Herbal remedies in four seasons

- Introductions
- Why herbal medicine?
- The seasonal cycle
- Seasonal energetics, self-care, and herbs
- Resources and questions
Why herbal medicine?

- Plants have powerful healing properties
- It deepens our relationship with plants
- It *can* be community-based
- It's easy to grow and wild-harvest medicinal plants
- It's part of our cultures and histories
Bioregional Herbalism:
We are embedded in an ecosystem

- The practice of sourcing medicines and remedies from one's local region
- Incorporates the ethics of sustainable use of plants and respect for ecosystems
- Balance between knowing/using local plants and respecting/protecting them
- Necessitates an understanding of seasonal cycles
Bioregional herbalism

Herbalism is based on relationship — relationship between plant and human, plant and planet, human and planet. Using herbs in the healing process means taking part in an ecological cycle. This offers us the opportunity consciously to be present in the living, vital world of which we are part; to invite wholeness and our world into our lives through awareness of the remedies being used...

-Wendell Berry
Seasonal patterns have a profound effect on our bodies and minds.

There are many parallels between the energetics of the season, the conditions of our environment, the cycles of plants, and our own bodies' patterns.
MICMAC ANNUAL CYCLE IN THE PAST

PERIOD OF ABUNDANCE AT THE COAST

COMPACT SETTLEMENT OF BANDS: (~200 people)

BAND COUNCILS & TRADE

FISH: Cod, Shellfish, Migratory birds

GAME: Rabbits, Squirrels

EATING: Berries, Fruits

MAY - JUNE

JULY - AUGUST

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER

APRIL

FEBRUARY

MARCH

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER

PERIOD OF DIFFUSION: Small Family Groups Hunting & Trapping in the Inland Everglades

BEAVER, MOOSE, CARIBOU

SEAL, WHALE

Semi-Nomadism

Small Family areas: Semi-Nomadism
Western Zodiac signs begin and solar terms begin within two days of the dates shown.
Bike Commuting: Seasonal Cycle of Pathos

- Summer: Hideous Sweating
- Spring: Brief Delusional Joy *
- Fall: Absurdly Freezing
- Winter

*Almost worth it.
Winter

Energetics: cold, slow, dark, low energy, grounded
Winter in our environment

- Growth is slowed / halted
- Animals hibernate or slow their activity
- Plants store energy underground in roots and tubers or in seeds
- Gardeners find time to reflect, plan, dream, and enjoy preserved foods from prior season
- Herbalists are processing herbs from prior season
Winter in our bodies

- Mental: Season of reflection, introspection, planning
- Energetic health patterns: cold, stagnation, depression, slowed activity, increased hunger
- Medical conditions: congestion, bronchitis, colds, flu, holiday anxiety, Seasonal Affective Disorder
Winter self-care

- Regular exercise and extra sleep
- Foods: roots, soups, stews, cooked foods, warming spices
- Cultivate laughter and community
- ACCEPTANCE of darkness, quiet, and the opportunity they offer for visioning and dreaming
Winter herbs

- Warming, moving herbs and spices: cinnamon, cardamom, cayenne, ginger, black pepper, horseradish, rosemary

- Stimulants: coffee, tea

- Immune tonics: elderberry, astragalus, reishi

- “Liquid sunshine” for the mind: lemon balm, calendula, St. John's wort, mimosa

- Lung congestion: elecampane, hyssop, garlic
Add to a mason jar:
- 1 cup chopped garlic
- 1 cup minced ginger
- ½ cup chopped cayenne

Fill the jar with apple cider vinegar, and let sit for one month before straining and using. That's it!

Optional additions: turmeric, rosemary, horseradish, oregano, elderberry, honey...whatever you like! Traditional remedies are meant to be tweaked and shared, not trademarked for profit.
Spring

Energetics: upward- and forward motion, growth, excitation
The Spring environment

- Plants begin vigorous upward growth
- Animals mate and/or give birth
- Gardeners sow seeds, plant seedlings, till soil, deal with sudden weed growth
- Herbalists harvest young leaves, shoots, & roots
Spring in our bodies

- Mental: excitement, restlessness, joy, anger, creativity, shift from planning to doing OR resistance to change

- Energetic health patterns: phlegm/dampness, irritability, increased libido, liver disharmonies

- Medical conditions: seasonal allergies, cold/flu, congestion, injuries from increased activity
Self-care in Spring

- Gratitude for the return of warmth and light
- Foods: bitters and fresh young greens
- Enjoy outdoor time
- Put plans into action!
- Good time for “cleanse” if you are a believer in that sort of thing
Herbs in Spring

