

# Greenwood Herbals

May 2009

What's happening at Greenwood Herbals in May:

Making Products  
Filling Orders  
Seeing Clients  
Getting ready for the apprenticeship 2009!  
Going on Vacation!

What's coming up at Greenwood Herbals in May:

Skunk Cabbage  
False American Heliboro  
Foam Flower  
Bloodroot  
Coltsfoot  
Wormwood  
Nettles

I'm writing this as I sit in Florida. It's almost the end of April and I'm wondering at this very moment what is happening in Maine. It's hot and humid here. The air is full of wonderful scents, blooms of Jasmine, Magnolia, Hibiscus and other tropical plants. It's wonderful and luscious to the senses, bringing back memories of childhood fun in Florida. It is also making me think about my garden and what is to come this summer. At the moment I can only guess and according to Harley, what may be *popping* in my own garden. On my way here I drove through different stages of spring. In Massachusetts, they were at least 3 weeks ahead of us, by the time I got to Virginia, the dandelion and pipsissewa was out in full bloom. In a matter of 24 hours, we went from new budding to the bliss of full blooms of tropical scents. I love road trips!! As we drove we couldn't help but notice the Kudzu. The plant that grows over everything, trees, houses, cars in the fields so that left unattended, in a matter of a year or two it is out of control. This is the plant that I have heard others refer to as the plant that ate the south. It certainly does seem to be out of control. I didn't know much about this plant as it is not one that I am familiar with in the Northeast, but a lot of people have called asking about Kudzu and Alcohol withdrawal. I started my research a few months ago just for this reason but found so much more—and then to see it in a full charge, creeping and moving over everything. Yikes!

## **Kudzu—*pueraria montana lobata***

An obnoxious weed that was introduced to the Southeastern United States to decrease soil erosion and as a foraging crop. Farmers planted it and even the Civil Engineer Corp encouraged its use up until 1953. It now covers approximately 7 million acres in the deep south and has been nicknamed "the vine that ate the south". Looking at it you would not consider this an exaggeration. It was once thought that Kudzu could not withstand harsh winter conditions but it can now be found in as far north as Indiana. It seems to grow well under most conditions and soil types. It grows rapidly, up to 60 feet per season (about 1 foot per day) and its large leaves can smother native plants, kill trees through girdling, blocking the sun and uprooting trees.



**Edible Uses:** The root is a staple food in Japan. The flowers can be cooked or made into pickles and the stems and young leaves can be eaten raw or cooked. Herbal Teas can be made from the leaves and jam from the blossoms. The young leaves can be cooked like spinach. The roots ground into a powder make a good substitute for cornstarch.



**Medicinal Uses:** This plant is being touted for its alcohol withdrawal capabilities at this time. Kudzu causes acetaldehyde to accumulate in the blood faster. So if you take dried Kudzu (in capsule form) with your first drink, you literally start feeling the hangover effect before that drink is gone. This tends to make people cut back on drinking excessively. What most overlook is that this plant is also an anti-

spasmodic, which makes it useful for muscle spasms, stiff neck and achy muscles. It is also a demulcent, diaphoretic, hypoglycemic and hypotensive. It is useful for IBS (Irritable bowel syndrome) as well as a liver tonic. It is also useful for angina pectoris and migraine.

**Other Uses:** The woody fibrous stems can be used to make textiles and paper or woven into baskets. It is even being used to make candles (it's related to the legume family (soy)). And is used in all types of scented products from soaps to body oils and lotions.

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**Classes/Events:** .

We are still accepting applications for the 2009 Apprenticeship Program—Registration deadline has been extended. Payment plans are accepted. Call the office if you are interested. If you need to set up a different payment plan than what is being offered. We will work with you. 207-793-3553

May 16 the 2009 Apprenticeship program begins.

May 16th is also the 2009 Master Gardener Plant Sale at the extension office in Springvale. I believe the doors open at 8 am. Mark it on your calendar!

May 31—Plant ID walk with Debbie at Greenwood Herbals. \$15. 11:00—1:30 pm Plant id books are optional. But if you wish to learn to key out a plant—call the office to register and we will recommend some books that we use. 207-793-3553

**Announcements:**

- Greenwood Herbals has now changed over to our summer hours. We will be open Thursday thru Sunday 10 am to 6 pm. Wednesday's by appointments.
- The apprenticeship program is starting on May 16th. Please get your application into the office, in order to receive the welcome package in time for the beginning class.
- Greenwood Herbals consultation form is now on-line for your convenience. You can fill it out on-line, and send it back to [herbalist@greenwoodherbals.com](mailto:herbalist@greenwoodherbals.com) or print it off, fill it out and mail it back to 561 Parsonsfield Rd. Limerick, Maine 04048. Once I receive the form I will call you to schedule the appointment.
- Consultations are \$65 for the first two hours. This does not include the cost of products.

**Spring Nettles**

4 cups of nettle leaf (cut the top 6" aerial part)  
Water  
Organic Butter  
1 diced onion  
Garlic  
Olive Oil  
Salt and pepper to test

Cover the leaves with water and bring to a boil. Cook over medium heat for twenty minutes. Five minutes before the leaves are ready, sauté' the onions and garlic in olive oil. Take the leave and chop them and add to the onions and garlic. Serve with butter on the tops of the leaves.

Keep your nettle plants harvested to encourage the stalks to grow new, tender leaves.