
MWSHS Student Newsletter

Winter 2012-2013—Spring 2013

MWSHS Profile: Alise Leguizamon

Alise Leguizamon had been studying herbs for years, but was not always proficient in their use: “As an amateur herbalist,” she explained, “I had learned how to make useful things like salves, tinctures, and herbal capsules; but all I knew about how to use herbs was that this one was supposed to be good for such and such and that one was supposed to be good for such and such. Yet, if I tried it on myself or others, it usually did not work well!”



Alise Leguizamon, C.H.

Then she discovered the Midwest School of Herbal Studies. With what result? “I decided to take the plunge from being an amateur herbalist to being one with formal training.” Now working on her thesis as her last requirement toward completing the Master-Herbalist Diploma Program, Alise appreciates deeply what she has learned: “Now I have the solid foundation I need to be able to match herbs to people properly. I have tools that serve me well. Now I can *really* help people and that is of great worth!”

Saturday, May 4th Is “Herb Day!”

What Will *You* Be Doing on that Day to Educate the Public about the Healing Power of Herbs?
(See www.herbdays.org)

What has Alise especially liked about MWSHS’ course materials? “I appreciate having printed texts to be able to hold in my hands, to underline, and to annotate. The supplemental CDs are great, too.” Indeed, with MWSHS’ course materials, one does not have to stare at a computer *ad nauseum* as with online programs, but can hold tangible workbooks in one’s hands: Real books for real people, not virtual books for virtual people!

She has also attended a number of MWSHS’ workshops over the last few years, with the observation: “I really appreciate the requirement for workshop hours because you really need some hands-on work before you go out there.”

As to how she proved successful in completing her coursework and in preparing for her exams, Alise tells us: “Keeping the overall goals of completing the Western-Herbalism course in about 1 yr. and the Master-Herbalist course in about 2-3 yrs has been a great motivation. Re-reading the materials helped me because the more I studied, the more I understood and the more motivated I was to continue to study for the first of the exams (Western Herbalism).” *(Profile Continued in Column Two)*

Mid-2012 to Early-2013 Graduates

We offer congratulations to the following recent graduates of the Western-Herbalism Certificate Program:

Bonnie Garoutte, C.H.

Tracey Kamm, C.H.

Janet Munson, C.H.

Carrie Stinson, C.H.

We also offer congratulations to the following graduate of the Master-Herbalist Diploma Program:

Mary Schmidt, M.H.

We look forward to hearing more from these graduates as they apply their accumulated herbal knowledge in real-life situations!

Comments on the “Herbal Therapeutics” Workshop of December 2nd

Attendees of MWSHS’ December workshop were abuzz with appreciation for the event! Here are some of their many comments:

“Very enjoyable, very informative: The 4 hours went by very quickly!”

“Fantastic! The information provided was great for herbal students of all levels.”

“Excellent workshop: The information was clear and to the point, presented in a step-by-step fashion.”

Have you, dear student, found opportunity to attend an MWSHS workshop yourself as yet? If not, why not take the opportunity to register for the next available workshop? (See page two of this newsletter for details.)

MWSHS Profile *(Continued from Column One)*

To do that, I had to rely on good old flash cards and I set a goal to study for one month to complete the test before my birthday. (I figured that that would be a good birthday present to myself!)”

Alise is excited to continue to apply the invaluable knowledge she has acquired in the cutting-edge field of herbal therapy: “Adult community education is very popular in many small towns near where I live,” she tells us. “I am developing and beginning to teach at a public school in Wisconsin. There is also a health-food store in a nearby community which has space for teaching and I may try that, too.”

We are excited to see how Alise continues to blossom as a world-class herbalist, like so many of our graduates!

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

April 7th, 2013. “*Holistic Assessment Skills*” Workshop. **New Brighton MN.** \$45. For more information, visit the MWSHS website at www.midwestherbalstudies.com and click under “Events.” Attendance at this workshop qualifies as 4 hours toward Workshop Category #2 (Holistic Assessment Skills).

Apr. 13th-14th, 2013. “*Southwest Conference on Botanical Medicine,*” **Tempe, AZ.** For information or to register, call 541-482-3016. For more information, www.botanicalmedicine.org.

June 13th, 2013. “*Medicines from the Earth Herb Symposium,*” **Black Mountain, NC.** For information or to register, call 541-482-3016. For more information, visit the website at www.botanicalmedicine.org.

"Where Do I Find Qualifying Workshops in My Local Area?"

