

# The Four Seasons Herbal Guild Newsletter



## Happy Spring!

Welcome to our Spring newsletter!

While things may look dead or dormant there is a lot happening “underneath” and just like our gardens this is also true with the guild. We continue to beef up the website and are about to launch our barter's corner (not yet named) so each of you that make and wish to sell herbal items can do so (or trade with others). We also are working through our 501c3 process which will allow members or others to contribute to the guild and get the tax deduction! In the meantime we are able to use the Herbalist Without Borders 501c3 for donations

## The Board

Your board members for 2021 are:

Mary Schmidt and Torie Foote - *Co-presidents*  
Cara Hagar - *Treasurer*  
Lily Jane Seitz - *Secretary*  
Carla Martinez - *HWOB & Garden Chair*  
Jessica Spurr - *Faire Chair & Newsletter*

We would welcome any other guild members that have time to join the board-just submit your name for consideration.

Many hands make light work!

## Community Gardens

Please contact Carla Martinez at

[perianthherbs@gmail.com](mailto:perianthherbs@gmail.com)

If you are interested in being a garden manager or other type of volunteer, have suggestions and/or ideas Carla would love to hear from you!

Thank you!

~Carla Martinez

## Social Media

We're on Instagram! Follow us @fourseasonshg for herbal knowledge, tips for staying healthy & guild updates.

And Facebook! Like/Follow us @FourSeasonsHerbalGuild

## Current Events

### Three Women Herbal Apprenticeship

It runs April-July contact Carla for more info (notice was sent out in last email).

[perianthherbs@yahoo.com](mailto:perianthherbs@yahoo.com)

### Microfarming Workshop (\$40-\$70)

with Micheal “Skeeter” Pilarski April 17<sup>th</sup>  
7213 N Regal St.

### Native Plant Walk (\$40-\$70)

Location TBA  
with Micheal “Skeeter” Pilarski April 18<sup>th</sup>

Classes are on a sliding scale

<https://friendsofthetrees.net/>

### Spring Plant Sales

#### Inland Northwest Permaculture Guild Plant/Seed/Swap/Sale

April 17<sup>th</sup>

7213 N Regal St. 4pm-6pm

#### Footehills Farm Plant Sale

May 1<sup>st</sup>

7915 E Cooper Ln., Colbert 9am.- 4pm.

#### Tieg Plant Sale

May 8<sup>th</sup>

Spokane Community College 8-5pm.

#### NorthWest Vendors Market

6206 E Trent Ste.B.

Open 7 days a week from 10-6pm.

We are just in the process of opening a booth at this site for plants, salves, tinctures, etc. There will be 2 booths after April. These are places where guild members could sell things. Those that do would share in the monthly rent and help arrange/set up wares they are selling. Talk to Torie if you are interested.

## The Faire

As of today we are still aiming for our pre Full Moon Dates of September 18th & 19th again at the West Central Abbey.

However, with this pandemic still looming about our reality we are waiting till a bit later in the Spring to really say that we are sure the Faire is a go. The website has been updated accordingly. So please, mark your calendars and ready your goods because we are envisioning a beautiful event for 2021!

Please consider putting forth your time and efforts into volunteering for the Faire as a coordinator or supporter, please contact Jessica Spurr for more information, [earthlyapothecary@gmail.com](mailto:earthlyapothecary@gmail.com) also visit the website: [www.spokaneherbalfaire.org](http://www.spokaneherbalfaire.org)

## Michael Pilarksi Spring Classes

As listed in the Current Events section on page 1, you will see two classes offered by Michael "Skeeter" Pilarksi. Wanting to dive a bit deeper into who this is, (in case you don't know) and why we are featuring his workshops in our newsletter.

Skeeter came to Spokane in 2012 to teach a 10 week Permaculture Design Course, a few of our board members were involved, and graduated with their PDC Certificate. Michael founded Friends of the Trees in 1978, he is the founder of many more gatherings in our area, including Fairy Congress, The Global Earth Repair Conference and the Spokane Herbal Faire. He is something of a gathering Guru.. he is quite skilled at bringing folks together to eat, sing, dance, learn and so much more.

A plant walk with Skeeter is something special. Plant knowledge, folk lore, medicinal properties and harvesting techniques are topics one will hear about as he discusses the plants. What I'm telling you, to be blunt, is if you have an opportunity to take a plant walk with Skeeter, do it, it is worth your time and money.

