
MWSHS Newsletter

Autumn-Winter 2006

Student Profile: Marlene McKenzie

goldenspirit133@sbcglobal.net

When Marlene McKenzie, now a senior student with MWSHS, first discovered our Master-Herbalist program, she felt that she might be a natural for it, in view of her extensive background in the medical, horticultural, and natural sciences and her longtime interest in medicinal plants!

Time has confirmed that initial conclusion, she tells us, as she finds that she is really enjoying the program and learning so many fascinating things about plants and people and how they can help each other! As to specifics: "I really like the program's diversity and structure," she explains, "especially the detail--how things are broken down and analyzed--that's for me! I've always been very analytical!"

"I also like the program's practical emphasis. There are herbal programs out there that have not been developed by practicing herbalists, but this is *not* one of them! In addition, the fact that MWSHS is constantly updating and revising its material speaks volumes as to its dedication to its students!"

Marlene attended our "Assessment Skills" seminar in February of 2006 and tells us that she found the speakers to be most informative and that she really enjoyed being in the company of persons of like mind and spirit--people who truly love the natural world! "What I discovered from the workshop," she went on to explain, "was how much I still need to learn and how I really need to *practice* the skills I am developing!"

"All in all," she adds: "The school has been a real inspiration to me. It has stimulated me to become a real *doer* with herbs! For example, I've started my own herbal business, Earth Treasures, selling herbal salves, teas, and soaps. I'm also speaking to folks about herbs at various craft fairs. A current, on-going project is in helping my community to develop (continued. in column 2)



Assessment-Skills Workshop Slated for Feb. 3rd-4th!

On February 3-4, 2007, MWSHS will hold its annual Assessment-Skills Workshop. Lectures and practice sessions will take place for several important holistic assessment skills, including:

Chinese Tongue Analysis

Ayurvedic Analysis

Iris Analysis

Sclear Interpretation

Muscle Testing

Three highly skilled and seasoned teachers from MWSHS' faculty and adjunct faculty will be coordinating these presentations. We're sure that you won't want to miss this opportunity to learn and practice some invaluable assessment tools! To register, please see the registration form on page 7!

Student Profile (continued from column 1)

an 80-acre plot for growing organic produce. Last but not least, I am on the way to becoming a clinical herbalist!"

Asked as to how she has progressed so efficiently in the program and what encouragement she might offer to fellow students who are not progressing as well as they would like, she tells us: "*Regularity* in study is very important. I always study heavily on my day off from work. Studying in a quiet atmosphere is also vital. These are the key factors!"

Truly, Marlene is an inspiration to all of us here at MWSHS! We trust that she is an inspiration to you as well, dear students!

Inside This Issue

- | | |
|---|--|
| 2 | Workshop Credit Options--Nationwide! |
| 2 | Report on November Workshop |
| 3 | Winter Foraging--in the Northern USA! |
| 5 | Persevere in Study! |
| 6 | A Call for Student Articles/Book Reviews |
-

WORKSHOP CREDIT OPTIONS

Except where noted, all of the below-listed events qualify as Workshop (Course-Eight) credits toward the 2-year Master-Herbalist program. Each hour of *verified* attendance (per instructor-completed workshop-credit slips as supplied by MWSHS counts toward an equivalent hour of Workshop Category #3 credits (up to the student limit of 20 hours), unless another category is specified or unless one attends a particular workshop at one of these events that is *strictly* in one of these other categories. **MWSHS-sponsored workshops are boxed.**

Workshops, Conferences, Lectures, & Events in Herbal Studies Across North America

February 3-4, 2007. "MWSHS Assessment-Skills Workshop for 2007," **New Brighton, MN.** Interactive presentations in scleral interpretation, iridology, Chinese tongue analysis, Ayurvedic analysis, and muscle testing for herbs. This workshop counts as 11 hours toward category #1, Assessment Skills. *See the registration form on p. 7*

April 14-15, 2007. "Southwest Conference on Botanical Medicine," **Tempe, AZ.** For more info, call 800-252-0688 or see the website at www.botanicalmedicine.org/conferences. This workshop counts toward category #3, Misc. Workshops in Herbal Therapy (unless you take in some of the herbwalks offered, which would count toward category #2).

