

Greenwood Herbals

September 2006

What's blooming at Greenwood Herbals in September:

Agrimony
Anise Hyssop
Astragalus
Boneset
Calendula
Cardinal Flower
Echinacea
Great Blue Lobelia
Hops
Hyssop
Jerusalem Artichoke
Joe Pye Weed
Lavender
Obedient
Phlox
Rubeckia
Sage
Tickseed
Yarrow

I attended the United Plant Savers Conference in Vermont, last month. The United Plant Savers is a non-profit education corporation that focuses on protecting native medicinal plants in the United States, as well as in Canada. Their mission is to help the plants native habitat and to ensure an abundant renewable supply of medicinal plants for future generations. I learned a number of things about our At-Risk-Plants in the United States. We are losing plants not only to over harvesting and development, but also to clear cutting. Did you know that it takes a forest 1000 years to produce an inch of top-soil on the forest floor? Once the forest is cut and the sun can shine in, the forest floor becomes hard packed and we start losing our plants, then the wild life. It is a huge cycle. I have witnessed this myself when some trees were cut on one of the property lines where the Pink Lady Slippers grew. Even though the trees were not cut on my side, the loss of those trees allowed more light in which seemed to cause a dwindling in population. It broke my heart.

I learned about different plants that I could grow and use in place of American Ginseng, Goldenseal, as well as a number of other plants that are quickly disappearing in the country. I was thrilled at this information, as I have not been able to harvest any of these plants here. I have not been able to bring myself to digging up these plants, so do not use them in my medicines. I've strictly used them for education only. When I got home I did a search on the USDA database to see how many plants were threatened or endangered in the state of Maine and 373 plants were presented on that search. Some of them grow prolifically in the Greenwood Forest but if you think about it on a larger scale and not bio-regional, this makes sense. I encourage anyone who has a love of these plants or use these plants for medicine or landscapes with these native plants, to check out their web-site, <http://www.unitedplantsavers.org>. I have also added their web-site link to the links page on the greenwood herbals website. So please check it out if you have a chance.

One of the most interesting classes I attended was the one on the Aralias of the Northeast, and how to propagate and grow them. These included *Aralia racemosa*: Spikenard, *Panax quinquefolium*: American Ginseng and *Aralia nudicaulis*: Wild Sarsaparilla. Amazing plants, all of them.

Wild Sarsaparilla— *Aralia nudicaulis*

Also known as American Sarsaparilla, this plant belongs to the Ginseng Family, and should not be mistaken for Sawbrier, *Smilax glauca*, which is also called a Wild Sarsaparilla but Sawbrier is part of the lily family.

These two plants are used medicinally for completely different reasons.



Aralia nudicaulis is one of the woodland aralias' of the Northeast. It is found in the moist woods, where there are mixed hardwoods and evergreens. It is a perennial and grows to about 2 feet tall. The leaves are twice divided, each of the three divisions have 3 to 5 toothed, oval leaflets. Three leaves are usually found at the end and the second two are opposite of each other. Flowers are found in a single umbel on a separate stalk, just below the leaves from May to July. This plant can be cultivated and started in cold frames, but are frost tender. They are much easier to start from suckers and can be planted in their permanent positions without worry of frost. The Greenwood Forest is full of these plants.

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Edible Uses: The rootstock is used as a flavoring and is also used for making 'root beer'. It is also used as an emergency food (usually mixed with oil, having a sweet spicy taste and a pleasant aromatic smell. It was used by Native Americans during war time or while hunting because it is very nutritious and sustaining. The roots can also be made into a nice herbal tea. Young shoots can be used as a potherb and the fruit can be used to make wine or jelly.

Medicinal Uses: *Alterative; Diaphoretic; Diuretic; Pectoral; Stimulant.*

Native Americans used the root as a beverage tonic. It was used as a blood purifier, lassitude, debility and coughs. Externally it is used as a poultice in treating rheumatism, sores, burns, itchy skin, ulcers and skin problems such as eczema. The root is collected in late summer and the autumn and dried for later use.

In the 19th century, this was one of the most widely used herb for Syphilis. It was used by the Native American Indians as well as the cowboys. I remember those cowboy shows and movies that we watched as kids! And here I always thought that those cowboys who came into the saloon and order a sarsaparilla instead of a whiskey were being good, when in fact they had probably just left the local brothel! Sawbrier, *Smilax glauca*, which is also called a Wild Sarsaparilla, was used in the same way.

New Products: We are now featuring Fairy Houses, Copper Wands, Copper and Crystal Sun Catchers and Unique Fabric Creations by Carol Hutchins of the Purple Angel. Come in and see her lovely creations.

Our apples at Greenwood are ready for picking. Tom is already anticipating the Cinnamon Apple Rings and has reminded me about them several times. So I thought I would share my recipe. It requires a dehydrator, but I'm sure you can bake them as well.

Cinnamon Apple Rings & Sugar.

Slice apples into rings about 1/4 inch thick. Dip the slices into 1 cup of water and 2 TBS of lemon Juice to prevent them from turning brown. Pat dry before placing in the dehydrator. Sprinkle with cinnamon and/or *natural sugar (powdered apple—see below). Dry 4-10 hours at 135 degrees. Until leathery or crisp.

*Natural sugar can be made by placing dried apples into a blender and powdering. It's great for sprinkling over cereal and toast too!

Announcements:

- **September 8, 2006-Pat Trotter will be presenting "Naturally Clean"** Learn how effective those 'antibacterial' sprays really are. Most importantly come to understand the outcome of long and short term effects these products have on you and this earth! See for yourself a simple solution of the alternatives to combat these issues and maintain a 'healthy' home and life, while sustaining the Earth. Program Cost \$20 plus a \$6.00 Material Fees to paid directly to the instructor
- **September 16th—Healing Arts Celebration Day:**
 - ~Herbs by Debbie Mercier of Greenwood Herbals
 - ~Craino~Sacral and Acupressure Bodywork - Nancy Cole
 - ~Flower Essences - Deborah Gideon, herbalist
 - ~Flower & Herbal Wreath Making - Alieda Raymond
 - ~ Do you know what is in your food? - Amy Bernard of Broake & Thumb
 - ~ Health benefits and crafting of fermented foods-Linda Routhier of Avalon Farm
 - ~ Healing through Art -Sharon DeGiovanni of The Root Seller
- **September 25 - "An Introduction to Herbs"** - Debbie will be teaching at the Old Orchard Beach/Saco Adult & Community Education 6:00 - 8:30 pm \$15. Contact: 207-934-7922 Monday through Thursday.

Take a fascinating trip through the world of herbs and explore, first hand, what they are and how they are used. You will learn about growing herbs; herbs that will grow in your New England garden; the culinary vs. medicinal uses of herbs and when and how to harvest, dry and store herbs. Sample lavender cookies and leave with new culinary and tea recipes you can make at home.