
MWSHS Student Newsletter

Summer 2017

W.H. Graduate Profile: Grace Watkins-Wright

Grace Watkins-Wright graduated from MWSHS' Western-Herbalist Certificate Program in early 2017. Yet, how did she begin her journey with MWSHS? "My daughter suggested that I take a local college course in herbal therapy taught by Matthew Alfs," Grace related, "as we had both expressed interest in herbalism as a healing modality. This initial coursework led me to enroll in MWSHS' Western-Herbalism program."



Grace Watkins-Wright, C.H.

"I was particular drawn to the independent study aspect of the program," she went on to explain, "combined with the workshops offering hands-on experience, as well as the field trips where we could identify a variety of plants in their natural habitat." She added: "I also appreciated being able to work at my own pace."

What sort of study environment and methods helped her to move through the program? Grace elucidated: "What I personally did was to designate a space strictly for studying my lessons. This space was surrounded with inspiring photographs and artist renderings of botanical prints, as well as all of my MWSHS workbooks. When I was in my study space, I never brought my cell phone with me, so that I could fully concentrate on the lessons without any distractions."

We asked Grace what occupies her time now, as a W.H. graduate: "Honestly, there are so many different avenues that one can choose as a certified herbalist," she told us. "Currently, with my business Herbal Options LLC., I work as an independent contractor with an Ayurvedic practitioner developing custom herbal formulas for her patients. This has led me to explore the possibility of working in herbal product development (everything from household products to bath and beauty). I am, also, definitely continuing my studies in MWSHS' Asian Herbalism program as I move toward my Master-Herbalist diploma."

What, then, is in Grace's future? "The future is difficult to predict in details," she notes, "but I do know that it is time for change in the way that public health is currently viewed. Although moving in the right direction, it would be nice to see greater cohesion between mainstream medicine and herbalism, with the intention of "doing no harm." I would welcome the opportunity to consult with any medical professionals in (Continued in Column Two)

We're Now on Facebook!

As of May 15th, 2017, we have a page on Facebook! You can find us by logging onto www.facebook.com and searching for "Midwest School of Herbal Studies." If you like, you can "follow" us (click "follow" under our main photo), in which case you will receive notifications when we post on the page (usually every weekend). By clicking "share" under our main photo, you can spread the existence of our School and of our postings to your friends. *We hope that you enjoy our new Facebook page!*

Late-2016/Early-2017 Graduates

We offer congratulations to the following first semester, 2017 graduate of the Master-Herbalist Diploma Program.

Pamela McNally, MH (MWSHS)

We also offer congratulations to the following first-semester, 2017 and last-semester 2016 graduates of the Western-Herbalism Certificate Program:

Nan Cicha, CH (MWSHS)

Suzanne Peterson, CH (MWSHS)

Kylene Seres, CH (MWSHS)

Lelia Thell, CH (MWSHS)

Grace Watkins-Wright, CH (MWSHS)

We greatly look forward to hearing how these graduates will use the knowledge they have gained from their herbal studies in the months and years ahead.

W.H. Graduate Profile (Continued from Column One)

bridging the health-and-wellness gap." Something else of great import to her, too: "We face critical threat to the environment, which directly affects the pollinators on which plant life depends. Therefore, I would be remiss, as a certified herbalist, if I were not compelled to take part in efforts to reverse these trends. On that note, my 16-year-old daughter and two of her classmates developed an app called "Pocket Pollinator" that can be downloaded for free from Google Play (<https://play.google.com/>). Using a cell phone to photograph various pollinators in various locations, valuable data is collected that is used by the University of Minnesota and Pollinate Minnesota. In this way, I become a "Citizen Scientist" and do my part in helping to track and reverse the damage to pollinators."

To all of the above, we say: Way to go, Grace!

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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

Late-July/early-Aug. 2017. "Wild-Plant Walk," by MWSHS director Matthew Alfs, at a nature area in **Falcon Heights, MN**, in the evening (7:00 – 8:30 PM). Date to be determined in mid-July via extended weather forecast to avoid the many heat advisories during this time of year. Final date will appear on our website in mid-July. This workshop counts toward Workshop Category #2 ("Wild-plant Walks").

Sept. 10th 2017. "Wild-Plant Walk," by MWSHS director Matthew Alfs, at a nature area in **Fridley, MN**, from 2-5 PM. This workshop counts toward Workshop Category #2 ("Wild-plant Walks"). Date tentative based upon weather.