May 18-21 (Pt 1) & 25-28 (Pt2), 2007. "16th Annual Northern California Women's Herbal Symposium," **Mendocino County, CA.** Over 60 beginning, intermediate, and advanced workshops and intensives offered by local Northern California teachers! For more info, call 707-824-1429 or see the website at womensherbalsymposium.org.

Report on our Annual "Herbal Therapeutics" Held in November

On November 18th and 19th, MWSHS held its annual autumn workshop on Herbal Therapeutics, attended by students from near and far. Those assembled listened to, and participated in, presentations on "Tincture Making," "Ayurvedic Herbs: The Power of Taste!" "Little-known Herbal Powerhouses," "Blending Essential Oils," and "How to Create Herbal Formulas."

This was a real "hands-on" workshop, with students blending essential oils, making tinctures, tasting Ayurvedic herbs, and constructing their own herbal formulas based upon a template that was presented!

At the conclusion of the workshop, students evaluated the workshop, offering their thoughts, among which were the following:

"A plethora of information presented in an informed, concise, and pleasant manner"

"Very inspiring... these workshops always leave me wanting more."

"Very helpful and enjoyable"

"Excellent material--well presented"

"This is so excellent--it revs me up!"

In rating the quality of the teachers' presentations, the consensus of the students was perhaps best reflected in the comments of one of them, who wrote: "The teachers had wonderful energy and a real love of teaching. I really enjoyed the enthusiasm!" Those teachers included Amrit Devgun, N.D., C.A.P., a popular presenter at our workshops since 2004, and Mindy Green, M.S., one of the country's best-known aromatherapists and one of the founders of the American Herbalists Guild. MWSHS director Matthew Alfs also presented on three different topics.

Over lunch break, the students had an opportunity to get to know each other and to make new friends in common purpose! All in all, the consensus was that this was a most enjoyable event!

MWSHS Newsletter, Autumn-Winter 2006. Entire contents copyright © 2006 by Midwest School of Herbal Studies. All rights reserved. Printed in the USA. Any opinions expressed by contributors are those of their own and not necessarily those of the Midwest School of Herbal Studies. Articles on the use of plants for health are for educational purposes only. All readers are encouraged to see their professional health-care provider for illness or injury. Correspondence should be addressed to us by snail-mail at Midwest School of Herbal Studies, P O Box 120845, New Brighton MN 55112 or by email at MWSHS@aol.com.

Winter Foraging in the Northern USA

Matthew Alfs

This article's title may sound ludicrous: How could one possibly find living wild plants to eat during the frigid winters of the northern USA? Well, a friend once challenged me to do this very thing, after my bold proclamation that thriving wild plants could actually be found in mid-December—plants that one could eat right on the spot, and that without “defrosting.” I explained that some of these plants contain chemicals called glycerols, which serve as a natural ‘antifreeze’ to keep the plants succulent during the cold, winter months.

But, my friend was unconvinced and boldly challenged me to prove my claim! A friendly wager ensued, revolving around my needing to find ten wild-plant foods in a single hour of hiking. Not only that, but I had to eat them right on the spot! I was, however, allowed to choose the foraging grounds. And so, never one to ignore a challenge, I accepted, choosing a plant-dense region where I remembered a good number of candidates.

After disembarking my vehicle, we set out to round up some tasty winter fixins, with my mouth a-watering... and her stopwatch a-tickin'!

Blue vervain (*Verbena hastata*)

About five minutes into the hike, I spotted a colony of blue vervain at the edge of a marsh. “Here’s Number One,” I exclaimed! “What do you mean?” she asked, adding: “Why, the leaves and stalks are all dead and shriveled and our wager says that you can’t eat dead, brown leaves!” “I’m not going to eat the leaves,” I replied. “It’s the seeds I’m after.” With that, I gathered a number of seed-heads, thrashed them between my hands, winnowed the chaff, and plopped the small handful of remaining kernels in my mouth, chewing and swallowing them. “Though small in size, these seeds contain protein and fat for winter survival, and in a pinch one can make a hot cereal with them by stirring them into boiling water,” I explained.