This is a question we hear frequently from MWSHS students who live outside of the Midwestern USA, where MWSHS is located and where our workshops are held. Aside from the *MWSHS Student Newsletter*, which lists resources from around the country of which we become aware, you can check holistic newspapers that are available in many larger cities. In these areas as well as in less populated communities, you might check local, independently-owned health food stores and food co-ops, which may have bulletin boards or knowledgeable staff who may be aware of local teachers of holistic-assessment skills, herbal-medicine-making, or who may lead wild-plant walks. (Local nature centers, plant nurseries, greenhouses, horticultural clubs, and native-plant-appreciation societies may know of local wild-plant-walk instructors as well.) Finally, check the phone book for local naturopaths, herbalists, acupuncturists, and other holistic-health professionals who may be willing to mentor you on some of these skills.

Nov. 7th-10th, 2013. “*American Herbalists Guild Annual Symposium: 'Celebrating Abundance in Herbalism,'*” **Bend, OR.** For more information or to register, visit the AHG website at www.americanherbalist.com. There will be herbwalks available and attendance at these will count towards Workshop Category #1, "Wild-plant Walks."

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!

MWSHS graduates may also send us a calendar of upcoming wild-plant walks, lectures, workshops, or presentations that they will be doing for consideration of possible inclusion in the "Workshop Credit Options" section of the Newsletter.

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A Decade of World-class Herbal Education!

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An Interview with Matthew Alfs, R.H., in Celebration of the *Ten-Year Anniversary* of the Midwest School of Herbal Studies

With the dawning of the year 2013, the Midwest School of Herbal Studies celebrates a *full decade as a provider of world-class herbal education!* In recognition of this milestone, we reproduce below an interview conducted by one of the MWSHS coordinators with the School's founder and director, Matthew Alfs, M.H., R.H., in which he reminisces about the School's founding, its journey since that time, and its role in providing herbal education

Birth of a Very Unique Herb School

Q. What Prompted You to Start an Herb School and How Did It Come About?

A. In the late 1990s, there were very, very few herbal-education schools in the United States, although some older ones had been running in Canada (I had earned my own master-herbalist diploma from one of them.) The schools that were in existence in the USA at this time were primarily regional-oriented schools situated in small buildings on herb farms that were usually limited to offering classes on herb identification, herb gardening, and medicine making and not by any means providing a clinical-level education.

Seeing this sorry state of clinical herbal education, I resolved to change it: I envisioned a distance-education School, with periodic "hands-on" workshops, in which the serious herbal student could achieve a world-class education in *clinical* herbalism. With that in mind, I began to write a curriculum revolving around what I was envisioning: The first volume, published in 2001, consisted of a field guide and historical monographs on the medicinal uses of 100 wild plants (this went out of print in 2008 in anticipation of an extensive revision and expansion, due to be reprinted in late spring of the current year [2013] as *Edible & Medicinal Wild Plants of the Midwest*. Students and inquirers can obtain a copy, at a *significant prepublication discount*, by emailing the publishers—our sister company, Old Theology Book House—at Viskichi@aol.com.) The next volume was *300 Herbs: Their Indications & Contraindications*, which was published in 2003. This consisted of both a materia medica and a repertory of 300 different herbs from the Western, Chinese, and Ayurvedic traditions; it remains the textbook for MWSHS students to this day. Finally, and also in 2003, a Master-Herbalist Diploma program of over 1,200 pages was completed and published! This program focused on the clinical uses of herbs per body system, but also provided an education in the develop-

ment of Western and Asian herbal systems, botany, nutrition, holistic-assessment skills, herb-drug interactions, and the "ins" and "outs" of analyzing a case and developing healing strategies for such.

Once we found a site for our offices and clarified our exempt status with the state of Minnesota, we began distributing our educational materials to eager students in 2003, preparing and guiding these students to become world-class herbalists—to our great satisfaction and delight!

Establishment of the MWSHS Clinic

Q: What Occurred in 2004 that Enabled the School's Educational Program to Find a Real-life Outplay?

A: That was the year in which we established the MWSHS clinic (the Midwest Herbs & Healing center), an integrative, natural-therapies center that we attached to the School offices. Since that time, this center has grown to serve the public with, not only my own services as a clinical herbalist, but also the services of a naturopath, an acupuncturist, a homeopath, a massage therapist, a shiatsu therapist, an aromatherapist, and a holistic psychologist.