In April he will be teaching two classes, on Saturday a Microfarming Workshop, followed by a plant/start/seed sale & swap.

On Sunday he will lead a plant walk, (location TBA).

The classes are \$70/each or both for \$120.

If you can find your way there, I'll see you!  
~Jessica Spurr

## Curbside Pickup of Seed Packets

The Spokane libraries will give any patrons a baggie with about 10 different seed packets, an egg carton and dirt to plant them in and basic instructions-all free! They go fast so call your library to snag one. They also make great gifts!

From the Libraries Site:

"Here's how to get seeds for this year's planting:

Visit any library during curbside pickup hours.  
Park in a designated curbside space.  
Call the number on the sign,  
and ask for the seed packet bundle.

If seeds are still available, staff will bring a pre-packaged assortment of 12 seed envelopes to you curbside. Please note that the pre-packaged assortment of seeds will be a surprise for each customer! At this time, there is no way to request specific seed types.

How do seed libraries work?

You borrow from a selection of vegetable, herb and flower seeds during the year, plant them in your garden and watch them grow. When it's time to harvest, collect some seeds to bring back to the library for the next round of gardeners to enjoy.

Please note, the library is not accepting seed donations at this time."

<https://www.sclد.org/take-and-give-seed-libraries/>



# Nettle leaf, Stinging nettles, Barnyard nettles Urtica dioica Family Urticaceae

Nettles is one of those herbs that if you don't know what to use, use nettles. It is so rich in vitamins and minerals that it feeds the whole body and helps supply what is needed to work well. My two top purposes are kidney support and hay fever relief. With 3 different pathways to inhibit histamine response, it can make hay fever season tolerable and over time not a problem at all. I have a friend that was on hay fever medication for 9 months out of every year since childhood. After a few years of routinely adding nettles to his diet and using them medicinally during hay fever season, he only has to take medicine every now and again when the pollen is especially bad.

The ability to help the kidneys break down protein makes it my number one herb for kidney and urinary tract support. It grows in manure piles in the barn yard, this shows us its ability to break down proteins. Gout is one example of problems that can arise from poor protein metabolism from the kidney, thin hair and nails is another. Nettles will help to thicken and add sheen to hair, nails and the skin. It is also used for bone health due to all the minerals in it. Consider consuming to help with osteoporosis, osteopenia and such. A Good healthy nettle plant will have 34 % protein, so makes a great addition to our daily diet. It has diuretic, hypotensive, properties, helps lower blood pressure, calm and relax our nervous systems to aid in restful sleep.

One odd but interesting use is something called urtication, or flogging with nettles, is the process of deliberately applying stinging nettles to the skin in order to provoke inflammation. We can try this for any arthritic inflammation and has been reported to be effective.

A few agricultural uses are: as food for beneficial insects and as a compost enhancer, due to its high nitrogen

content. Nettles has been used for clothing, twine and sandal straps.

It grows to 3 to 6 even 8 feet tall in maturation. Deep green leaves opposite on the stem with hairs on them that have the stinging formic acid in them. That is the best identifier, just back into them with bare skin and you will know if you found them. The flower is not showy, barely noticeable unless you look, and it forms under the leaf axils in clusters. They prefer shady, good rich moist soil but

can really be found anywhere. If the soil is too dry they tend to be thin and straggly.

Pick nettles in the spring before they reach your mid thigh, some people say the knee. In either case, stop picking the stems when the flower buds start setting. The reason for this is there is a good supply of silica in nettles and may be too much for the kidneys later on in the season. So, pick early and often in the spring so you have enough to last the year.

This nutrient is very good for connective and nerve tissue. It helps form the myelin sheath around the nerves, so it is very helpful for brain and nerve communication. The Formic acid in stinging hairs, loses potency after being picked so use gloves to cut and dry but no need for them to strip the leaves

off the stems. Stems have the most silica content so save those for chewing on to strengthen teeth and bones.

Eating fresh nettles is best because you are getting all the goodies including minerals. Try them steamed, sautéed, in pasta, soups or tea. My favorite way to eat them is a scrumptious potato and nettle casserole from Kay Young's book "Wild Seasons".

Tea infusion is used most often because you can steep a quart overnight and drink it all the next day or two, to get a nutrient packed beverage. Add a bit of mint or lemon balm for flavor and enjoy!

Tincture is good if made with fresh leaf, but dry will do if that is all you can get. You don't get all the minerals but it still has good medicinal effect and tincture is an easy way to take 3 times a day no matter where you are..