Highbush cranberry (*Viburnum trilobum*)

Another few minutes into the hike and we encountered my all-time favorite winter wild food: the delectable highbush cranberry! Not a true cranberry, but a viburnum related to the healing herbs cramp bark and black haw, this shrub is dotted with ruby-red fruits that ripen only *after* the first frost. Incredibly, they remain on their stalks all winter long!

I voraciously sampled the tempting fruits, encouraging my friend to try a few as well. Though not finding them as mesmerizingly scrumptious as I did, she was surprised at how succulent they were.

Sumac (*Rhus glabra*; *R. typhina*)

Shortly thereafter, we came across a colony of sumac shrubs densely enveloping us from both sides of our narrow path. I carefully broke off a cluster of the hairy fruits and sucked them dry, offering my companion some as well. She was surprised at their vividly sour taste. I explained that one could swish these in water and strain the results to make a refreshing, lemonade-like drink, adding a bit of natural sweetener such as rice syrup if desired. “Their powerful astringency makes them a valued healing herb as well,” I added, “helping to soothe a sore throat, firm up loose stools, and even help prevent bedwetting in certain cases.”

Turkey garlic [Garlic mustard] (*Alliaria officinalis*)

Winter edible number four beckoned to us around the bend—the indomitable turkey garlic! Considered a pesky weed by weed-control agents (the very personifications of Satan, I assured her), it bore a taste quite in tune with its name—just like that of garlic! After sampling some herself, she freely confessed how this pungent plant might add zest to an otherwise bland salad mix, and I heartily agreed.

Canada Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*)

Spotting some dead stalks of Canada thistle—another villain in the eyes of those weed-control agents I so abhorred—I sensed what might be under the light snow at their beside, after viewing some depressions there. Gently, I whisked some snow aside to uncover a thistle rosette, fresh and green as the day was new! I pulled a children’s scissors from my pocket (always at my side during foraging hikes) and trimmed away the thorns on the leaf edges. Then, wide-eyed at the prospect I knew awaited me, I happily began chewing and swallowing the stripped flesh, savoring the taste of what has always been one of my favorite foraging staples.

Chickweed (*Stellaria aquatica*)

Amazed at what we had found under the snow, my companion was even more surprised when I uncovered a colony of water chickweed growing alongside our path. (I knew it would be there, from past hikes in this area!) I explained how this fascinating plant has sepals that close up over its flowers, often protecting them from the freezing cold of early winter and allowing the plant to grow undamaged for some time into the season. Between mouthfuls, I told her that this was one of my most oft-consumed wild foods and that its taste beckoned to me ever so powerfully! She remarked that that was quite evident!

Rose hips (*Rosa* spp.)

As we emerged from a forested area, we encountered shrub after shrub of wild roses. The “hips,” or closed-up flowers, were O-so-evident from their reddish-orange sheen and so we proceeded to collect a bunch of them, after I cautioned her to exercise care in view of the thorns. She decided to take some home to make tea, which she knew was high in vitamin C, in the hopes that it would help prevent winter colds. But, I chose to consume them right on the spot—not only to rack up “number seven” in my ten needed wild foods, but because I relished their taste when raw.

“Euell Gibbons once wrote an article on ‘How to Eat a Rose Hip,’” I declared, adding: “There’s a method to it, you see.” I directed her to watch as I used the nails of my thumb and index

finger to snip off both ends and then saw through the tough skin of the remaining fruit all around to produce two halves. I then scooped out the fluff and seeds in the middle and discarded them, plopping the shell in my mouth. We gathered a number of them so that I could have a quantity to eat as we walked along. She tried some, too, and liked them.

