

HedgeWych Wylds/ Backwoods Basics

2019 March Newsletter



Honouring the Ancestors

Norma Myers (1919 – 1988) was a Herbalist, teacher, Activist and Inspiration to a whole generation of youths in the 60s and 70s. They came from all over North America, finding their way to a little known part of the continent, an island off the west coast of British Columbia, to study at the hands of a Mohawk/Scots medicine woman, whose knowledge of plant healing brought with it a spiritual/religious fervor, that was so lacking in the conventional educational programs of the day. Norma was my first teacher, my life was forever changed, and destiny's path altered, when first I was introduced to her in 1981.

I would like to share with you today the words of Gertrude Norma Myers as it relates to plant healing and the wilds:

"After many years of working with plants, I have come to believe that herbs work not so much because of the biochemistry and nutrition but because of energy fields. Medicinal herbs have *powerful energy fields*. You can feel the energy when you take them into your body.

I have *two beliefs* that have grown out of feeling the energies of the herbs. The *first* is that these plants were made by the same creator that made you and me. I was not a religious person when I first came into contact with plants. But because of their influence on me, I have now become a religious or spiritual person. The plants have given me an understanding. I believe that the creator that made them and made me had a design in mind. Where ever plants and animals and humans live, they were meant to live together as part of a bigger family. As part of a bigger ecological family. The *other belief* that comes out of feeling the plant energies is that when all these ecological factors were created on this earth, God had certain laws for the health of the animals, the plants and the humans. And here I use the term *divine laws*. If people could only live by these divine laws, they would live in health and happiness. I like to encourage a sense of conservation among would-be herbalists. To do this, I take people out into the woods, to feel the energy of the trees – the arbutus, the maples, all the different trees. I want them to feel that, *because when people get closer to being part of the pattern, then they won't be so destructive."* **from "Herbal Pathfinders voices of the Herbal Renaissance"** Robert Conrow and Arlene Hecksell

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Important Update!! Changes made to the starting date of classes!

In both the Cowichan and Sunshine coast, due to the late spring, we will be having our first classes beginning in **April** (not March) this year, and we will be merging the "wild nutrition" with the "Digestive health" segment into one.

Changes to Registration requirements: *Due to the changes to our spring schedule, registration for April classes accepted up to April 5th. Please note: you are welcome to sign on for individual classes only, or for the full immersion (8 month) program. Registration and payment for individual classes need to be in by the 5th day of the month of the class you are registering for.*

BwB Calendar of Events, Classes and Festivals

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April 20th	BwB classes - on the Coast	Wild Nutrition/Digestive health
April 27th/28th	BwB classes - in the Cowichan	Wild Nutrition/Digestive health
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May 18th/19th	BwB classes (on the Coast)	Heart and Respiratory health
May 25th/26th	BwB classes (in the Cowichan)	Heart and Respiratory health

Wild Nutrition, Cellular and Digestive Health

April 20th on the Sunshine Coast
April 27/28 in the Cowichan Valley

Wildcrafting! Nutritive, Tonic, Alterative herbs
Dandelion, Stinging Nettles, Chickweed,
Tree barks; Cascara S., Alder, wild Cherry

Medicine Making: basic teas as medicine, decoctions, tonics
and cleanses. Wild foods luncheon

Registration requirements:

Fill out registration form and send it to me at backwoodsbasics.info@gmail.com Payment in full at time of registration. You'll find all class details on our website as well as registration forms and financial and payment options. You can also contact me personally at **604-989-8095** if you have any questions.



The Seedy tradition

Whether it's on Saturday or Sunday in your community, the tradition of seed sharing has become a big event. But its history and tradition might be a little vaguer to some folks, as it was to me. The tradition has long roots and the seeds now fall far from the tree. Here is the whole seedy story!

