

Greenwood Herbals

December 2007

What's happening at Greenwood Herbals in December:

- More Classes
- Making Products
- Seeing Clients

The garlic has been planted, the gardens put to bed. This year we didn't cut the garden back. We decided to leave the plants and the seeds exposed for the birds and wildlife. Yes, it means more work in the spring, but that's okay. I wanted to move the elders that grow along the driveway to the open wetland, where the jewelweed grows. It is wet most of the year, as the little mountain behind it drains into it. It is perfect for them. Dappled shade, moist soil. Two years ago, when I returned home from shopping, to my dismay, the elders had been cut to the ground. I was horrified, but my husband explained that he needed to do it so the snow-plow could make it up to the house. He didn't realize they were medicine. He thought they were just little saplings of no importance. When I noticed that they were back this year, small but still producing fruit, I was overjoyed and promised to move them to the little wetland. Of course, time got away from me. I'm not sure it is such a good idea to do this in the spring though. Most will tell you to move, plant or replant in the dormant season. If all else fails, I will probably just start the new plants from the seeds next fall and move them to the wetland the following spring.

In the meantime, no one has said a word about any trees being in the way of the plow.

Elder — *Sambucus nigra or canadensis*

Elderberry is a small tree found in meadows, woodland edges, and sun dappled forests. The most prominent species is found in Europe and is known as *Sambucus nigra* or Black Elder. In North America, our choice of medicine is *Sambucus Canadensis* which is, a small shrub, found mostly in wet areas. There seems to be no distinction, medicinally between *nigra* and *canadensis*. They can be used interchangeably. It should be noted that there are more than one type of elder and the leaves, roots and bark can be poisonous on some elder plants. Elder flowers in June and July and in berry from August to September.



Edible Uses: Flowers—can be dried for later use to make a sweet tea or as flavoring for fruits, jellies or jams. They are sometimes used to make wine. The flowers can also be eaten raw.

Fruit—Cooked it makes a delicious jam, preserve, or pie. Dried fruit being less bitter than the fresh. It is often used to make elderberry wine.



Medicinal Uses: Elder has a very long history of household use as a medicinal herb and is also used by herbalists. The flowers and fruit are the main parts used in modern herbalism, though all parts have been used at one time or another. The fresh flowers are used in the distillation of 'Elder Flower Water'. The water is mildly astringent and a gentle stimulant. It is mainly used for eye and skin lotions. The dried flowers are diaphoretic, diuretic, expectorant, and pectoral. An infusion is very effective in the treatment of chest complaints and is used to bath inflamed eyes and it makes a good spring tonic and blood

cleanser. A cup of flower tea taken warm can stimulate and induce sweating. We combine it with yarrow and peppermint to break a fever. It can also be taken for headaches due to colds and for rheumatism. Cold tea has a diuretic effect. The flowers are high in Vitamin C.

The fruit is depurative, weakly diaphoretic and a gentle laxative. A tea made from the dried berries is said to be a good remedy for colic and diarrhea. The fruit is widely used for making wines, preserves etc., and these are said to

retain the medicinal properties of the fruit. We add the berries to our cough syrups, as they are known for their anti-viral properties. You could make a syrup of just elderberries and use it as an expectorant to relieve bronchial congestion or clear blocked ears. It is delicious and very nourishing in Vitamin A and C.

Other Uses: As a dye, the leaves produce green, the roots, black and the berries a purple coloring. The wood was once used to make pegs, needles and musical instruments, but be careful which elder you are using. Some species are poisonous

Folklore: Elder is full of history, myth and magic. It was believed that spirits lived in the shrub and so people refused to cut it down or burn it.

Our Winter hours are in effect. We are open Friday through Sunday 10 am to 5 pm. I can always be reached via e-mail or even a phone call!

Featured Product: Calendula Lotion—this is a custom product for one of our customers and we have been getting wonderful testimonials about it.

It contains Calendula Blossoms, Almond Oil, Coconut Oil, Aloe Vera, Beeswax, Carrot Seed Essential Oil and Vitamin E. 2 oz jar—\$9.95

Elderberry Soup

INGREDIENTS:

- 5 ounces elderberries
- 1 quart water, divided
- 1 1/2 teaspoons cornstarch
- 1/2 pound apples - peeled, cored and diced
- 1 lemon peel
- white sugar to taste

DIRECTIONS

Place the elderberries in a pot with 2 cups water, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low, and simmer 10 minutes. Remove from heat, puree in a blender until smooth, and return to the pot.

In a small bowl, mix the cornstarch with 1 tablespoon of the puree, and stir into the pot to thicken.

In a separate pot, bring the apples and remaining water to a boil. Place the lemon peel in the pot.

Reduce heat to low, and simmer 10 minutes. Remove peel. Mix the elderberry puree into the apple mixture, and sweeten to taste with sugar.

This was submitted by a customer—Let me know what you think.

Announcements:

- We are now accepting applications for the **2008 apprenticeship program**. See our web-site www.greenwoodherbals.com for more details and the application form.

Classes and Workshops:

December 8th, 1 pm to 4 pm, **Boosting your Immune System and Formulas for Winter Health**. Learn to boost your immune system and make your own cough syrup with Debbie Mercier. **Cost: \$35**.

January 13th, 10 am to 3.30 pm, - **Want to Lose pounds? "Lose to Gain"** This is not just another diet however. This is an opportunity to learn a lifestyle which will take off all those extra pounds. But in the process you stand to gain:- vitality, energy and health. Jane Kuntz, herbalist will be presenting this workshop and it will include lunch. **Cost: \$25**

We will be closed December 25th thru January 3rd.