Juniper (*Juniperus communis*)

Rounding a bend, we encountered a number of juniper trees. I related a litany of medicinal uses for the bluish “berries”—which, I explained, are really the tree’s cones. Noting that they were edible and safe if consumed in small amounts, I ate a few, trying to convey to her the piquant, turpentine-like taste.

Wild onion (*Allium stellatum*)

As we began to cross a field, I saw a familiar seed-head with characteristically black seeds that confirmed the presence of a wild onion plant. I located a good digging stick and, after clearing the snow away, I began to dig out the bulb—which, though a bit on the mushy side, was still edible and palatable. Numerous other wild onion plants grew nearby and I dug up another bulb and offered it to my increasingly adventurous companion, who sampled it and declared it to be better than some domestic onions she had tasted. (I wasn’t sure if this was a positive comment or a negative one, but I didn’t press it.)

Carrion flower (*Smilax herbacea*)

Nearing the parking area and the end of our walk and with only minutes to go, I spotted some carrion-flower vines entangled with some other plants and shrubs. Sure enough, they still bore some of their characteristic round clusters of indented, bluish-black fruits. “Certain Indian tribes used to use these to make a gargle for laryngitis,” I informed her, as I chewed the dryish fruits (carefully, in view of their many, hard seeds) and swallowed them, trying hard not to let her know how unpalatable they really were!

But, no matter! I was elated at having successfully met the challenge of my doubting friend and introducing her to the joys of winter foraging besides! Really, who could ask for more?

Persevere in Study!

How? Why? When?

by Matthew Alfs

The ancient Oriental sage Lao Tzu once said: "The journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step." As a student of herbology, you are on such a long—and sometimes arduous—pathway. That being as it is, it is possible to get discouraged, especially with all of life's distractions. However, the reward for perseverance is great, namely, *illumination* of one of life's greatest mysteries: *the secret to health and long life!*

Truly, what wouldn't a wise person sacrifice for the knowledge of such? Jesus of Nazareth once emphasized the import of sacrifice for something precious by relating a stirring story of an insightful man who found 'a pearl of great price' and 'sold everything he had' to obtain it, knowing that what he was about to obtain was worth far more than anything else he already possessed. And what can be more valuable than vitality of body, mind, and spirit, and the ability to help others to preserve such in themselves? After all, such *wholism* is the basis, not only of the world's health-care traditions, but of its great religions and philosophies as well!

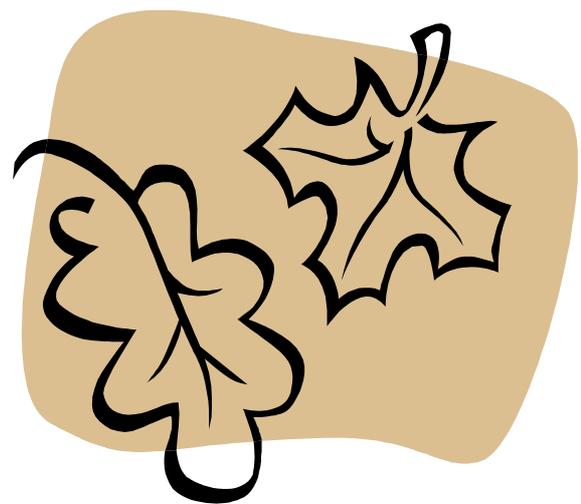
So, then, dear student, we encourage you to persevere in your studies, not letting mundane matters crowd out your time. After all, "nothing will ever be accomplished," observed the noted English author Samuel Johnson, "if all possible objections must be first overcome." Therefore, *set aside time for study*, and barring genuine emergencies, *use this time as planned*.

"But, how can I find that time in the first place," you might wonder? In asking those students who've moved along most efficiently in the program how they've accomplished so much, we've received some helpful answers, a few of which we'd like to share with you here, directly below....

