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# MWSHS Newsletter

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Summer 2008

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## Your Thesis: Which Topic to Choose?

As all students enrolled in the Master-Herbalist Diploma Program are no doubt aware, a thesis is required for completion of the Program. In this regard, many students have expressed concern about the topic to choose for the thesis. We say here: "Choose one for which you have a passion for both learning and sharing!"

For example, one of our students has had a longtime interest in herbal pediatrics and common complaints in that area and so chose for her thesis the topic "Herbs for Childhood Asthma." Another, who has a background as a chiropractor and was interested in musculo-skeletal conditions, chose "Botanical Remedies for Fibromyalgia." Still another, who has an interest in astrology, wanted to explore the connections that Nicholas Culpeper and other herbalists throughout history have made between herbal remedies and astrological signs and so chose this subject for her thesis. Yet another student, who has a passion for how adaptogenic herbs can support immune function, chose that subject as her thesis topic. So, again, we say: "Go with your heart and explore an area that you've always wanted to tackle in-depth!"



*Wood-sorrel (Oxalis), the  
Basis for the Irish  
Shamrock*

## March Workshop Report

On March 18th and 19th, MWSHS held its annual workshop on Holistic Assessment Skills, attended by students from near and far. Those assembled listened to, and actively participated in, presentations on eye analysis, pulse analysis, and muscle testing.

Students evaluated the workshop as a "plethora of information presented in an informed, concise, and pleasant manner," and as "very inspiring; these workshops always leave me wanting more." One student elatedly told us that "the teachers had wonderful energy and a real love of teaching.... I really enjoyed the enthusiasm." (Continued in Column 2)

## Mullein's Mighty Marvels

Senior student Marlene McKenzie recently shared the following interesting experience with us: "Recently, when my daughter's boyfriend was over at our home, I found my daughter rummaging in the refrigerator for my homemade cough syrup. She told me that her boyfriend was having trouble breathing and thought that the cough syrup might help. He had gone outside in the cool air and she proceeded to follow him with some of the syrup.

When he came back in, I asked him what was wrong. He said that he had bronchitis, and then went into a room with an open window. I quickly went to work and pulled my wonderful mullein leaf from the basement and made an infusion for 15 min. I then strained it twice (because of its many little hairs, which can otherwise irritate the throat) and presented him with a 10-oz. cup of the tea, telling him to drink it all. Half an hour later, he came back from the room with the open window and asked me the identity of the herb that he had drunk, as he could not believe that everything was normal again in his chest--he was truly amazed! I explained to him that mullein is an antiinflammatory and that it soothes irritated membranes in the chest. (As I had heard him expelling mucus while in the bathroom, I added that the tea is also an expectorant.) I was so delighted at his recovery, knowing that it was all due to mullein!"

## Workshop Report (Continued from Column One)

Over lunch break, the students had 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!

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## Inside This Issue

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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 (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. Note that *MWSHS-sponsored workshops are boxed*.

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

**Sept. 4-7, 2008.** “22nd Breitenbush Herbal Conference: An Herbal Infusion,” at **Breitenbush, OR**, with 30 different workshops on various herbal themes. For more information, call (503) 238-4513 or visit [www.breitenbushherbalconference.net](http://www.breitenbushherbalconference.net).

**Sept. 7, 2008** “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”). (See Workshop Registration form below, or you can register online at our website, [www.midwestherbalstudies.com](http://www.midwestherbalstudies.com), under the "Events" tab.

**Sept. 12-14, 2008.** “Wild Women Weekend,” False Cape State Park, **Virginia Beach, VA**. A 3-day event of wild foods and wilderness survival skills! Call Cameron at 757-426-3657 or email [cameron.swain@dcr.virginia.gov](mailto:cameron.swain@dcr.virginia.gov). This workshop counts toward Workshop Category #2 (“Wild-plant Walks”).

**Sept. 19-21, 2008.** “Nature Wonder Wild Food Weekend,” at North Bend State Park, **Cairo, WV**. (304) 558-2754. This event--an annual one since the days of Euell Gibbons, who used to present there every year--counts toward Workshop Category #2 (“Wild-plant Walks”).

**Sept. 22-26, 2008.** “Becoming a Gatherer. Hawk Circle,” **Cherry Valley, NY**. See [www.hawkcircle.com](http://www.hawkcircle.com) for more info. This workshop counts toward Workshop Category #2 (“Wild-plant Walks”).

**Oct. 4-5, 2008** “Fall Foraging Weekend,” **Caledonia, MN**. A weekend of wild-food foraging. For more info, email [sam@foragersharvest.com](mailto:sam@foragersharvest.com) or call 715-767-5826. This workshop counts toward Workshop Category #2 (“Wild-plant Walks”).

**Oct. 19-21, 2008.** “Sacred Plant Medicine,” with Stephen Buhner. **Charlottesville, VA**. Call (434) 295-3820, email [info@sacredplanttraditions.com](mailto:info@sacredplanttraditions.com), or view [www.sacredplanttraditions.com](http://www.sacredplanttraditions.com).

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#### **PRE-REGISTRATION FORM FOR WILD-PLANT WALK WITH MATTHEW ALFS ON SEPT. 7, 2008**

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:.....  
Zip Code of same address..... Telephone Number ( ).....

Send completed form with payment to:  
**Midwest School of Herbal Studies, P. O. Box 120845, New Brighton MN 55112**

# Proving Successful as an Herbal Student Despite Distractions

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 great 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. Consider: 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 as well!

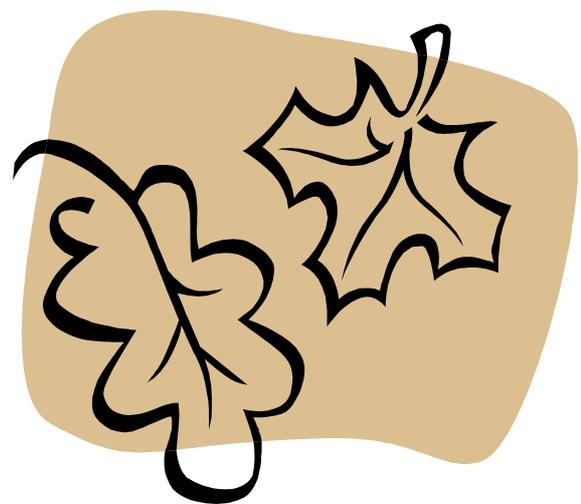
So, then, dear student, we encourage you to persevere in your studies, not letting mundane matters crowd out your time. After all, "nothing will ever be accomplished," observed the noted English author Samuel Johnson, "if all possible objections must be first overcome." Therefore, *set aside time for 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 that time." "I click on a tape in the morning while getting ready for work or play one while driving to or from work." "My teen-age 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 note-pad with me to take notes."

Whatever may work for you, we urge you to find your niche and to work at it wholeheartedly! Please always remember that 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!



## In Coming Issues of the MWSHS Student Newsletter

\* *Student Profiles*

\* *Student Articles*

\* *News & Views*

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**To:**

**First Class Mail**