

Backwoods Basics

2020 March Newsletter



***“ Treat the Earth well.
It was not given to you by your parents,
it was loaned to you by your children.
We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors,
we borrow it from our children.”***

First Nations proverb

Welcome to a New Year!

Spring: a time of renewal and Life affirmation. Yeah!! For me this winter season has been a time of transition; packing and moving, leaving friend behind; *I moved from the Cowichan Valley to the Sunshine Coast in November 2019*. Now unpacking, settling in, to a beautiful new home. But home in the Cowichan is still home to me. Knowing where to find my wild medicines makes it home to me. Thus I return often to old friends and foraging places. Still searching the coast though; from Langdale to Davis Bay, happy dance to find a willing patch of Nettles growing, still searching for cottonwood poplar. **Does anyone know where to find them over here?**

This is my first newsletter in quite sometime; Spring seems to be a good time for new beginnings. Hope you enjoy it! Blessings all and happy foraging. Sheila

The Nettles Edition

Ahh Spring!! There are so many rich nutrients springing forth at this time of year; dandelion greens, tender and sweet, chickweed and berry shoots, and not to forget the great gift to nursing mothers everywhere - Stinging Nettles! All of these wild herbs that I have mentioned are rich in calcium, iron, potassium, vitamin C, A, and in some, vitamin D and K. The deep wisdom of our Mother Earth in knowing just what we need this time of year, as we shake off the heavy slumber of wintertide.

Of the many great treasures, bursting forth in our woodlands each spring, is the Stinging Nettle! Aptly named, if any of you have met the Nettle as I met her many years ago. She will have left a stinging impression on you, as she did on me. It was many years back, in 1983 (if my memory serves), and I was taking part in a First Nations ceremony, called a sweat lodge ceremony. As many of you may be familiar with, and as the name implies, one is often overcome with heat during the ritual. As I crawled out of the sweat lodge, stumbling on shakey legs, I collapsed in a bed of stinging nettle. And this is how I first made the acquaintance of this great and powerful healing plant.

Stinging Nettles

recognizable by its rich green shade, sometimes with a purple tint to the center leaves, a serrated mint-like shape, carpeting open woodland, damp river banks.

A pleasant milky spinach taste when cooked. Yes! It loses its sting when blanched in boiling water. Don't overcook; its loaded in nutrients. Juicing it is another way to get its fresh benefits, without the sting.

Nutrient Value: *rich in iron, chlorophyll, calcium, Iodine, also chlorine, silicon, magnesium, sulfur, potassium, sodium, and vitamins C and D.*

Tonic for the entire system! *Often called 'Land Kelp', it shares many of the same minerals as kelp, especially Iodine. An excellent endocrine system tonic.*

Mother's Milk

High in calcium, magnesium and iron; it is the ultimate woman's herb; as a young mother, I used it to build up my iron level after child birth and to ensure adequate supply of breast milk. When my daughter gave birth to her first, she struggled with breast feeding, the milk wasn't coming in fast enough. I made her a pot of Stinging nettle tea. One pot of tea and she had enough milk to feed six babies!

It was that quick.



Nettle Soup was a favorite around our house, collected fresh, or dried for use later in the season.

Nettle Soup

1 onion diced
4 garlic cloves, pressed or diced
1 stick of celery, chopped
1 carrot, chopped
1 potato, chopped, skin on
1 – 2 handful fresh washed *Nettles
1 cup cream (or coconut cream)
salt and pepper to taste

sautee in a cooking pot with a little olive oil first three ingredient, when onions and garlic are transparent add the carrots and potato and cover with water or stock. Simmer for 20 mins. til the potatoes are fully cooked, add the nettles, remove from heat. Let sit for ten mins. Place in blender with a cup of cream, my favorite is coconut cream, mmm. Blend and return to cooking pot. Add salt, pepper and a tab of butter to taste. Reheat gently – don't boil! Serve warm with melted cheese (optional) on top and good bread.



Backwoods Basics School of Wildcraft Medicine



new 2020 programs starting on:
April 25/26 in the cowichan
April 18/19 on the coast
Wild Nutrition & Digestive Health
Tree medicine: Alder

- * **Saturday: wildcrafting adventure to find spring greens of dandelion, nettles, berry shoots and more**
- * **Sunday: in the kitchen preparing a wild foods banquet and digestive tonic**

\$160 for the weekend Saturday/Sunday 10-3pm

For full program and registration details
check out "classes and Events on my website
www.backwoodsbasics.ca

Sign up for the full 7 month course and receive discounts and excellent monthly payment plans
Register online, phone or email me
backwoodsbasics.info@gmail.com