Sept. 15th-17th 2017. "*Nature Wonder Wild Weekend*," North Bend State Park, **Harrisville, WV**. Experience the bounty of wild foods while celebrating the wonder of nature at North Bend State Park. Enjoy a full weekend of hikes, programs, and a wild foods banquet--a wide variety of events, including wild-plant walks that qualify for Workshop Category #2 "Wild Plant Walks." For more info or to register, visit the website <http://www.northbendsp.com/> or contact Wendy Greene at (304) 558-2754.

Sept. 29th-Oct. 1st, 2017 "Midwest Wild Harvest Festival," **Prairie du Chien, WI**. \$165. For more details, see the website at www.wildharvestfestival.org or contact organizer Melissa Price at wildharvestfestival@gmail.com. There are several wild-plant walk opportunities and a variety of teachers for this event, including Sam Thayer, author of *The Forager's Harvest* and *Nature's Garden*, two books we have previously reviewed in the pages of the *MWSHS Student Newsletter*

Oct. 13th-15th 2017. "*Sixth Annual Dandelion Seed Conference*," Evergreen State College, **Olympia WA**. For more info or to register, visit the website www.dandelionseedconference.weebly.com.

Oct. 5th-9th, 2017. "*American Herbalists Guild Annual Symposium*," **Silverton OR**. AHG Members: \$310 (or \$270 before July 15th), There are usually opportunities to fulfill hours for Workshop Categories 1, 2, and 3 at AHG symposiums! For more info or to register, visit the website www.americanherbalistsguild.com or call 617-520-4372 or email symposium@americanherbalistsguild.com.

Feb. 23rd-25th, 2018. "*Seventh Annual Florida Herbal Conference*," Camp Winona, **DeLeon Springs, FL**. Over 35 workshops, including wild-plant walks, which qualify for Workshop Category #2 "Wild Plant Walks". For more info or to register, visit the website: www.floridaherbalconference.org.

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Building an Herbal Reference Library

by Matthew Alfs, M.H., R.H., Director, MWSHS

Good herbalists appreciate that the science and art of herbalism has been shaped over many centuries by countless practitioners, all of whom were granted various degrees of insight into the remarkable healing powers of the many plants covering earth's surface. Of course, the chief way that this wisdom has been passed on to succeeding generations has been by way of the printed word—that is, in the form of *books*. In view of this, a good home library on herbal medicine is a *necessity* for the present-day herbal practitioner. Understandably, then, the School has received frequent requests for an article detailing the more important herbal books that a serious herbal student would do well to acquire. Below, then, appears just such an article, outlining the "best of the best" books available on medicinal plants....

General Herbal-Reference Works

Some of the most treasured and trusted works in this category include Andrew Chevallier's *The Encyclopedia of Medicinal Plants* (London: Dorling Kindersley, 1996, 336pp.), James Duke's *CRC Handbook of Medicinal Herbs* (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 1985, 704pp.), and R. C. Wren, *Potter's New Cyclopaedia of Botanical Drugs and Preparations*, rewritten E. M. Williamson & F. J. Evans (London: Saffron Walden and New York: C.W. Daniel Co., 1988, 400 pp.) These books not only serve as a wealth of information on the historic uses for each of the many medicinal plants that they cover in encyclopedic fashion, but also provide phytochemical data and summarize a wide variety of scientific studies, for which they provide the references.

Be aware, however, that while many books have been published over the last decade or so along the theme of "herbal medicine for health-care professionals" (meaning, in this context, physicians, physician's assistants, nurse-practitioners, registered nurses, and pharmacists), most of these have been only selectively researched (often lacking reference to the rich historical testimony on the efficacy of the respective plants) and are often laced with unsound conclusions. Moreover, most of them reflect a lack of genuine clinical experience with herbs on the part of their authors (ironically so, in view of their titles!). In this category, I would place books such as the *PDR of Herbal Medicines*, Varro Tyler's titles *The Honest Herbal* and *Herbs of Choice*, and Fetrow and Avila's *Professional's Handbook of Complementary & Alternative Medicines*.

General Histories of Herbal Medicine

One of the most widely appreciated books on the history of herbal medicine is Barbara Griggs' *Green Pharmacy*, first published in the U.K. in 1981 and recently updated, which discusses the history of medicinal plants from ancient Egypt up until the present day. Another goodie is Edith Wheelwright's *Medicinal Plants and their History*, publ. by Dover Publications in 1974.

