
MWSHS Student Newsletter

Summer 2009

Our Alumni in Action!

Marlene McKenzie, a 2008 graduate of our Master-Herbalist Diploma Program, writes to let us know about the diverse ways that she has been applying and sharing what she has learned from the M.H. Diploma Program and additional studies and experiences in herbalism....



"I have begun my long journey toward becoming a clinical herbalist registered through the AHG (American Herbalists Guild)," she tells us, explaining: "The process is quite extensive, but my motto in life is: 'Good things come in good time.' Basically, you mentor with someone you have picked from a list provided by the AHG council. I have interviewed, and will be working with, one of these mentors. I will need to do some 400 clinical hours (= seeing clients), all being documented and reviewed by my mentor. To accomplish this, I have set up a low-cost clinic at a large health-food store in my area. It is only about eight hours a month at present, but it's a start. (This is a rather large feat in our area of the U.S., which is not as open to herbalists and botanical medicine as are some other areas.)"

"I have also planned and created an herbal garden for a non-profit organization here that is dedicated to educating the public on the responsible use of open space. We have created a CSA (Community-Supported Agriculture) on several acres of an old cow farm leased from our town. We have a farm manager, and she asked me to create an herb garden. There are walkways in between them, leading to a central area. There are also small half-walkways into the quadrants so that one can have access to harvesting the herbs." (*Continued in Column Two*)

Last Wild-Plant Walk of Year on Sept. 13

On Sept. 13th, MWSHS director Matthew Alfs will be leading his last wild-plant walk of the year. (See details and registration information on p. 2 or on our website, www.midwestherbalstudies.com, under "Events.") Students are strongly encouraged to attend wild-plant walks so as to get to know the plants "up close and personal" and to meet fellow MWSHS students, faculty, and staff. Moreover, students who have attended previous walks have tended to comment on the pure enjoyment of these events!

First Graduate of Our New C.H. Program

Our congratulations are heartily extended to our very first graduate of our newer (since late 2007) program, the Western-Herbalism Certificate Program, who finished his studies in January, 2009!

Erik Powell, C.H.

We look forward to hearing more from Erik and to other, soon graduates of this same program as they apply their accumulated knowledge as MWSHS alumni! (Forthcoming graduates will be announced in future issues of the *MWSHS Student Newsletter*.)

Our Alumni in Action (*Continued from Column One*)

"I am also enjoying my own garden, consisting of vegetables, medicinals, and flowers. I have harvested many seeds from last year and have planted them this year. (I am trying to become more self-sustainable.) I have planted *Avena sativa* (wild oat), which is growing great! I have been using this herb myself and will harvest the milky stage for its CNS-restorative properties."

To the above, we say: Congratulations, Marlene, on working so diligently toward the realization of your herbal goals!

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WORKSHOP CREDIT OPTIONS

Except where noted, all of the below-listed events qualify as Workshop (Course-Eight) credits toward the Master-Herbalist Diploma program. Each hour of *verified* attendance 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

September 13th, 2009. “Wild Plants of Autumn,” Herb-walk with Matthew Alfs, M.H., R.H., director of MWSHS, at a nature area in the **northern suburbs of Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN**, 2:00-5:00 PM. Cost, \$25. Counts as 3 hours toward Workshop Category #1. To register, print out and send the registration form at the end of the current Newsletter or the similar form on MWSHS’s website at www.midwestherbalstudies.com, under the tab for “Events.”

October 23-25, 2009. “Herbal Medicine: New Possibilities for Primary Care,” 20th Annual Symposium of the American Herbalists Guild (Pre-Conference Intensives on October 22nd), **Santa Rosa, CA**. If attendee is an AHG member, cost is \$280 if registered by 8/15, \$305 if registered by 9/15, and \$335 if registered after 9/15. (If not an AHG member, the cost is \$325, \$360, and \$390, respectively.) Note, however, that a “student rate” is available for attendees who are members of AHG at this organization's "Student Membership" rate. (A number of our students have informed us that they are members of AHG at this special "Student Rate."). For further info and/or to register, see the website at www.americanherbalistsguild.com or call (203) 272-6731.

The MWSHS Natural-Therapies Clinic and Store (Midwest Herbs & Healing)

As many of our students are aware, a thriving natural-therapies clinic (or, healing center) is attached to the administrative offices of the Midwest School of Herbal Studies, which center is open Monday through Saturday, except for major holidays. (This natural-therapies clinic is referred to, from time to time, in both of our herbal-studies programs as the “MWSHS clinic.”)

