PETASITES SPP. (BUTTERBUR) WILD CULTIVATION
by Ryan Drum

Petasites spp., near relatives of Tussilago spp., are usually relatively easy to manage as wild-cultivated plants, whose leaves and rhizomes have several therapeutic uses (anti-spasmodic, anti-persistent dry cough, migraine headaches, asthmatic conditions, GI disturbances, some skin conditions, etc).

Beginning in February, they produce showy composite flowers on erect stalks to 3 feet high, which emerge 3-8 weeks prior to the very large leaves, 12-36” across in favorable locations. The very large Petasites japonica, a mild-tasting cultivar, has leaves ranging to 6 feet across. The large blooms provide early pollen and substantial nectar for wild bees. The leaves, with long plump petioles, and the strikingly obvious flowering stalks emerge from subterranean rhizomes, the true stems, which usually remain buried throughout the life of the plant.

I have wild-cultivated Petasites palmatus, butterbur, for over 30 years in addition to harvesting wild patches of P. palmatus in the Cascades, the Olympic Peninsula, and in California and Oregon. The plant seems to grow most luxuriously on freshly cut roadside banks and in road water runoff channels, usually with at least 40-60% shade. I collected only the plump (½-3/4”) rhizomes by gently removing 2-4 inches of soil (usually waterlogged heavy clay) to expose the rhizome stems up to lengths of 20 feet or more!

Forty years ago, I did not see any Petasites spp. growing in the archipelago of Waldron Island, WA where I settled and still live. Since it was a lot of bother to travel off-island to harvest, I tried to find local sources for the herbs I used and harvested to sell. I tried to wild cultivate as many plants as I could. I planned to try petasites if I could locate suitable habitat. I decided that I would try and replicate the roadside conditions where I had seen and harvested the most butterbur rhizomes. Then, one fine February day, I saw the flowering stalks presenting in a small wet meadow; it was a monotypic patch of Petasites palmatus, about 200m from my cabin along an old shepherds’ trail and logging road, unused for decades. A year later we had two small ponds dug below the cabin for irrigation and fire control. The dozer dug out a lot of heavy gray clay, which was used to make the two dams. That clay and the bare site resembled the roadside conditions where I had observed petasites thriving.

That autumn, after the petasites leaves had withered, I dug a score of 4-6 inch petasites rhizomes from the old trailside patch and planted them on one of the dams in roughly 2-ft. centers into the plant-free clay, each planting marked with a 2-ft cedar stake labeled, “Butterbur”.

The following spring, about 8 stakes had little collapsed umbrella-like butterbur leaves emerging nearby. They grew modestly that first summer. The next spring, 18 stakes had little butterbur plants, although none produced blossoms. By year 5 there was a thick jumble of underground rhizomes, and I harvested some for home use as a cough suppressant, combining a tincture with live grindelia bud tincture.

In subsequent years I have harvested up to 50# of fresh P. palmatus rhizomes every year. We planted 100 rhizome pieces at the wet end of a shallow declivity where we had established an orchard. After 5-6 years, a few dozen modest P. palmatus plants persist, bloom, and try to spread into the nearby coniferous old growth with little success. We do not harvest these plants.

Two days ago I saw where recent (10 years ago) modest forest road grading had apparently dragged a bunch of P. palmatus rhizomes from the original patch down into a seasonal well-overflow wet area, and they had thrived and produced hundreds of plants and blossoms. Hooray!

Petasites Conservation continued on page 5...
CINDY RIVIERE
May 17, 1953 – April 11, 2010

Early morning, April 11th, 2010, our dear friend, herbalist and co-worker Cindy Riviere made her final journey to the spirit world. Cindy was our former UpS office manager in Athens, Ohio from 2001 to the fall of 2003. We will be writing a memorial piece honoring Cindy in our Fall Bulletin, and we invite anyone wishing to contribute to send their memories and photos of Cindy to our editors at plants@unitedplantsavers.org by August 15th.