Be Well! ~Mary

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eW10NTnz-pc&t=13s>

## Nettle Casserole

If you haven't tried nettles yet, do so this spring and if you are lucky enough to find a local source for fresh, spring shoots, try them in this potato and nettle casserole.

3 large potatoes washed and sliced about ¼" thick  
1 cup heavy cream  
½ cup (or more) cooked, drained, chopped nettle leaves  
Salt and fresh ground black pepper to taste  
1 teaspoon thinly sliced green onion (optional)

Arrange potato slices in a well buttered casserole.

Combine other ingredients, stir to mix and pour over the potatoes.

Place uncovered in a 350 degree oven and several times during baking, spoon some of the cream up over the potatoes.

Bake about one hour till sauce is thick and potatoes are done.

Makes 4-6 servings

## The Practice of Sustainable Herbalism

Walking through the fields I see the skeletons of last year's plants, the St. John's Wort with its red stalks, the stems of the Yarrow, I feel the cool breeze on my face and feel grateful to reside in a place plentiful with its own medicine. These previously stated plants are in abundance here, as well as many other herbs I gather and process into medicine for humans. But what about other folks? Those who live in the city or other Urban areas, those who do not have their own space to gather from, where do they go to wildcraft? It is possible that some know of places to look for things, but it is more likely that many do not. State and National Parks are off limits when it comes to wildcrafting, for good reason! (widespread over harvesting etc.) So folks that are without their gathering spots have two options: Grow your own or turn to the Internet.

Growing your own when possible is important to consider. There are many endangered medicinal plants that can easily be cultivated in a small space, including a container on your balcony or steps. American Ginseng, Echinacea and Lomatium are a few on the list of at risk herbs that you can cultivate (for a full list visit <https://unitedplantsavers.org/>). Those of us wishing to make medicine from plants whose populations are endangered have a responsibility to grow our own whenever possible, this is something to be taken seriously, because we do run the risk of losing species. If it were not for forces like United Plant Savers (UPS) it is entirely possible that American Ginseng would have been lost forever. On this note there is a fantastic book by Richo Cech (who is on the board of UPS) that I would encourage everyone to read: *Growing At Risk Medicinal Herbs*, in its second edition it is a read worthy of your library.

Okay, so for the rest of the folks that cannot grow their own we have a wonderful tool: the Internet! Online is a great resource – especially during Covid, and is useful for sourcing all kinds of things. But with this unlimited access to buy and sell, some things can easily be pushed to the back of our minds, things like sourcing, sustainability and ethics. There are wonderful markets online, like Etsy, where one can find hand crafted goods, including herbs. And then there are an abundant number of companies selling bulk herbs and medicines. However, in our longing to craft our own medicines, it can be easy to get ahead of ourselves in pursuit of the best deal for the most amount of material.

Vetting herb vendors takes a bit more time, research and sometimes try-it-yourself approaches. There are things to look for in Bio's, Item Descriptions etc. (sustainably wildcrafted is a common term). I have found most folks who are going out of their way to treat the plants, the process and the product with respect will go out of their way to tell you. In the meantime, I would really like to point a light to some excellent examples of sustainably crafted sources of plants

and medicine. Anyone can harvest some material, dry it and resell it online, however, someone who truly loves plants, their medicine and people will put the time and effort into gathering & crafting a beautiful product worthy of your purchase. By the way – I choose to boycott the worldwide monopoly that Amazon and the Bezos empire has created, not only for their part in out-competing small business, but also because they are unkind to their employees, actively discourage unions and other things that I'll leave to your discretion to research.

**Friends of the Trees**, currently in Port Hadlock, WA: Michael Pilarski has been the purveyor of herbs, books, extracts, permaculture, songs and more since 1978, he is a fabulous teacher and has the utmost respect for the plants.

<https://friendsofthetrees.net/>

**Frontier Organic CoOp**: Birthed in 1976, this company supplies many health food stores and co-ops (you may have seen their products in the bulk section). They were one of the first strong advocates for organic agriculture, and their commitment to sustainability is written all over their business model. <https://www.frontiercoop.com/>

**MoonWise Herbs**: Linda Conroy resides in Wisconsin, and is an organizer for the Midwest Women's Herbal Conference. She has an incredible bio on her website that has so many inspiring things – you'll just have to go read it yourself!