Through the skilled services of six different natural-health providers, this healing center provides natural therapies to the public such as herbal therapy, acupuncture, naturopathy, massage therapy, aromatherapy, and holistic psychology.

Many MWSHS students have referred friends and relatives to this healing center, while yet others reading this information may wish to do so. In fact, in response to frequent requests from students for information on how to do so, we are happy to once again provide the healing center’s contact information, as follows: The phone number is 612-781-3006, the email is MWHRbs@aol.com, and the fax is 612-781-3054. Further details on the center—including clinician biographies and specialties—can be accessed via the its website at www.midwestherbsandhealing.com.

Also attached to both the natural-therapies clinic and the administrative offices of our School is a retail store (Midwest Herbs and Healing) supplying over 300 different, individual herbs (in the form of either tinctures, teas, capsules, solid extracts, or tablets), plus several hundred herbal formulas, vitamins, minerals, essential oils, books, and personal-care products. This store is open to the public as well as to clients of our natural-therapies clinic. Please note that *registered MWSHS students who wish to avail themselves of either a mail order or an in-store purchase from this store receive a 20% discount off of the listed retail price for any product stocked (except for consignment items = essential oils).*

The contact information for the store is the same as that for the healing center, as given above. The friendly and knowledgeable staff for both the natural-therapies clinic and the store stand ready to serve both MWSHS students and their referrals.

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Building an Herbal Reference Library—Part Two

by Matthew Alfs

Picking up from the previous issue of *the MWSHS Student Newsletter*, where I reviewed some books I consider worthy for inclusion in any herbal student's home library, I'd like to transition from my coverage of ancient Greco-Roman herbals and other herbal literature to similar works produced from the Greco-Arabic (Unani Tibb) perspective.

Greco-Arabic (Unani Tibb): Classic Works & Modern Interpretations

As the Arabs swept through the vestiges of the Roman Empire after its fall, they recovered the works of Hippocrates, Galen, and other Greco-Roman healers and incorporated the essence of these works into their own medical system, creating Unani Tibb (Ionian medicine), as discussed in the School's curriculum for Western herbalism. This system's greatest scholar was Avicenna, called the "Prince of Physicians." Unfortunately, just a smidgeon of his works has been translated into English. Foremost here is Laleh Bakhtiar's 1999 translation of *Avicenna's Canon of Medicine*, Vol. 1 (with other volumes hopefully to follow). Of great value to understanding this incredible work by Avicenna is a commentary on it by Mazhar H Shaw, *The General Principles of Avicenna's Canon of Medicine* (Karachi, Pakistan: Naveed Clinic, 1966).

Some modern interpretations of Unani Tibb that have been translated into English and can sometimes be found in North-American bookstores include Jamil Ahman and Ashhar Qadeer's book entitled *Unani: The Science of Graeco-Arabic Medicine* (1998) and G. M. Chishti's work, *The Traditional Healer: A Comprehensive Guide to the Principles and Practice of Unani Herbal Medicine* (1988). Both are useful, but especially the latter.

European Herbalism: Classic Works

In England, herbalism wound up becoming governmentally protected by the decree of King Henry VIII, himself an herbalist, in the year 1542, in response to the persecution of the herbal profession by medical doctors of that time. A plethora of herbals, materia medicas, and repertories followed, with one of the more famous and useful being John Gerard's *Great Herbal* (Dover Publications of New York, a longtime favorite press of mine, reprinted the complete 1633 edition as revised and enlarged by Thomas Johnson in 1975; a condensed form of the herbal has been reprinted continually by other publishers—a 1991 ed. by Studio Editions of England being one of the more recent).

The most widely appreciated work to follow King Henry VIII's charter, however, was Nicholas

Culpeper's amazing tome on herbal medicine, *The English Physician*, which has become the world's most widely distributed printed herbal until this very day and remains of great value to modern herbalists, especially those editions which contain Culpeper's "A Key to Galen" as an appendix (such as *Culpeper's Great Herbal & English Physician, Enlarged*, 1990, publ. by Meyerbooks, Publisher, reprinting the 1814 edition of Culpeper's works published in London by Richard Evans), in which Culpeper's link and debt of gratitude to the humoral diagnostics and therapeutics of Galen and his predecessor, Hippocrates, are well elaborated. (An excellent modern exposition of Culpeper's herbalism and its connection to Hippocrates and Galen is Graeme Tobyn's study, *Culpeper's Medicine: The Practice of Western Holistic Medicine* (1997, by Element Books).