FRANK CUMMINGS COOK, IV
1963 – 2009
by Mary Morgaine Thames & Juliet Blankespoor

Early morning of August 19, 2009, beloved green man and inspirational teacher, Frank Cook, left this earthly plane. This visionary giant left a legend in his wake—of how to listen to the stories from the plant world and, in turn, be a voice for them. Frank fearlessly lived his life’s purpose by being fully present in the moment. An engaging storyteller, Frank was dedicated to his mission of awakening ‘Gaian’ consciousness in humanity. His deep love of plants introduced thousands of people from six continents to the world of botany and traditional herbalism.

Frank had an insatiable appetite for knowledge and possessed a keen intellect. In 1985 he graduated with honors, receiving a B.S. Degree in Zoology and Computer Science from Duke University, North Carolina. Frank later was a graduate from the Northeast School of Botanical Medicine and became certified in Permaculture Design. Recently he earned an M.S. degree in Holistic Science at Schumacher College in England; his master’s thesis was published as a book under the title Emerging Planetary Medicines.

Frank kept a disciplined travel and work schedule. For the past thirteen years he traveled the world with the goal of meeting all the genera of plants on the planet. Frank self-published books describing his experiences of meeting the plants and healers in India, Peru, and southern Africa. Through his travels he realized the common patterns found in plant families and their uses. He facilitated an online discussion through the book Botany in a Day, helping others understand botanical concepts and plant families.

Frank was an avid wild foods enthusiast and helped to revitalize the art of mead making, bringing back the ancient tradition of brewing medicinal herbs in honey.

Frank Cook’s crossing has alit sleeping embers in people all over the world. His unfinished work continues more expansively than he could have accomplished on his own. A week before Frank’s crossing, he was asked how he saw himself in the world and he answered, “I am a teacher of teachers, that is my job.” Death has not stopped this and, if anything, it has enhanced his mission. He lives on through his writings, stories, and the students who carry forth his passion to the next generation.

Celebrating the awe of existence was what Frank Cook did in every moment, and this is why we loved him so. His very presence reminded us of our own vitality, our own interconnectedness with all of life, and especially with the green beings.

For more stories and information about Frank Cook please visit his website: www.plantsandhealers.com.

ADVICE FROM A TREE
by Ivan Shamir

Dear Friend
Stand Tall and Proud
Sink your roots deeply into the Earth
Reflect the light of your true nature
Think long term
Go out on a limb
Remember your place among all living beings
Embrace with joy the changing seasons
For each yields its own abundance
The Energy and Birth of Spring
The Growth and Contentment of Summer
The Wisdom to let go like leaves in the Fall
The Rest and Quiet renewal of Winter
Feel the wind and the sun
And the delight in their presence
Look up at the moon that shines down upon you
And the mystery of the stars at night
Seek nourishment from the good things in life
Simple pleasures
Earth, fresh air, light
Be content with your natural beauty
Drink plenty of water
Let your limbs sway and dance in the breezes
Be flexible
Remember your roots
Enjoy the view!
GETTING BACK TO YOUR ROOTS
by Kathi Keville

The earth is covered with an amazing assortment of plant forms and colors, yet we visually experience only half of the plant world. Below ground level exists a maze of roots that vary as much as the foliage they support. Roots hold together topsoil, bring nutrients to the surface, aerate soil, and work with a beneficial network of mycorrhiza. Plants such as clover and legumes also fix nitrogen to convert soil minerals into usable organic nutrients.

We people carry our digestive system, but plants simplify life by staying in one place and using their roots to search out and select nutritive materials while excluding others. A chemical barrier in the root prevents nutrients from leaking back to the soil. Evaporation from leaves creates a vacuum that draws nutrients up to them.

Similar to people, roots store energy in the form of carbohydrates, such as starch and inulin. This gives many roots a fleshy texture and the ability to hold water. Herbalists take advantage of mucilaginous roots, such as marshmallow, to make poultices and soothe the digestive tract.

Few roots regenerate themselves from pieces left in the ground. Of course, there are exceptions. Many rhizomes like ginger and comfrey have this capacity. Since digging roots usually destroys the plant, it is especially important for us to learn how to cultivate them rather than deplete the wild. Spring and fall are ideal times for planting root herbs. They don’t have many special requirements. Like any perennial, they will occupy their garden spot for a long time, so it pays to prepare it properly. I like to match the soil type and amount of watering as closely as possible to the plant’s homeland.

