

Greenwood Herbals

September 2005

What's blooming at Greenwood Herbals in September:

Astragalus
Calendula
Cardinal Flower
Echinacea
Great Blue Lobelia
Hops
Joe Pye Weed
Lavender
Obedient
Rubeckia
Sage
Tickseed
Yarrow

I have discovered that I actually enjoy weeding! It is a quiet Thursday afternoon, I am in the garden weeding and I suddenly hear the silence around me. No chain-saws, no lawnmowers, no tractors, not one machine is running. I can actually hear the birds, the wind, the insects. I close my eyes and listen to the sound of nature all around me. It takes me back to my childhood, when I would lay in the long grass and just listen to the buzz of the bees and the chirps of the grasshoppers and crickets. The silence around me is really quite noisy. I realize that my metabolism is slowing down to the plant level and I am inspecting my surroundings at microscopic detail. There is a vast assortment of insects all around me. Nature just goes on whether I am there to care for it or not. If I don't plant something in this spot, Mother Nature will. Nature progress's through the seasons on it's own schedule and if I fall behind, the landscape just moves on without me. Weeding has given me the satisfaction of bringing about order to my small corner of the universe. I realize that this is the perfect meditation for me. Someone walking through my garden might question my method of weeding. Wondering why I leave some weeds and pluck others. Looking at my lawn, one might think I need a good weed killer spread in the spring. My husband would agree. It has taken me many years but I have finally won this battle. My husband actually waits for me to harvest the lawn before he mows. My lawn is a field of wild food. You could survive by eating my lawn. It contains, Plantain, Sheep Sorrel, Dandelion Greens, Chickweed. While many wild greens are bitters (helping to activate the digestion), others such as chickweed are sweet and more nutritious. Dandelion greens has 14,000 IU of vitamin A compared to lettuce at 330 IU. I thought about writing about wild greens but realized that I would have so much to say that it would take up more room than I have in this newsletter. So I have chosen one to write about.

Chickweed— *Stellaria media*

Chickweed can be found through out the United States. It has naturalized itself wherever the white man has settled, becoming one of the commonest weeds. It can be found in any garden. The leaves are oval and smooth. The flowers are small, and white, blooming from March through the September.



Medicinal Properties of this plant are demulcent, and a refrigerant. Chickweed is a super food. It contains, 3 mg of iron, 30 mg of Magnesium, 20 mg of Calcium and 1000 IU of Vitamin A. It can be picked and added to a salad or dried and powdered to be added to a wild green powder (see this month's recipe).

Here at Greenwood Herbals, we use Chickweed infused in Castor Oil and then applied as a poultice for inflammation and for external abscess or cyst. We also use it in our salves and ointments for eczema.

It has also been reported to work on the metabolism and help with obesity. .

Mary Doherty and I took a walk through the woods in August and found the Rattlesnake plantain in bloom. This was a first for me! It was beautiful. We also found lots of Indian pipes, and I was able to harvest some witch hazel. We also found a patch of wintergreen. I returned a few days later to gather some of this plant. I want to make a wintergreen muscle rub. We had a good morning. I love taking people out and letting them discover the wonder of the plants and their uses. It is like discovering it all over again and seeing it through new eyes.

The workshop on medicinal salves took place in August. Everyone went home with two salves that they made from their own oils. Afterwards, we had a good time, drinking tea and discussing different oils and making creams opposed to salves. Everyone wants to come back for another class. This probably won't happen until October, as the harvesting is in full swing here this month.

Wild Green Powder—

Pick only undamaged, green healthy leaves of each wild green that is available in your area. Below are some suggestions:

- Yellow Dock Leaf
- Dandelion Leaf
- Chicory
- Plantain
- Nettles
- Mallow
- Chickweed

Dry the leaves thoroughly. Then powder them well. Store the powder in amber glass jars. To use, place some of the powder in a shaker-top jar and sprinkle on food.

Announcements:

- Greenwood Herbals is happy to announce that Sharon Deill Degiovanni, Artist/Herbalist of Norway, Me. has added new work to her selection at the shop.
- We are also featuring Vinegar Hill Casual Furniture designed and created by Richard N. Raymond. His furniture is handcrafted in his country cape in the woods, in an area once known as Vinegar Hill. He has graciously added one of his benches to our garden.

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