A crowning achievement in British herbalism after the time of Culpeper was the 1931 publication of M. Grieve's *A Modern Herbal*, which was reprinted in 1971 in two softcover volumes by Dover Publications, which has kept this well-researched and written compendium of herbal information in print all the way up until the present time. The Dover edition is especially valuable because it adds an index to the Latin plant names that was assembled by Manya Marshall. (This edition pops up in used-book stores from time to time and can thus usually be found by even the semi-earnest herb-book collector.)

The great influence that the American Eclectics had upon British herbalism from the birth of the twentieth century becomes manifest in F. Harper-Shove's *Prescriber and Clinical Repertory of Medicinal Herbs*, published in the U.K. in the late 1930s, which is indisputably one of the finest herbal repertories ever produced! Long out of print and hard to find, I added this volume to my own several-thousand-volume herbal reference library in 2004, just after my personal efforts at compiling a repertory (in combination with a materia medica) was published in 2003 (*300 Herbs: Their Indications and Contraindications*).

Modern European Herbalism: Notable Works

Modern European herbalists have produced some fine works that should next be mentioned: The *British Herbal Pharmacopoeia*, first published in 1971-76 and revised and updated several times since, remains one of the finest guides to the clinical uses of herbs that I can call to mind.

David Hoffman, an herbalist from the U.K., has authored some particularly valuable works: These include his *Holistic Herbal* (first publ. in 1983, although the 2d

ed. of 1986 most commonly pops up in American used-book stores), his much-appreciated *An Elder's Herbal* (1993), and his more recent and mammoth volume, *Medical Herbalism* (2003). Other works of note by British or Scottish authors include: Mary Carse's *Herbs of the Earth* (1989), Penelope Ody's *Complete Medicinal Herbal* (1993) and her *Holistic Herbal Directory* (2001; being also a great resource for TCM and Ayurvedic herbal insights), and Simon Mills' *Out of the Earth: The Essential Book of Herbal Medicine* (1991) and his *Principles and Practice of Phytotherapy* (2000; co-written with Australian herbalist Kerry Bone).

Some specialized books on herbs for women's health by U.K. authors that I believe provide useful information and which pop up in North-American used-book stores from time to time should also be mentioned here. These include Elisabeth Brooke's *Herbal Therapy for Women* (1992) and Anne McIntyre's *The Complete Women's Herbal* (1985).

Some non-British, European works of value that periodically become available in American bookstores include Juliette de Bairacli Levy's *Common Herbs for Natural Health* (1974), Rudolf Fritz Weiss' *Herbal Medicine* (1988), Igor Zevin's *A Russian Herbal* (1997), and Ludo Chardenon's *In Praise of Wild Herbs: Remedies & Recipes from Old Provence* (1984), which details herbal formulas for a variety of health conditions that were passed down to the author, an herb gatherer and merchant, from his herbalist grandmother. (Zevin's book, mentioned just previously, also contains formulas passed down to him by his herbalist grandmother. This work also features a fine materia medica of Russian herbs.)

Native-American Herbalism

Many hundreds of books have been published on the ethnobotany of individual native-American tribes, the majority of which have enabled the reader to achieve a special insight into the medicinal-plant applications of the respective tribe discussed. (I compiled a list of quite a few of these in the bibliography to my own book *Edible and Medicinal Wild Plants of Minnesota and Wisconsin*, published in 2001 and now out-of-print, but due to be republished in a revised and expanded ed. in 2011.) The best of these were done by ethnobotanists, physicians, or other scientists who stayed with the tribes for some time and at least gained a semblance of their trust. (Otherwise, the sense has been that AmerIndian healers have typically been reticent to share their knowledge with outsiders.)

Some of my personal favorites—which either remain in print or have been taken out-of-print but were produced in such a high print run that they are often readily obtainable at used-book stores—include *Tom Brown Jr's Guide to Edible and Medicinal Plants* (1985; the author having been trained by an Apache-Indian

herbalist), James Herrick's *Iroquois Medical Botany* (1995), Frances Densmore's *Some Chippewa Uses of Plants* (1928; the 1974 reprint by Dover Publications being most commonly being encountered in U.S. bookstores, however), Gladys Tantaquidgeon's *Folk Medicine of the Delaware and Related Algonkian Indians* (1972), and Melvin Gilmore's *Uses of Plants by the Indians of the Missouri River Region* (1919; most readily available as a 1991 reprint, however).