Ancient Greco-Roman Herbals

A very readable English translation of Hippocrates' writings by J. Chadwick is still in print as an inexpensive paperback edition by the Penguin Classics (as *The Hippocratic Writings*). Dioscorides' famous herbal of the first century C.E. was translated by John Goodyear in 1655 and edited by Robert Gunther and published in Oxford in 1959. However, as the English in this translation is quite out-of-date and difficult to understand for a modern reader, one can be thankful that a more modern rendition is said to be in the works.

An English translation of second-century Greek physician Soranus' interesting writings on gynecology (in which he discussed many herbal remedies) was made by Owsei Temkin in 1956 and published as *Soranus' Gynecology*. A paperback edition was published by the Johns Hopkins Univ. Press in 1991, which is still in print.

An English translation of Celsus' *De Medicina* ("On Medicine") was made by W. G. Spencer in 1938 and has been in print by the Loeb Classical Library for some time. (It was also reprinted in 1989 by the Classics of Medicine Library in a beautifully bound form, with a raised spine, of which I am a proud owner!)

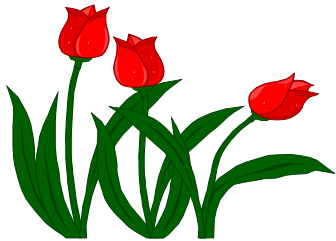
Pliny the Elder's extensive encyclopedia of natural history was translated into English by W. H. S. Jones in 1938 and has long been available from the Loeb Classical Library in the form of the English translation facing the Latin text, but may have recently gone out of print (as far as I can tell). (Note that only Books 24-27 of the *Natural History* discuss medicinal plants in any depth.)

A fine resource on ancient Greco-Roman herbalism in general is *A Pompeian Herbal*, by W. F. Jashemski, published in 1999 by the University of Texas Press, which covers individual plants used by Greco-Roman herbalists by way of monographs, each of which quotes choice selections from the ancient Greco-Roman authors.

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, until recently, just a smidgeon of his works had been translated into English. Now, however, we have Ms. Laleh Bakhtiar's English translation of *Avicenna's Canon of Medicine*, in 5 vols! The two volumes of greatest interest to herbalists are Vol. 2 ("Natural Pharmaceuticals") and Vol. 5 ("Pharmacopia"). (See www.kazi.org for ordering info). Of great value in 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 repertoires 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, a publisher that 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 repertoires 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 best 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 wonderful *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.)

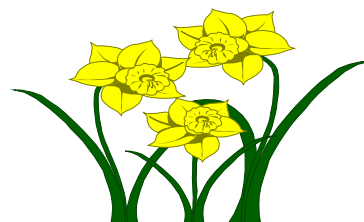
Native-American Herbalism

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 the Midwest*, published in 2013.) 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).

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 Kavash'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 Herbage 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 vulneraries 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.



Early-American Medical Botanists

All of the works in this category are long out-of-print and hard to find, but some may be obtainable through interlibrary loan. The most important is the 2-vol. set by Constantine Rafinesque entitled *Medical Flora* (1828-30), which is referred to repeatedly in the MWSHS coursework. Rumor has been that it is slated to be reprinted, but I haven't discovered that to occur as yet.

American Physio-medicalism

Probably the most important Physio-medicalist work for modern Western herbalists is *Herbal Medication*, by A. W. Priest and L. R. Priest, publ. in the U.K. in 1982. This magnificent work is designed for clinical application and reflects great knowledge and experience on the part of its authors. Sadly, it had been out-of-print for some years and hard to find on the used-book market, leaving interlibrary loan as the best resource for acquiring it until recently, when it was reprinted—currently being available from the National Institute of Medical Herbalists in Great Britain (www.nimh.org.uk).

A more recent work of value is *Herbal Medicine: Keys to Physio-medicalism, including Pharmacopoeia*, by Christopher Menzies-Trull, 2003, published in the U.K. (since, of course, Physio-medicalism only survives there to any great extent these days). It is currently out of print and hard to find (and expensive, when it is found!).

A Physio-medicalist work that is not too hard to find on the used-book market and still one of the best, is R. Swinburne Clymer's *Nature's Healing Agents*, published initially in hardcover in the first half of the 20th century but reprinted in 1997 by Meyerbooks in a softcover edition. (Clymer called himself a "Natura" physician—a term that he even legally protected—although he was trained as a Physio-medicalist.)