Calendar of Upcoming Events

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| March 14 | Seedy Saturday on the Coast (Roberts Creek)
25th annual event
11 am – 3 pm at the Robert's Creek Community Hall & Masonic Hall
Hosted by One Straw Society |
| 22 | Seedy Sunday in the Cowichan (Duncan)
10 am – 2 pm at the Si'em Lelum Gymnasium 5574 River Rd. Duncan, B.C.
Hosted by Cowichan Green Community |
| April 5 | Open House and Registration for all Backwoods Basics spring classes.
This will be your last chance to ask questions and get your registration in. Mark it on your calendar, facebook. Come on out for a complete overview of course material, a great social time to meet folks and decide if its right for you! <i>Website for location and details!</i> |
| April 18/19 | Backwoods Basics - On the Sunshine Coast
BwB will be in Roberts Creek with
<i>Total Immersion Wildcrafting</i> starting March 16, 10 am to 3 pm
<i>Just Medicine Making</i> on the Sunday, March 17, 10 am to 3 pm |
| April 22 | Earth Day |
| April 25/26 | Backwoods Basics - In the Cowichan Valley
BwB is once again back in the Valley!
<i>Total Immersion Wildcrafting</i> on Saturday 10 am to 3 pm
and <i>Just Medicine Making</i> on the Sunday 10 am to 3 pm
(exact location will be revealed, as soon as I know) |
| May 1st | Beltane Celebration of Fertility, life, vitality and JOY!
Come join me on a forest walk. <i>(details on my website)</i> |
| May 23/24 | BwB on the Coast |
| May 30/31 | BwB in the Cowichan |

Backwoods Basics School of Wildcraft Medicine is Offering:
New! Mini Drop-in Sessions this Spring/Summer
Family medicine and Nature First Aid
Children under 16 FREE
as long as accompanied by a parent
includes: Nature walk and wild plant identification
Folkloric teachings told through stories **Tea On the Front Porch**
with a discussion on folk herbal usage, remedies and kitchen cures.



Earth Day 2020

from University of British Columbia for Earth Day 2019
UBC Sustainability (sustain.ubc.ca)

“April 22, 1970, millions of people across North America took to the streets to protest the negative impact of 150 years of industrial development. Earth Day is now a global event each year, with more than one billion people in 192 countries taking part.

We are amidst the largest period of species extinction in the last 60 million years. Normally between one and five species will go extinct annually. However scientists estimate that we are now losing species at 100 to 1000 times the normal rate, with multiple extinctions daily. Multiple species will disappear before we learn about them or the benefits they bring to our planet.”



“When the Earth is sick and dying,
There will come a tribe of people
from all races....
Who will put their faith in deeds,
Not words, and make the planet
Green again....”

Cree prophesy

Let us be the Change we want to see!!

Food for Thought as we prepare to celebrate Earth Day ***and What is truly meant by the medicine of the Earth?***

Folk Herbalism carries with it greater relevance in our 21st C., ecologically conscious world today, than ever before, because it encourages and utilizes the local, regional folk medicine and traditions. *Why is this so important today?* Folk medicine emphasizes environmental sustainability and regional autonomy, the folk herbal approach renews our connection to the earth through wildcrafting, a spiritual and holistic method of medicine gathering. In this time of technological distraction, we are becoming disconnected from the earth and its life forces, it is time to return to the source of all life and health. Medicine gathering and folk healing are more than a time honoured, practical alternative to mainstream medicine; it is also a spiritual journey, a renewal and a coming home.

We are the dance of moon and sun
we are the light that is in everyone.
We are the turning of the tide
we are the hope that is deep inside.
And we won't give up the fight!

In solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en Hereditary chiefs and people that oppose the pipeline, and the Sacred Trust Initiative.

*In solidarity with the wild lands, the winged ones, the ones with fur and the ones with fins;
Earth, Ocean and sky.*

*For our children and our childrens children.
May we restore the balance in our generation.
All my relations.*

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****Again if you did not receive the original mailout from Backwoods Basics regarding Spring courses for 2020 and would like to, contact me at: 604-989-8095 backwoodsbasics.info@gmail.com
Help me get the word out please. Pass it on!**

Also a Call out for Submissions to Our Newsletter!

Send me your thoughts :

- Stories and experiences from the wyld;
- wildcrafting excursions and wanderings,
- eco concerns and environmental “hotspots”
- Personal feed back on content and focus of newsletter.

All gratefully accepted!

Keeping it real!! Let me hear your voice.

Photo of eagle thanks to Vidar Nordli-Mathisen

**Send your contributions to: Sheila Wray or Backwoods Basics
1540 Grandview Rd.
Gibsons, B.C. V0N**

backwoodsbasics.info@gmail.com

(I need to reserve the right to determine relevance based on the spirit of this newsletter)

**Contact: Sheila Wray 604-989-8095 backwoodsbasics.info@gmail.com
www.backwoodsbasics.ca**