Since the founding of the Midwest Herbs & Healing center, those of us who work in the clinic have witnessed an amazing confirmation of the healing properties of herbs as outlined in the School program: Indeed, many *thousands* of sufferers of a variety of different maladies have embarked on a journey of genuine healing by means of the skillful application of herbs and other natural therapies by our seasoned clinicians!

At the present time, too, graduates of our Master-Herbalist Diploma program (not simply of our Western-Herbalism Certificate program) can contract with the School to do clinical observation in our clinic, per the guidelines provided in our *Handbook to Clinic Observation*, which is presented to graduates who so contract with us.

Vital Role of the MWSHS Coordinators

Q. What Role Have the MWSHS Coordinators Played in the Success of the School and of its Students?

A: They have played a vital, irreplaceable role! MWSHS coordinators grade student lessons, prepare the students' grade documents, assemble programs for mailing to new or progressing students, contribute to the *MWSHS Student Newsletter*, answer phone calls and emails from students and from inquirers of our programs, market our programs via phone calls to inquirers,

coordinate our workshops, manage student files, and perform countless other functions!

Our original student coordinator, Deborah Loveland, worked with me from 2000-2002 as a clinic assistant in an integrative, natural-therapies clinic owned by a university in which I was practicing (this was in Woodbury, MN), during which time we became fast friends. In 2003, she was kind enough to accept a position as a part-time coordinator with the School despite having worked full-time at another job. Deb and I still have fond memories of doing a skit at the School's very first workshop for the students demonstrating the proper *and improper* ways of developing a rapport with clients who seek one's services as an herbal counselor. Some of the lines in that skit were so humorous that we almost broke down laughing while we were doing it! (In fact, if memory serves me correctly, I think that we *did* break down laughing!)

Succeeding Deborah in that position (as she moved on to greater responsibilities in her full-time employment) was Sara Ruiz, who had also worked with me at the natural-therapies clinic in Woodbury. Sara came on as student coordinator in 2004 and served ably in that position until the last part of 2005, when she moved on to focus on finishing her schooling to become a dietitian, in which capacity she now serves in the community. We introduced the students to Sara in the Summer, 2004 issue of our *MWSHS Student Newsletter*, in which I wrote: "Those of you who attended the June herb walk got the opportunity to meet Sara: Clever, hardworking, good-humored, and soft-spoken, she has already demonstrated herself to be a tremendous asset to MWSHS, and we are very happy to have her on our team. Thanks, Sara, for the 'go-getter' spirit you bring to MWSHS!"

Succeeding Sara was Laurie Swadner, who has served most capably as Senior Student Coordinator since late 2005. Many of the current students know Laurie as their coordinator from her regular calls to check on their progress and to answer questions or concerns about student life (which is the aspect of Laurie's work here at MWSHS that she enjoys the most)! Laurie also served as office manager for our clinic until 2012 and was responsible for much of the clinic's growth and success (including keeping us all on time with our patients and clients!). Our debt to Laurie is *tremendous*, indeed!

Kara Carper came on as Assistant Student Coordinator in January of 2007, as the School was growing in leaps and bounds and additional help was needed to effectively serve our students. Kara, a licensed nutritionist, has done a lot for the School in our outreach to inquirers, as well as in grading student lessons, preparing many of the course-completion documents for the students, and maintaining student records. Smart, capable, and possessed of a very pleasant personality, Kara has been a wonderful addition to the team here at MWSHS! With her amazing talents, Kara also writes and hosts a radio show here in the Twin

Cities that is one of the most popular shows on the station on which it airs!

Joining MWSHS as assistant student coordinators over the next couple of years were Deborah Garrido (in 2008) and, eventually, Annika Christensson (in 2011)—both of whom continue to work diligently as assistant coordinators for the School to this day, as well as serving as clinic assistants in our natural-therapies clinic. Deborah and Annika are the School's chief graders nowadays and also prepare many of the completion documents for the students as well as assemble programs for beginning students. In truth, the School would not be able to function without these two, dedicated individuals! *Thank you so very much, ladies!*

Western-Herbalism Certificate Program Added in 2007

Q. How Did the School's Educational Efforts Diversify in 2007?

A. By 2007, we had been deluged with requests on the part of health-care professionals for a shorter version of the program that emphasized simply the herbs commonly used in the USA and Canada and excluding lesser-known herbs from other countries. Realizing that this was a reasonable request, we spun off the Western-Herbalism module of the Master-Herbalist Diploma program into a separate "Western-Herbalism Certificate Program" later in that year, which we designed to be able to be completed in about a year. This was gratefully received by health-care professionals as well as by many other busy persons who wished to focus on the commonly-used American herbs. Since this shorter program's inception, a goodly number of medical doctors, pharmacists, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, and massage therapists have studied herbal therapy by means of it, finding that they have benefited greatly by what they have learned. I want to shout out here a special "thank you" to all such healthcare professionals for making this program a very large success!