A number of wide-ranging studies of Native-American plant healing as a whole have also been published, some of which have wound up as clumsy and ill-fated attempts at elaborating the length and breadth of a topic that would no doubt be quite difficult, if not actually impossible, to effectively tackle. Those that seem to have come closest to succeeding include Virgil Vogel's *American Indian Medicine* (1970), Daniel Moerman's *Native-American Ethnobotany* (1998), Charlotte Erichsen-Brown's *Medicinal and Other Uses of North American Plants* (originally put out in Canada by a small press in 1979, but reprinted by Dover Publications in 1989); Kelly Kindscher's *Medicinal Wild Plants of the Prairie* (1992), and Mildred Fielder's *Plant Medicine and Folklore* (1975).

Perhaps less impressive attempts at a wide-ranging elaboration have included E. Barrie Kavasch's *American Indian Healing Arts; Herbs, Rituals, and Remedies for Every Season of Life* (1999; a good overall study of native-American healing, but with much less emphasis on the plants than the subtitle would suggest); Alma Hutchens' *Indian Herbalogy of North America* (1973; reprinted in softcover in 1991 by Shambhala Publications and most readily available in that form)—which, despite what one would naturally infer from the title, presents a lot more valuable material about Russian uses of the listed plants than Native-American applications; Eric Stone's *Medicine Among the American Indians* (1962; a fair study of the various vulnerabilities used by the Indians, but woefully lacking in describing how plants were applied to conditions other than injuries or wounds); and Michael A. Weiner's *Earth Medicine, Earth Food: Plant Remedies, Drugs, & Natural Foods of the North American Indians* (the rev. ed. of 1980 being most commonly found)—which, although widely acclaimed in the popular press, provided only a spotty repertory of Native-American plant uses, often highlighting species that were used much less widely for a given condition than other species that wound up receiving no mention at all.

I hope the above summary has spurred you into searching for some of the literary gems I've discussed above! In the next installment of this series, I will highlight what I've found to be some of the finer books on herbalism written by the early-American "root doctors," medical botanists, Physio-medicalists, and Eclectics.

As H1N1 Becomes More Serious...

By Cristina Perez



Like many of you, I have been enjoying the summer by spending time in the garden and soaking up the sun. (Warmth is a transitory experience here in Minnesota, so I never let a beautiful day go to waste!) My family has been lucky so far in that we have avoided the H1N1 Flu that has continued to spread despite the warm weather and sun. But, now that the fall season is almost upon us, and kids will be back in school in only one month, I thought it would be a good time to see how the flu pandemic has been progressing.

Since beginning the research for this article, I have been surprised by the speed at which the information on H1N1 has been evolving. The new data seems to be a mixed bag of information: Some of it is alarming, but it has always been my philosophy that it is better to be aware and prepared than uninformed.

What Do We Really Know about H1N1?

The general consensus among those studying this virus is that it is not “acting” like a typical influenza should: What normally would take some six months to spread globally has taken only six weeks.

An international team of researchers led by UW-Madison virologist Yoshihiro Kawaoka recently published a highly detailed study of the H1N1 flu virus showing that the pathogen is more virulent than previously thought. This strain is acting similar to the 1918 and 1957 strains in that it tends to move deep into the lungs and even into the intestines, in contrast to the common seasonal varieties which tend to affect only the upper-respiratory system.

Currently, the majority of people who have been infected with this flu have suffered only mild-to-moderate illness. Health officials are closely watching the virus, however, as in *some* cases it seems to be becoming more severe. They are also concerned with the number

of people that will be impacted, expecting up to 40% of the US population to become infected over the next year.

Among those people who have been hospitalized or died from the virus in its current form, many have also suffered from underlying illnesses such as heart disease or severe asthma, but some have not. What is unusual about this virus is that the more serious symptoms seem to be disproportionately affecting pregnant women (who have altered immune systems) and people who are obese (a body mass index [BMI] of >40). (Note that obesity is not normally a risk factor for the seasonal flu.) Given that, according to CDC Statistics, 34% of the US population is obese, this is a story well worth following.

Immune Boosting is Key!

The best strategy for *any* flu season is to strengthen the immune system, which increases the chance of avoiding the illness. Even if a person with a bolstered immune system does get sick, however, the illness may pass more quickly compared to a person with weakened immunity.