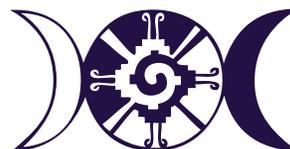
<https://moonwiseherbs.com/>

**Mountain Rose Herbs**, in Eugene, OR: This company was originally started by Rosemary Gladstar in 1987. They support only sustainable agriculture and have many philanthropic paths. <http://www.mountainroseherbs.com/>

**Strictly Medicinal**: Richo Cech is the author of two fantastic books about herbs: *Making Herbal Medicine*, and *Growing At Risk Medicinal Plants* He is also on the board of United Plant Savers. From seed to plant, this is a great company. <https://strictlymedicalseeds.com/>

Certainly there are many other fabulous herbalists that you can support, and I encourage everyone to do their due diligence. Just because something is affordable does not mean it should be, nor does it mean that it was treated with respect. Sustainable harvesting and growing our own is the way to go, and is paramount to all the future generations of plants and herbalists.

Herbally yours,  
Jessica Spurr  
Earthly Apothecary LLC



## Using Herbal Infused Oils in Soap Making

“...*They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude;...*”(1)

These lines from one of my favorite poems flashed upon my memory as I viewed the bottle of St. John's Wort, *Hypericum perforatum*, infused oil sitting on the shelf with a 2-year old date on its label. The date seemed to scream: “I'm dying here!” as my mind wandered back to that lovely, inviting meadow with waves of yellow St. John's Wort flowers and white Yarrow, *Achillea millefolium*, swaying in the summer breeze. They seemed to beckon me to enter with my harvest basket and ‘bloody’\* my fingers gathering their bounty!

\*Hypericin, the active constituent in SJW, stains your skin red when pinching the fresh flowers from their stems.

I think the best lesson I am learning as an herbalist is Don't Be Greedy. I gathered so much St. John's Wort (and Yarrow), that day that I had a hard time putting it up in a timely manner! Always remember that once the harvesting is done there will be even more work to do once you return home with it! So, I was up quite late that day, spreading the flowers on screens in a protected area—to partially dehydrate them and allow the bugs to find other homes, before infusing in olive oil. And subsequently, two years later, I was pondering how to make use of that last precious remaining quart of infused oil before it oxidized and became rancid.

Olive oil has a shelf life of approximately 2 years. That is, if it has been stored under good conditions such as: 1. in a cool, dark place. 2. in a bottle with little to no air above the oil line. 3. tightly capped. and 4. kept refrigerated. Mine had been stored (after gently straining off the herb), in a cool, dark place in a dark green glass olive oil bottle which I had saved when I made the infusion. It was filled to the top and tightly capped. Upon inspection, there was just a skim of sediment in the bottom—something which I would leave behind while carefully pouring off or filter out by passing the oil through a few layers of cheesecloth. I saw no film or mold on the top of the oil, and the aroma was still the pungent, earthy, and slightly off-putting smell I associate with St. John's Wort, like how it smelled when first made. But I did not want to press my luck for much longer and risk losing the oil.

I love making cold process soap. Years ago, before prepping for when the SHTF became popular, I use to save bacon grease and render it into a beautiful white lard. But that is too much work! So, I turned to a wonderful book I found at my local library called *Soap Crafting* by Anne Marie Faiola,

The Soap Queen, (2), and discovered the wonderful world of using a variety of oils in soap making and decided to use up my infused herbal oil in a batch of soap. (I also made a batch with Calendula, *Calendula officinalis* infused oil.)

I choose the following oils to use based on these descriptions in the book AND what I had on hand:

**Cocoa Butter** - adds to the moisturizing content and helps create a hard bar that produces small, stable bubbles.

**Shea Butter** - is emollient and has moisturizing qualities.

**Jjoba Bean** - besides increasing the shelf life of the soap, it adds smoothness and stable lather to the soap and provides skin conditioning properties.

**Castor Oil** - contributes to a stable, copious lather and acts as a humectant, drawing moisture to the skin.

**Olive Oil** - produces an exceptionally mild and creamy lather and produces a bar soap that is long lasting. And, when combined with St. John's Wort, will have astringent, antibacterial, vulnerary (wound healing), and inflammation modulating properties, that are especially helpful in treating scrapes, cuts and a variety of herpes and shingles conditions on the skin as well as reducing scarring. (3)(4)



The book also describes the best percentages of each oil to use and why to stay within the parameters to produce an excellent bar of soap.