In the early eighties we saw large companies such as Monsanto taking control of seed production. To control seed distribution and production was to control the food supply. There was a grassroots movement at the time, speaking out about the obvious danger involved in allowing this pattern to continue. The idea of conserving heritage variety seeds was only a thought gaining hold in the 80s. In 1988, Sharon Rempel wanted to find period appropriate heritage wheat for a 1880s themed garden she was creating at the Keremeos Grist mill museum. The Abundant Life Seed foundation in Washington state was her sole source at the time, pioneers and visionaries in the field of seed preservation.

The first "Seedy Saturday" event grew out of this inspiration organized by Sharon Rempel. It was held at the VanDusen Botanical Gardens in Vancouver, British Columbia, in the spring of 1990

"One Straw Society's goal is to help people access and engage in a local resilient, sustainable food system"

The One Straw Society was founded in 1995 by Robin Wheeler, on the Sunshine Coast. The name One Straw was inspired by Masanobu Fukuoka who believed in the power of a single straw to start a revolution (in food sustainability). One Straw arranged a community seed exchange event (seedy Saturday) in 1996. Little Roberts Creek, B.C. became a center for the new revolution! Robin Wheeler passed away in 2012. www.onestraw.ca

Fast forward twenty five years to 2015 when over 100 events were planned and held across Canada. What Sharon had given birth to in 1990 had also by this time scattered its seeds internationally!

"By swapping seeds you will help protect local biodiversity. You will also be making a stand against the control of the seed supply by a handful of large companies." **Great Britain** from their 3rd annual seedy saturday celebration.

Sharon is retired now, but her inspiration lives on, through the many seedy event. Dan Jasons' Saltspring Island Seed company, founded in 1989, has an amazing diversity of heritage seeds. www.saltspringseeds.com Thank you to the hard working folk like Robin, Sharon, and many unnamed but not forgotten hands, for their far reaching insight and bright vision in protecting our seed supply for future generations!!

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Cottonwood Poplar

We walked out among the stunted river loving trees of willow, alder and cottonwood; over fallen logs, nurse mothers to ***turkey tail fungus**, around mossy maples with their adopted ***licorice fern** children hanging from their sides. We stopped to make an offering of gratitude. We turned our attention then to the flowing river, and talked of its place in the cleansing health of our mother earth. The river, like our lymphatic system, and indeed our entire circulatory system, cleans and purifies toxins from the environment. We are but the micro expression of the macrocosm, a reflection of our mother earth. **When she is in pain we are in pain; and when she is sick, so we also will fall ill.** From there we spoke of our immune systems and the cleansing medicines growing all around us on the river's edge, and in particular; the **Cottonwood Poplar**.

This tree holds the balance between water flow and air; the circulation and the breath. It has a long distinguished history in medicine and is known by many names; black cottonwood, balsam poplar, "Populus" the latin generic name for poplar; **"arbor populi", the people's tree.**

Cottonwood Poplar at a glance

- Think Respiratory – air/Breath
 - asthma
 - lung congestion
 - colds
 - bronchitis
- Think Heart and Circulation
 - warming, reviving heart tonic
- Think Lymphatic – water flow
 - immune system boost
 - fever and flus
 - lymphatic cleanses/tonic



***turkey tail fungus** – look for it on old decaying logs, and around the base of old alders
Much research has been done on the tonic affects of this amazing fungus.
As an Immune system tonic in an age of auto immune disease, laboratory results have found it is packed full of the protective antioxidants needed for healthy immune response.
It is currently been studied as a potential cancer treatment.

***licorice fern** – found growing on the mossy old growth maples or alders.
It is an adaptogenic meaning it helps the body adapt to stress,
adrenal exhaustion, hormonal balancer, lung and bronchial congestion.

"Backwoods Basics is dedicated to the preservation of the Wild lands and her folk Herbal wisdom!"

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**Interested in contributing? Whats on your mind? Submissions in the spirit of this newsletter can be sent to: Sheila Wray or Backwoods Basics backwoodsbasics.info@gmail.com
604-989-8095 www.backwoodsbasics.ca**