Herbs, Food, & Supplements Noted for their Ability to Strengthen the Lungs, Immune System, and Digestive System.

1. **Panax ginseng.** Several scientific studies have shown that this Asian adaptogenic herb possesses the ability to strengthen the function of the immune system.

2. ***Cordyceps.** This is another Asian adaptogen that has been shown to strengthen immune function. Herbalists have observed that it also supports the function of the lungs, with studies even showing that it improves athletic performance. Since the H1N1 type of flu attacks the lungs more severely than other strains, herbs that strengthen the lungs strongly would seem to be most worthy of consideration.

3. ***Astragalus.** This is another adaptogen that has been shown to both boost the immune system and strengthen the lungs.

4. **Elderberry Extract (*Sambucus nigra*).** Hadassah University Hospital found that *Sambucus nigra* was effective against ten different strains of flu. It also cut the duration of the flu by 3-4 days. Elderberry extract can also be taken as a prophylactic. *(There is some controversy as to whether taking elderberry may increase the possibility of an inflammatory "cytokine* storm" in the body of a person challenged by this virus. According to Herbalist Paul Bergner, who has studied the cytokine-storm theory, recent tests on elderberry flowers showed that they actually inhibited the growth of pro-inflammatory cytokines. He concluded that there is currently no evidence that treatment with elderberry will aggravate Pandemic-type influenza. See his article on this subject in his journal Medical Herbalism, Vol. 15, No. 3, Winter 2007, via www.medherb.com)*

5. **Reishi & Shiitake Mushrooms.** Recent clinical studies on patients with cancer have shown these two mushrooms to be powerful antivirals and immunostimulants.

6. **Resveratrol.** A study by the Institute of Microbiology in Rome showed that resveratrol inhibited the replication of the Type-A strain of the flu. So, this may be promising—both as a prophylactic and when infected by the flu.

7. **Probiotics.** Because this flu attacks the intestines, improving the friendly bacteria in the digestive system would seem to be important.

8. **Cod-Liver Oil.** This oil contains three of the biggest antiviral and anti-inflammatory agents: Vitamin A, vitamin D, and omega-3 fatty acids. It is especially great for people who live in cold, darker, winter climates.

9. **Raw Organic Garlic.** The list of garlic's positive qualities could take up this whole article: It is a powerful antiviral, antibacterial, and anti-inflammatory.

10. **Oil of Oregano.** Recent studies at Georgetown University have shown that oregano works to protect against several bacteria (incl. *Staph.*) and fungi. It seems to be useful as an antiviral as well.

* A protein released by an immune cell in order to mediate an immune response. (See, further in the lesson on the Immune System in the Western Herbalism coursework.) —Editor

11. **Turmeric.** This spice is a powerful anti-inflammatory that may possess the potential to assist in avoiding/fighting the cytokine-storm phenomena, according to molecular biologist Art Ayers.



12. ****Neem.** This is a thousand-year-old immune booster that is an important herb in Ayurvedic Medicine. According to the National Institutes of Health, it also contains antiviral and anti-inflammatory properties.

13. **Vitamins A, C, D, E, Selenium, and Zinc.** These are all important, immune-boosting nutrients. (Much attention has especially been focused on vitamin D of late.)

14. Last, but not least: **Fresh citrus fruits and green vegetables** are some of the best mucus cleansers. (Avoid bananas and dairy products, especially if you get ill, as they produce too much mucus in the body.) Remember, too, that viruses feed on sugar! So, flu season is a great time to cut that substance out of the daily diet as much as possible.

**Contraindications: Astragalus, cordyceps and herbs that boost the immune system are contraindicated for patients taking immunosuppressant drugs such as azathioprine or cyclosporine.*

*** Contraindicated in Pregnancy*

Cristina Perez, a student of the Midwest School of Herbal Studies, works as an artist, designer, and writer. You can view some of her work on her website at www.sunlitartdesign.com. You can contact her via e-mail at Perezart@aol.com.

PRE-REGISTRATION FORM FOR MWSHS WORKSHOP

Student Name:..... Student I.D. #.....
Workshop Title..... Date(s).....
Hours.....
Total Cost Payment Enclosed: (Check).....(M.O.)(C.C)

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 *near signature strip*)
Digits of Mailing Address to which Credit Card Bill goes to:.....
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Send completed form with payment to:

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In Coming Issues

** More Student Profiles*

** More Student Articles*

** Book Reviews*

**Building an Herbal Reference Library: Pt 3!*

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