"I devote half of my hour-long lunch break to study." "I take a brief nap after work and then have the workbook next to me on my

bed, ready to go once I awaken and feel renewed in mind and spirit." "I study first thing on Sunday morning when I wake up, as I'm not rushed at this time." "I click on a tape in the morning while getting ready for work or play one while driving to or from work." "My teenage daughter reads portions of the Workbook to me, or I listen to the tapes, as I'm washing dishes or folding laundry." "My husband and I read from the Workbook on Sunday mornings when we're not rushed." "I listen to the tapes while I work on my home exercise program." "I have a headphone and listen to the tapes while I garden or walk around the park. I keep a pocket notepad with me to take notes."

Whatever may work for you, we urge you to find your niche and work at it wholeheartedly! And please remember, we at MWSHS stand ready to offer encouragement or suggestions as you feel the need for either, or even if you're stuck somewhere in your studies and need some guidance. Such support is part of your student package, and we are only an e-mail or phone call away!



A Call for Student Articles

The *MWSHS Student Newsletter* is for you, the MWSHS student, and we would like your input and help in assembling the best possible vehicle for you! So, if you have something you'd like to contribute to the *Newsletter* (an article, news item, book review, or unique experience with herbal healing or herbal education), please don't hesitate to contact us for possible inclusion of that material into a coming issue!

Book Reviews

The Nursing Mother's Herbal, by Sheila Humphrey. Fairview Press: Minneapolis, MN: 2003. 355pp., softcover, index, resources, bibliography.

This long-needed book on herbal galactagogues and antagalactics comes from the pen of an experienced lactation consultant and R.N. who also consulted a variety of herbalists and ethnobotanists along the way. Offering a plethora of useful and balanced material on herbal use for the milk supply, it also provides information on attendant issues such as postpartum recovery, infant colic, fertility, and contraception. The concluding chapter offers this cogent thought: "During the twentieth century, modern medicine moved away from the traditional use of healing plants and began to view herbs as ineffective compared to scientifically produced drugs and medications.... One by one, herbs were dropped from the U.S. Pharmacopoeia, their virtues forgotten. Interestingly, herbs were not dropped because they were dangerous.... Rather, most herbs, being gentler or slower acting, were simply ignored and then forgotten. These gentle herbs have now become so unfamiliar to conventional medicine that they're often thought out of ignorance to be more dangerous than drugs—especially when used with pregnant or nursing women and children. The European view is somewhat different, as herbal therapies have remained part of mainstream health care there. Indeed, because herbs can have fewer and milder side effects than conventional medications, many European doctors *prefer* to use herbs with nursing mothers and children."

Kindly Medicine: Physio-Medicalism in America, 1836-1911, by John S. Haller, Jr. Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1997, 207pp., hardcover, index, notes, bibliography.

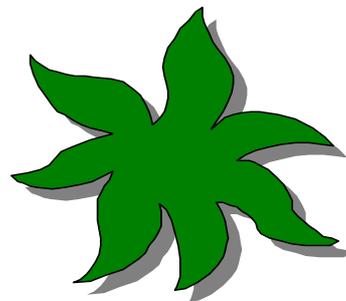
A scholarly, though somewhat dry, study of this important chapter in vitalist healing—so widely neglected otherwise. The Physio-Medicalists, a spin-off from the Thomsonians, practiced gentle herbalism, eschewing dangerous botanicals. They administered herbs based upon a system of energetics connected with observed tissue states. This fine study offers much of value and helps clarify a most important period in American and British herbal history.

Grandfather, by Tom Brown, Jr. New York Berkley Books, 1993, 202pp., softcover.

Tom Brown, Jr. burst upon the scene in 1978 with his first book, *The Tracker*. It related the inspiring story of how, owing to guidance from a wise Apache Indian elder, he acquired powerful skills in tracking and other survivalist techniques and how he used those skills to help others. Over a dozen books and a decade-and-a-half later comes this thrilling read on the life of Tom's Apache mentor: Stalking Wolf—leader, teacher, wild-foods expert, and medicine-man from a tribe that had fled to a remote corner of the wilderness while the government was herding area tribes onto reservations. Surely, this fast-moving chronicle of an ultra-wise healer's life will bring a new song to your heart! It is one of those rare classics that you will treasure and find yourself returning to again and again!