Next, I used one of the three online lye calculators that Faiola recommended. Find it here:

<https://www.brambleberry.com/calculator?calcType=lye>,

I put the percentages of each oil I wanted to use into the calculator and was shown how many ounces of each oil to use and how many ounces of Sodium Hydroxide (Lye) and distilled water to use.

Following is the recipe I obtained from the calculator, but not the process. I highly recommend that you check out Faiola's (or another) book at your local library to learn the cold soap making process and equipment needed to SAFELY make your own soap.

I chose to scent it with Ginger and Lemongrass essential oils and thus it obtained its name of Thai Ginger SJW Soap. I have received RAVE reviews from those who received it as Christmas gifts last year, and the color is a lovely light green. It firmed up well in about one week before I sliced it into pieces, and I left it to cure for another month before slipping the individual bars into small white paper bags and sealing the folded over top with a home-made label for gift giving. You can easily create your own labels at [www.avery.com](http://www.avery.com) and print them at home.

~Submitted by  
Dianna Michaels

# Thai Ginger SJW Soap

Yields: 1 pound 14 ounces, about 9 regular size bars of light green soap

## LYE & LIQUID:

Lye (sodium Hydroxide): 2.81 ounces

Distilled water: 6.28 ounces

Total Liquids: 9.08

## OILS:

SJW Infused Olive Oil: 16 ounces

Organic Cocoa Butter: 2 ounces

Castor Oil: 2 ounces

Shea Butter: 0.6 ounces

Jojoba Oil: 2 ounces

Total Oils: 22.6 ounces

## At trace I added:

.5 ounces of Lemongrass Essential Oil

.5 ounces of Ginger Essential Oil

This soap has an absolutely delicious aroma for using just 1 ounce of essential oil – yes, soap requires quite a bit of essential oil, so don't skimp if you want a good strong scent. It leaves my skin feeling a little dry after first washing but also gives it a slick feeling of softness, so I don't feel the need to immediately apply lotion.

Other great herbal infused oils to use in soap making include Calendula, Chamomile, Nettle, Lavender, Jewelweed, Lemon Balm, Peppermint & Yarrow. (5)

## References:

1) Wordsworth, William. (1807), I Wandered Lonely As a Cloud poem.

2) Faiola, Anne-Marie, (2013), Soap Crafting, North Adams, MA, Storey Publishing.

3) de la Foret, R. & Han, E., (2020), Wild Remedies How to Forage Healing Foods and Craft Your Own Herbal Medicine, United States, Hay House.

4) Moore, Michael, (2003), Medicinal Plants of the Mountain West, Santa Fe, NM, Museum of New Mexico Press.

5) Cable, Kelly, (July 27, 2017), Retrieved from <https://learningherbs.com/remedies-recipes/soapmaking/> on February 22, 2021.

Very long shelf life refrigerated!!!



## Three Women's Herbal Apprenticeship

Coordinated by Herbalist, Carla Martinez of Perianth Herbs, the April through November 2021 schedule provides:

- ☞ Herbal Wildcrafting & Botany: This field class is held one full Saturday per month and is led by Carla Martinez.
- ☞ Intro to organ systems: These classes will occur one evening per month. Join herbalist, Mary Schmidt, via either an in-person class near Spokane, or online.
- ☞ Intro to herbal preparations: These classes will occur online one evening per month. Join herbalist, Dianna Michaels, and explore the many methods for utilizing herbs in your life.
- ☞ Work Trade Field & Farm: Join Carla for a 2nd Saturday each month doing work trade in her garden. There will be an introduction to what we are working on and an individualized presentation assigned to each student present for future presentation. (This Work Trade keeps the class cost low.) The garden is located near Davenport, WA, approx. 35mi. west of Spokane.

NOTE: For all field classes and work trade we will be following COVID Safe Distancing and held outside. Masking will not be required for this portion of the class. If you choose to wear a face covering, I recommend a breathable respirator style as we will be hiking and working.

Cost: \$275 non-refundable payment DUE March 25th, plus work trade. Students will be registered on a 1st come 1st served basis with a cap on the number of students. For more information on the schedule and class details and to reserve your place, please contact Carla ASAP at [perianthherbs@yahoo.com](mailto:perianthherbs@yahoo.com) or (509) 725-1421 (Landline, no text).



[www.fourseasonsguild.com](http://www.fourseasonsguild.com)

Our mission is to develop and support community health and wellness through herbal education, connection and empowerment at personal, local, and global levels.