- Acute allergies: ragweed, goldenrod, nettles, aster
- Stinging nettles and other fresh spring greens
- Bitter, drying herbs for phlegm and sinus congestion: barberry, goldenseal (cultivated only!!)
- Liver support: dandelion, burdock, artichoke leaf
- Immune support: yarrow, echinacea, boneset, bee balm

Photo by Tyler Grigsby
Summer

Energetics: heat, transformation, vitality, fruition
The Summer environment

- Plants produce flowers and fruits, leaf growth slows
- Heat and water are dominant influences on life
- Gardens' most productive time: focus on balance, harvest, and fruition
- Herbalists harvest leaves, flowers, fruits
Summer in our bodies

- Mental: celebration, creativity, productivity, activity; anger, irritability
- Dominant energetic health pattern: heat
- Medical conditions: inflammation, sunburn, insomnia, skin rashes, heat exhaustion
Self-care in Summer

- Cooling foods: cucumber, melons, citrus, berries, salads, mint, raw foods; cooling bitter greens
- Find balance between activity and rest
- Hydration, sun protection, and swimming!
Herbs for Summer

- Cooling herbal iced teas: peppermint, lemon balm
- Anxiolytics: california poppy, passionflower, skullcap
- Cooling anti-inflammatories: meadowsweet, willow
- Topical herbs for sunburn: tea, rose, plantain, jewelweed
- Detoxifying herbs: burdock, smilax, sassafrass

Photo by Tyler Grigsby
Autumn

Energetics: dry, cool, downward motion
The Autumn environment

- Season of harvest, preparation, and storing
- Plants move resources down into roots or complete their life cycles
- Animals prepare food stores for winter
- Gardeners harvest fall crops, prepare beds for winter, and preserve the harvest for storage
- Herbalists dig roots and harvest leaves from plants that have recovered from the heat of summer
Autumn in our bodies

- Mental: grief, longing, nostalgia, and letting go
- Dominant energetic health patterns: cool, dry
- Medical conditions: asthma, coughs, allergies, eczema, constipation (dry conditions are exacerbated)
Self-care in Autumn

- Grounding, moistening foods: healthy fats, root vegetables, pears, apples, honey, mushrooms; pungent spices (rosemary, thyme, oregano, garlic)
- Avoid phlegm-producing foods: dairy, refined grains
- Hydration; humidifier for dry lungs
- Prepare for cold and flu season
Herbs for Autumn

- Moistening remedies: marshmallow, licorice, alfalfa
- Lung tonics: mullein, elecampane, thyme
- Grief support: rose, milky oats, holy basil, hawthorn
- Immune tonics: elderberry, mushrooms, astragalus
- Pungent herbs to clear phlegm: garlic, horseradish, oregano, onions
- Adaptogens: holy basil, ashwagandha, reishi
• Seasons shift gradually from one to the next-- a continuum of change instead of clearly delineated segments

• Everyone is different! People react to each season in their own ways

• Importance of ritual, celebration, gratitude, and community
Rosemary Gladstar – Medicinal Herbs: a Beginner's Guide (and other books)
Peg Schaffer – Chinese Medicinal Herb Farm
Matthew Woods – The Practice of Traditional Western Herbalism (and other books)
Thomas Easley and Steven Horne: The Modern Herbal Dispensatoryary
Leslie Braun and Mark Cohen – Herbs and Natural Supplements: An Evidence-Based Guide
Timothy Scott: Invasive Plant Medicine
Melanie and Jeff Carpenter: The Organic Medicinal Herb Farmer
Resources: websites

- United Plant Savers
- Toi Scott: queerherbalism.blogspot.com
- Michael Moore: www.swsbm.com
- Maryland Native Plant Society: www.mdflora.org
- Botanical Society of Washington: www.botsoc.org
- Jim McDonald: www.herbcraft.org/articleindex.com
- Henriette’s Herbal: www.henriettesherbal.com
- American Herbalist Guild: www.americanherbalistguild.com
- Kiva Rose: www.bearmedicineherbals.com
Little Red Bird Botanicals

Community Apothecary

- Locally-grown medicinal herbs
- Herbal wellness appointments
- Handcrafted herbal products
- Classes, workshops, and plant walks

Open Wednesdays 4-7pm or by appointment
2437 15th St NW DC in the Josephine Butler Parks Center
Herbal CSA
May-November 2018

Memberships are available for the 2018 season

www.littleredbirdbotanicals.com/herbal-csa
Upcoming classes:
Community Herbalism (April/May)
Herbal CSA (Monthly, May-Nov)
Plant ID and botany (May 5th)
Health-specific topics (see website)

www.littleredbirdbotanicals.com
Holly Poole-Kavana
littleredbirdbotanicals@gmail.com
(202) 726-1924
Instagram @littleredbirdbotanicals