

Medicine in the Garden

Bringing herbs into the mix

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Medicine in the Garden

An annoying but necessary disclaimer

This presentation is for your education-- please don't take the info as personal medical advice. Herbs may interact with medications, may be less safe or unsafe in pregnancy, or have other cautions specific to you as a person. They're not 1:1 replacement for pharmaceutical medications.

Educate yourself! Do some research! See an herbalist! Get to know the plants in person! Trust me, it's fun.



Medicine in the Garden

- Why herbal medicine?
- Medicinal herbs are already in your garden!
- Adding new medicines
- Easy to grow medicinal herbs
- Working with the seasons: harvesting and processing



Why herbal medicine? Healing with plants

- Herbs offer types of healing that conventional medicine doesn't
- Can be an alternative to OR an adjunct to conventional medicine
- Growing and harvesting herbs is often easy and straightforward!



Why herbal medicine? Community care

- Building community capacity for mutual aid
- Sense of community autonomy around healing and supporting each other
- Tending plants and gardens can help build relationships between people
- Plants are beautiful and make our neighborhoods nicer!





Why herbal medicine? Meaningful plant connections

- Connection to the plants of our cultures and histories
- Alternatives to plants that are often subject to cultural appropriation
- Ritual/spiritual/ceremonial use of plants is WAY more meaningful when we are in relationship with the plants
- Opportunities to witness and celebrate plants' many non-human relationships
- Act of tending and reciprocal relationships
- Reduce the environmental impact of the herb trade

Local herbs

- Community accountability around labor, environmental sustainability, and other business practices
- Lower carbon footprint
- Control over environmental factors like heavy metal contamination
- Connection to local ecosystems and seasonal cycle





Medicinal herbs are already in your garden!

Culinary herbs

Alliums: garlic, onion, chives, etc

- Antimicrobial
- Pungent compounds help loosen phlegm



Mint family: rosemary, lavender, thyme, sage, mints

- Most are calming and aromatic
- Support digestive function
- Many are antimicrobial



Medicinal herbs are already in your garden!

Weeds

- **Root medicines:** dandelion, yellow dock, burdock
- **Medicinal leaves and flowers:** plantain, mugwort, red clover, cleavers, violet
- **Food as medicine:** lamb's quarters, chickweed, purslane, nettles



Incorporating new medicinal herbs

- **Annuals** can be grown in rows just like vegetable crops (or intercropped)
- **Perennials** require more planning as they will be in place for many years
- **Roots** will need to be dug up in the fall/winter-- plan accordingly!
- **Shrubs and small trees** will eventually create shade

Medicine for the garden

- **Attract pollinators:** CA poppy, fennel, echinacea, hyssop, passionflower
- **Source of mulch:** comfrey, any leaves discarded from harvesting)
- **Prevent soil erosion** (perennials)
- **Aerate soil** (deep-rooted plants: ashwagandha, burdock, elecampane)
- **Medicinal cover crops** (alfalfa, oats)



Easy-to-grow medicinal plants

Annuals: Calendula, tulsi, ashwagandha, borage, milky oats

Perennials: yarrow, echinacea, fennel, lemon balm, meadowsweet

Globalized medicines: Tulsi, reishi, ashwagandha, astragalus, licorice

Native plants: Boneset, skullcap, passionflower, red root, blue vervain

At-risk root medicines: goldenseal, black cohosh, solomon's seal





Easy-to-grow medicinal plants

Calendula

- Annual, cultivated cool weather plant
- Full sun, regular garden conditions
- Harvest flowers when open, daily if possible
- Several annual successions are possible
- Traditional use origins: Arab and European herbalism



Easy-to-grow medicinal plants

Calendula

- **Internal use** as tea, tincture, or powder
- **External use** as infused oil, salve, or compress
- **Vulnerary:** helps heal damaged tissue
- **Mild antifungal**
- **Lymphatic** (helps lymph move through the lymph system)
- **Very safe** for all ages at appropriate dose
- **Use caution** with known aster family allergies



Easy-to-grow medicinal plants

Passionflower

- Perennial, native warm-weather vine
- Full sun, support with trellis
- Harvest leaves and flowers when fresh and vibrant
- Favorite of bumble bees!
- Traditional use origins: Indigenous American, appropriated by white American doctors in written history



Easy-to-grow medicinal plants

Passionflower

- **Internal use** as tea, tincture, or powder
- **Nervine:** helps calm the mind
 - Specific to obsessive / circular thinking
- **Mild antispasmodic:** some people find it helpful for mild asthma and/or menstrual cramps
- **Sleep support:** taken before bed
- **Very safe** for all ages at appropriate dose
- **Use caution** with sedative medications and in pregnancy



Easy-to-grow medicinal plants

Tulsi

(aka holy basil)

- Heat-loving, fast-growing annual
- Growth pattern very similar to culinary basils
- Harvest when flowering
- Can be harvested several times each season (cutting stimulates new growth)
- Traditional use origin: Ayurveda



Easy-to-grow medicinal plants

Tulsi

(aka holy basil)

- **Internal use** as tea, tincture, powder
- **Adaptogen:** helps recovery from and adaptation to stressors
- **Nervine:** calming, anxiolytic, mood elevating
- **Transitional use** includes upper and lower respiratory infections
- **Modern trials:** blood sugar regulation
- **Very safe** for all ages at appropriate dose



Easy-to-grow medicinal plants

Solomon's seal

- Perennial root medicine
- Threatened in the wild by habitat destruction and harvest for herb trade
- Prefers forest conditions: shade, rich / moist / well-drained soil
- Harvest rhizomes late fall through early spring
- Re-plant rhizome segments with crowns for future growth
- Traditional use origin: Indigenous American, appropriated by white American doctors