Tom Brown Jr's Guide To Wild Edible Plants. by Tom Brown, Jr. New York: Berkley Books: 1985. 241pp., softcover, index.

Instructive monographs on 44 plants, revealed to the author by his mentor, Stalking Wolf. Includes discussions of little-known or seldom-used species such as bunchberry, greenbrier, milkweed, & mulberry.



PRE-REGISTRATION FORM FOR MWSHS WORKSHOP

City of New Brighton's Family Service Center 400 10th St. N.W. Room #218 New Brighton, MN 55112	Cost: \$195.00 (for both days) \$175 if registered by Jan 13th, 2007 Payment by Check, MO, MC, Visa, AmEx, Discover
--	---

Student Name:..... Student I.D. #.....

Workshop Title: **Holistic Assessment Skills** Dates: **February 3-4, 2006**

Days/Hours: **(Sat) 11- 6** (w/1-hr lunch break, thus **6 hrs**) **(Sun) 12-5** (w/1-hr lunch break, thus **4 hrs**).....

Cost (\$195 for both days; or \$117 for Sat or \$78 for Sun) I encl. payment as: (Check) (MO) (CC)
If registered by 1/13/07: \$175 for both days; \$105 Sat only; \$70 Sun only

If paying by Credit Card, you must supply ALL of the following information in order for us to process. Note: Will clear as "Midwest Herbs & Healing."

Credit Card Number..... Expir. Date.....
CDC Code (last group of 3- or 4 digits in series of numbers on reverse of card <i>near signature strip</i>)
Digits of Mailing Address to which Credit Card Bill goes to:.....
Zip Code of same address..... Telephone Number ().....

Note: **You must be a registered MWSHS student to sign up for this workshop.** Student should bring textbook *300 Herbs* to workshop. It will be helpful, though not necessary, to bring *Course Three: Assessment Skill's Workbook* to the Workshop. (If not that far advanced in the M.H. program, you probably will be able to share a Workbook with a Course-Three student at the Workshop.)

Send to: Midwest School of Herbal Studies, P O Box 120845, New Brighton MN 55112

PRE-REGISTRATION FORM FOR MWSHS WORKSHOP

City of New Brighton's Family Service Center 400 10th St. N.W. Room #218 New Brighton, MN 55112	Cost: \$195.00 (for both days) \$175 if registered by Jan 13th, 2007 Payment by Check, MO, MC, Visa, AmEx, Discover
--	---

Student Name:..... Student I.D. #.....

Workshop Title: **Holistic Assessment Skills** Dates: **February 3-4, 2006**

Days/Hours: **(Sat) 11- 6** (w/1-hr lunch break, thus **6 hrs**) **(Sun) 12-5** (w/1-hr lunch break, thus **4 hrs**).....

Cost (\$195 for both days; or \$117 for Sat or \$78 for Sun) I encl. payment as: (Check) (MO) (CC)
If registered by 1/13/07: \$175 for both days; \$105 Sat only; \$70 Sun only

If paying by Credit Card, you must supply ALL of the following information in order for us to process. Note: Will clear as "Midwest Herbs & Healing."

Credit Card Number..... Expir. Date.....
CDC Code (last group of 3- or 4 digits in series of numbers on reverse of card <i>near signature strip</i>)
Digits of Mailing Address to which Credit Card Bill goes to:.....
Zip Code of same address..... Telephone Number ().....

Note: **You must be a registered MWSHS student to sign up for this workshop.** Student should bring textbook *300 Herbs* to workshop. It will be helpful, though not necessary, to bring *Course Three: Assessment Skill's Workbook* to the Workshop. (If not that far advanced in the M.H. program, you probably will be able to share a Workbook with a Course-Three student at the Workshop.)

Send to: Midwest School of Herbal Studies, P O Box 120845, New Brighton MN 55112

In Coming Issues

** Student Profiles*

** Student Articles*

** News & Views*

**Workshop Summaries!!*

Midwest School of Herbal Studies

P O Box 120845

New Brighton MN 55112

To:

First Class Mail