Unfortunately, though, most of the classic works by the nineteenth-century American Physio-medicalists (those by Cook, Lyle, etc.—all quoted often in our Western-Herbalism coursework) are out-of-print and very hard to find on the used-book market, although some of these are available via internet sites or databases. An exception is Thurston's *Philosophy of Physio-medicalism*, which is now available as a reprint through at least two different print-on-demand [POD] sources.)

American Eclecticism

Of the voluminous works produced by the American Eclectics, those that are probably most applicable to the modern herbalist's practice are Finley Ellingwood's *American Materia Medica, Therapeutics, and Pharmacognosy* (1915; reprinted by Eclectic Medical Pubns., in 1983), Felter & Lloyd's revision and expansion of King's *American Dispensatory* (1906; reprinted by Eclectic Medical Pubns., in 1982); John William Fyfe's *Specific Diagnosis and Specific Medicine* (1909, rev. in 1922); Rollah Thomas' *The Eclectic Practice of Medicine* (1907); J. M. Scudder's *Eclectic Materia Medica & Therapeutics* (1898); and Eli Jones' *Definite Medication* (1911, recently reprinted in softcover, however, by Kessinger Publishing Co. of Kila, MT). An especial favorite of mine is the little 'vest-pocket,' paperbound guide to specific medicines compiled by Joseph S. Niederkorn and entitled *A Handy Reference Book* (publ. in Cincinnati in 1905). This is a nice, quick-reference guide to specific

indications for herbal remedies arranged by organ-system afflictions. (I can't remember where I acquired my own copy, but it became so frequently used that the cover eventually detached, requiring me to reattach it by invisible tape!)

Most of the abovementioned titles are hard to find on the used-book market, but often obtainable through interlibrary loan. Some, too, are available for consultation via various Internet sites or databases. (The M.H. program's thesis guide lists the most pertinent sites.)

American Folk Medicine

Some of the best books in this category are Clarence Meyer's *American Folk Medicine* (Thomas Y. Crowell, 1973), Judith Bolyard's *Medicinal Plants and Home Remedies of Appalachia* (Chas. C. Thomas, 1981), and especially John Crellin & Jane Philpott's detailed study of the herbal practice of the late, great Alabama herbalist Tommie Bass, (*Herbal Medicine: Past and Present*, 2 vols., Duke Univ. Press, 1990), as well as a more recent work on Bass and his herbalism by Darryl Patton, a student of Tommie's, entitled *Mountain Medicine: The Herbal Remedies of Tommie Bass* (2004). Please don't neglect to view the wonderful video on Bass' life and career at <http://www.folkstreams.net/film,83> (See the link from our Facebook page.) You'll just love it (and him!).

Modern American Clinical Herbalism

John Raymond Christopher's *School of Natural Healing (Secrets of a Master Herbalist)* has been a standard American text on clinical herbalism since it was first published in 1976. It is especially appreciated by those inclined to a Thomsonian perspective, although I can't think of any colleagues in herbalism who don't own it and refer to it. (I also own some of the videocassettes of Dr. Christopher's lectures from the 1970s: It is evident therefrom that his style of teaching was most appealing and really captivated his listeners. It was a sad day, indeed, when Dr. Christopher left this world on Feb. 6, 1983.)

California herbalist Michael Tierra is well-known and appreciated by devotees of herbal healing for his useful herb manual, *The Way of Herbs*, first published in 1980, although I much prefer his *Planetary Herbology*, first published in 1988, since it covers some of the more obscure herbs that *The Way of Herbs* ignores.

Western-American naturopath Sharol Tilgner published her *Herbal Medicine from the Heart of the Earth* in 1999. This book of 384pp. provides some useful information and charts for herbal students and neophyte herbalists, especially relative to tincture measurements, formulation, materia medica (with excellent references to scientific studies), etc. It contains an enthusiastic foreword by longtime herbalist and educator Paul Bergner, editor of the finest journal on clinical herbalism produced on American soil, *Medical Herbalism*.

Another naturopath, Francis Brinker, wrote *Formulas for Healthy Living* in 1995 and revised it in 1998. It is a concise and well-written guide on the clinical use of herbs for body-system support.

