fetch, coordinate or do wherever is needed on the day. Kat Conte, a new member trying to untangle regulations with the Health District and track down food vendors to assure their compliance and coordinate the membership table. Our treasurer, Gail Nogas attending all our meetings and maintaining good financial records while streamlining the whole process for us by paying bills quickly and keeping us well informed. Fearless Leader, Pat Lavery, always in complete calm, picking up loose ends and tying them all together at the hospitality booth, and always answering my questions with "I already did that." George Hoffman and Thea Pastore - he always donates his time for a martial arts demonstration, and this year Thea donated all the coffee. Helyn Bartholomay always bakes several items for the bake sale, and even brings along a little something extra for the Topmost family! Our former chair, Pam Quayle, whose duties at the Haddam Land Trust precluded her participation after serving for 8 years often found time to make the 1 hour drive to join us at a meeting, and offer her quiet wisdom.

Among other things there are renting of tents, tables, chairs, and porta potties; obtaining insurance, media coverage, and designing and distributing programs and posters. If I've forgotten some folks, I apologize and also offer gratitude, as there are many components of the whole HerbFest experience. Change can be good, and we've built a good foundation, so may it continue elsewhere with the same great spirit and joy, as Topmost and I settle into the Crone years and cheer you on from the sidelines.

Catole Miller



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2008 Officers and Committees

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Vice-President - Lupo Connell - plantessence@aol.com

Treasurer - Gayle Nogas - sagewand1@aol.com

Secretary - Michele Maclure - michelemaclure@hotmail.com

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Newsletter

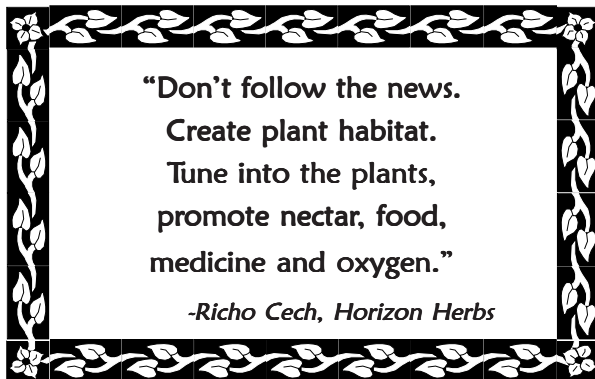
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