Later in that same year, we re-arranged the Master-Herbalist Diploma program so that students would proceed to study the various streams of herbalism *separately* and *successively* instead of *all at one time* as was done in the older version of the program. This adjustment allowed for greater focus and fewer distractions and was warmly received by our student body.

Thriving in a Tight Economy

Q. What Do You Think Has Enabled the School to Grow and to Thrive in This Tight Economy While So Many Other Natural-Healing Schools Have Bit the Dust?

A. While the Great Recession and its aftermath has been responsible for the demise of a number of natural-healing schools (most notably of late, Clayton College of Natural Health and the Global College of Natural

Medicine), the Midwest School of Herbal Studies has registered a *greater amount of students each and every year that we have been in existence!*

I believe that *our integrity and our transparency* have been major factors in our success as a School: For example, we've stated on our website from Day One that the reward that we offer is a master-herbalist's diploma (similar to a master-gardener's or master-chef's diploma) and not a master's-level degree, clarifying the difference in detail. Contrast this to some other natural-healing schools who claim to offer accredited master's-level "degrees" when in reality their "accreditation" lacks government recognition (in fact, there are *no* distance-education, strictly herbal programs that are government accredited in the USA) and comes only from "accreditation" mills that have been set up simply to offer such an empty backing to schools such as these! While we could have gone the latter route, we made the firm decision not to do so right from the beginning, feeling that it would have been deceptive and disingenuous.

These schools to which I've just referred are not listed on the educational resources page of the American Herbalists Guild (www.americanherbalist.com)—the first and major association of practicing herbalists in the USA—and understandably so. However, we have been listed on the AHG's educational page since our inception and have been for some time *a member school* of this prestigious organization.

I think that the *quality of our course materials* has also played a major role in our success as a School. All of these materials are original to our School, as mentioned in the first part of this interview, rather than being a mishmash of herbal books from a variety of authors (many of whom are not even clinical herbalists!) that lack any real cohesion, which latter case is true of so many other natural-healing schools. Students of ours who have taken coursework from other schools have consistently informed us that our section on holistic-assessment skills is the most extensive and well-presented that they have ever seen! Unlike many other schools, too, we offer extensive material on nutrition, herbal formulation, the "ins" and "outs" of using herbs when pharmaceuticals are being utilized, and provide a good number of actual case histories from our clinic evincing the healing potential of herbs!

Recent Developments and Objectives for the Future

Q. What Have Been Some Recent Developments with the School that Have Sparked Your Enthusiasm? Also, What Objectives Do You Have in Mind for the School's Future?

A. I have been excited about the establishment of our Student-to-Student Message Board and the many interesting posts that have appeared there by new and seasoned students. I encourage newer students to read through these—there are some really interesting

experiences and valuable lessons that have been put up there by a large variety of students.

We are also excited about the revision and expansion of our original textbook, *Edible & Medicinal Wild Plants of the Midwest*, to be published in late spring, as I have earlier mentioned. This book has 171 full-color photos of 100 plants in various stages of growth and close-ups of identifying features of many of these plants. The monographs for these plants concentrate heavily on the native-American uses of them. (I mention this because I know that the native-American ethnobotany is an especial favorite of many of our students.)

Another goal we have is to provide a *greater number* of *short* workshops in the place of the *less-frequent* and *longer* workshops that we have held in the past. Workshops need to be shorter, we have found, because people are more and more committed to work and other responsibilities than ever before and cannot afford to spend a whole weekend—or even a whole day—at a workshop, as they used to be able to do before the Great Recession. Yet, we have also discovered, they need to be more frequent in order to keep our fine students in regular touch with the School and *with their fellow students* and to enable them to practice the skills they are learning from the course materials more consistently.

Finally, on a personal level, I'm hoping that the next ten years prove to be even more enjoyable for me than the previous decade has been!

MWSHS Coordinator: Thank you, Director Alfs, for Your Insights on the Birth and Growth of the Midwest School of Herbal Studies! This Has Been Really Interesting!

MWSHS Director: It's been my great pleasure!



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