California herbalist and aromatherapist Kathi Keville wrote *Herbs for Health and Healing*, published in 1996. This book of 374 pp. is a well-written guide to the clinical use of herbs. (An earlier work, *The Illustrated Herb Encyclopedia*, published in 1991, is a well-researched materia medica.) Keville is the director of the American Herb Association and the editor of the *American Herb Association Quarterly Newsletter*. This quarterly newsletter publishes up-to-date herb monographs by Keville that might be considered updates and expansions to those presented in her herb encyclopedia, as well as herbal news items, herbal book reviews, and other useful features.

Wisconsin herbalist Matthew Wood's books are much appreciated by many herbal enthusiasts, especially his *Book of Herbal Wisdom* (1997) and his *Practice of Traditional Western Herbalism: Basic Doctrine, Energetics, and Classification* (2004). They are, however, influenced by nineteenth-century homeopathic principles, which pulls them out of the herbal mainstream that predates, by thousands of years, homeopathy—a system that many herbalists consider to be contrary in principle to the time-tested *allopathic* system of plant healing that has been utilized by every national group on the face of the earth since time immemorial.

Two, small handbooks on the clinical use of herbs by practicing herbalists of note include David Winston's *Herbal Therapeutics: Specific Indications for Herbs & Herbal Formulas* (2003) and Ed Smith's *Therapeutic Herbal Manual* (1999, 2003). I refer to these fine resources from time to time in my clinical practice and find them to be most insightful.

Probably the most clinically relevant of the books produced by practicing American herbalists, however, are the works of the late, great Michael Moore, who was director of the Southwest School of Botanical Medicine for many years. Among his best are his *Herbal Repertory in Clinical Practice*, 3d ed., 1994 and his *Herbal Materia Medica*, 4th ed., 1994. The detail in these books is remarkable and the coverage of obscure plants—all of whom were used by Moore in his clinical practice—is most commendable and helpful.

That's about it, however, for outstanding books on Western clinical herbalism in general (note that I have excluded specialized studies, e.g., women's health, veterinary studies, etc.) produced by modern American herbalists. This situation, however, begs the question: Does the scarcity of such texts perhaps point to a lack of depth in American herbalism? I leave that question to others to judge.

Physical Books vs. E-Books: No Contest!

by Matthew Alfs, M.H., R.H., MWSHS, Director

With the advent of digital publishing, virtual books—often called “e-books”—seem to have become all the rage. Yet, how do they stack up against physical books?

A recent survey from the Pew Research Center demonstrated that while e-books are gaining in popularity, only 23% of 2,252 Americans aged 16 or older had read a book on a tablet or e-reader over the last year, compared to 67% who had read a physical book.

While one might suspect that college students would prefer e-books to physical books as textbooks, a recent survey of college students by Direct Textbook revealed just the opposite: According to that study, 72% of respondents preferred a physical textbook over an e-book, stating that they like to highlight the text, that print textbooks are easier to read and that e-readers make their eyes hurt, and that they can't focus or concentrate when reading e-books like they can when reading printed books. (<https://campustechnology.com/articles/2015/09/01/survey-most-students-prefer-traditional-texts-over-ebooks.aspx>)

Perhaps this preference is also because students sense what a 2014 trial of 50 graduate students revealed: that reading a physical book fostered *better retention* than reading an e-book! But why would this be the case? One of the chief trial researchers, Anne Mangen PhD from Norway's Stavanger University, found that *the physical act of turning a page* and of *sensing the pile of pages to one's left and one's right* somehow cemented the book's information into a reader's brain. (See <https://www.shoppersbase.com/thinking-buying-kindle-read-first/>.)

This aspect of *retention* is why we, at the Midwest School of Herbal Studies, continue to offer our coursework in *printed* form—in the way of workbooks and textbooks—instead of producing it in a digital format as so many other herbal schools are increasingly doing. Indeed, we want our students to *master* herbalism (even as the word “master” in the “master-herbalist” diploma we offer indicates)! No doubt, this is one reason why MWSHS graduates show themselves to be *head-and-shoulders* above the graduates of those schools offering digital coursework, and this especially in the way of retention—for example, in knowing the specific indications for particular herbs, the Latin names of herbs, and the contraindications for herbs. And this is one of many reasons why we are *so very proud* of our talented and hard-working graduates!



In Coming Issues

* *Student & Alumni Profiles*

* *Book Reviews*

* *News & Views*

* *Informational Articles*

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