Easy-to-grow medicinal plants

Solomon's seal

- **Internal use** as decoction, tincture, powder
- **External use** as oil, salve, or liniment
- **Lubricating** to joint tissues
- **Transitional use** includes joint pain, tendon/ligament injuries, tendinitis
- **Very safe** in adults for short- to mid-term use (rhizome only! No leaves or berries)
- **Unknown safety** in pregnancy, children
- **Caution** with blood sugar medications

Working with the seasons



Seasonal harvesting connects us to plants' annual cycles

- **Spring:** rapid growth-- harvest new leaves, tree bark, and some flowers
- **Summer:** reproduction-- harvest leaves, flowers, and early fruits
- **Fall:** fruition-- major fruit harvest in addition to leaves and flowers
- **Late fall through very early spring:** dormancy-- harvest roots



Herbal preparations

Options for preserving, storing and using medicinal herbs

- Teas (steeped) & decoctions (boiled): made with dried herbs
- Tinctures: concentrated extracts preserved in alcohol
- Vinegars, glycerites, and honeys: extracts made without alcohol
- Powders: pulverized dried herbs
- Oils & salves: herbs infused into oils
- Syrups & elixirs: sweetened concentrated decoctions or tinctures

Respecting plant medicines

- Explore your relationship to land and ecosystems
- Observe and listen to wild plants
- Harvest with gratitude and offer gifts
- Advocate for wild spaces, large or small
- Create habitat for plants that are struggling in the wild
- Respect non-human relationships
- Interrogate and challenge the influences of consumerism, colonialism, & capitalism



Little Red Bird Botanicals Herbal CSA

Membership is open for 2023



- 6 months of locally grown herbal care packages
- Classes on medicine making, plant ID, and using local herbs
- Located in Takoma DC May-November

Little Red Bird Botanicals Community Apothecary

- Herbal appointments for health support
- Locally grown herbs: tinctures, dried herbs, salves, vinegars, etc
- Open Wednesdays 4-7pm or by appointment



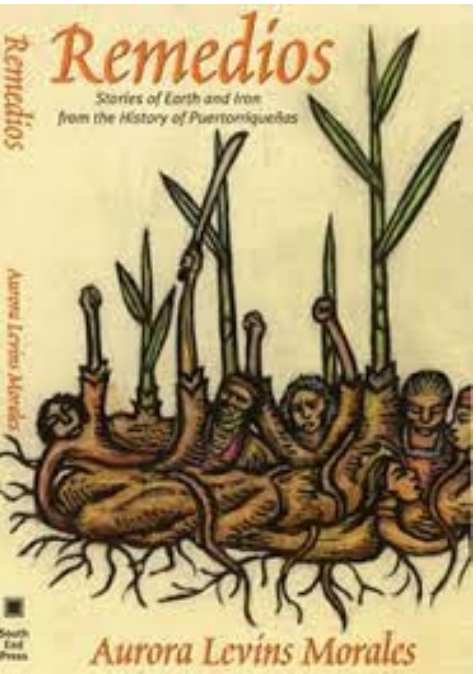
Upcoming classes

www.littleredbirdbotanicals.com/events


- Home apothecary program at Common Good City Farm
- Trees in Four Seasons
- Wild Plants! An exploration through the year



Rosemary Gladstar's
MEDICINAL HERBS A Beginner's Guide



'A hymn of love to the world'
 ELIZABETH GILBERT

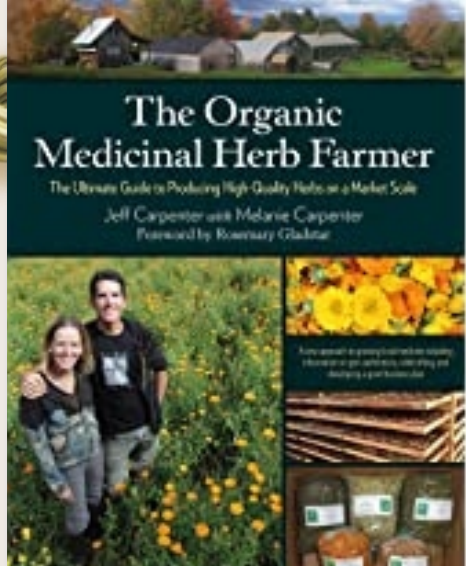
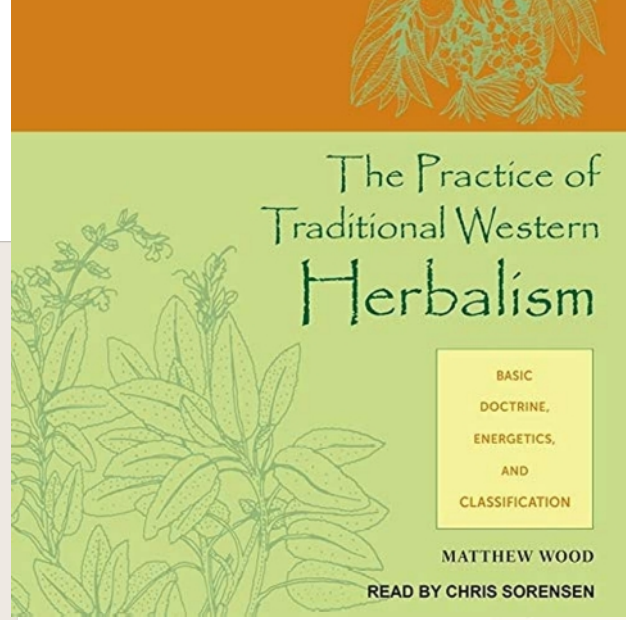


BRAIDING SWEETGRASS



Indigenous Wisdom,
 Scientific Knowledge and
 the Teachings of Plants

ROBIN WALL KIMMERER



A few
 good
 books