Nutrients are absorbed in solution by tiny root hairs, so it’s important for plants to have gophers away. All I need is to have gophers dining on reproductive and immune system enhancers!

Plants follow cycles, storing nutritive energy in their roots while they are dormant during the winter. Cooling weather stimulates perennial roots to increase their storage capacity and become starchier and often increase their medicinal properties. Thus, the best harvest time is fall or spring. If the ground doesn’t freeze, roots can be harvested throughout winter. Annuals do not need to develop roots with storage capacity, so the roots we use as medicine tend to be perennials or biennials (living two years). Burdock and other biennial roots are collected during their first winter. After that, they become woody and their activity and storage capacity resemble more of an annual than a perennial.

Most herbalists slice roots to quicken drying time and deter mold. Many roots are difficult to cut and process once dried anyway. Dry the fragrant roots, such as angelica or elecampane, with low heat so their essential oils do not dissipate. The temperature is low enough if the warm air around drying roots is not fragrant. Drying time varies depending upon weather and climate, but make sure they are no longer flexible and completely dry before storing your roots in a dry, cool place.

Once established, many perennial herb plants can be divided by separating the root clump or by runners that have sprouted, depending upon their growth pattern. It’s actually good to spread the plants out and an opportunity to pull any weeds that have crept into the root mass. Pry root clumps apart if you can. Otherwise, cut through them cleanly with a shovel. Some roots, such as echinacea and elecampane, conveniently make miniature plants around their base that can be pulled off and replanted. Mints are good examples of plants that spread by root runners. When the runner develops roots, you can cut it off from the mother plant so it can grow on its own. Wild ginger, calamus, iris, and other plants that have rhizomes are easy. Dig the plant up and cut off sections of the rhizome that have a bud and some roots, and plant these with organic compost. Water all your transplants right away, and keep them well watered and protected from intense sun for a few days or until they’re established.

Kathi Keville is the Director of the American Herb Association and the author of several books on herbs and aromatherapy and gives classes throughout the US, including at her Nevada City, CA farm. www.ahaerb.com

UPCOMING EVENTS
FOR 2010

June 5-7: Medicines from the Earth Herb Symposium in Black Mountain, NC
Annual symposium on herbal medicine at beautiful Blue Ridge Assembly near Asheville, North Carolina. For information visit www.botanicalmedicine.org or call 800-252-0688.

To be held in the bluffs of Lanesboro, Minnesota. For more information visit www.bgfloristherbals.com or call 507-523-2447.

September 17-19: Traditions in Western Herbalism Conference
To be held at Ghost Ranch near Santa Fe, New Mexico. More information at www.traditionsinwesternherbalism.org.

To be held at the Hyatt Regency, Austin, Texas. For more information visit www.americanherbalistsguild.com.

Saturday, October 2nd: Planting the Future Conference, Goldenseal Sanctuary, Rutland, Ohio.
Please see ad page 8 for more information.

Saturday October 9th: Herb Day Fest – Wellness Works, 1209 Lakeside Dr., Brandon, Florida from 10 am to 4 pm. Contact 813-991-5177 or email rose@imherbalist.com.
UPS SEeks Executive Director

with Non-profit & Leadership Experience

Over the past 16 years, United Plant Savers has made huge progress towards fulfilling our mission to protect and conserve our native medicinal plants. Currently, and as always, we have numerous vital activities going on within the organization and our membership. We are about to embark on the third season of our Intern Program at our 360-acre Sanctuary in Ohio, with a very interesting and enthusiastic group participating in the May session. Our Botanical Sanctuary Network continues to grow robustly, our publications have all been beautiful and filled with interesting articles, and our conferences have been plentiful and well-attended. Financially we are within our budget and on fairly stable ground, especially notable in these economic times.

Because of these accomplishments, we are now in the enviable situation of being positioned for new growth and undertakings. In analyzing what is needed to further our programs and initiatives, including a redesign of our website and a strong membership drive, we have identified that we need additional skilled person-power. Lynda LeMole, who has served as UpS’s incredibly effective Executive Director for the past 6 years, has decided to step aside and pass this role to a new E.D. with strong non-profit and fund-raising experience, someone who will enable Lynda and the rest of the board and other UpS supporters to further the various exciting projects that will fulfill our mission.

Some of the key qualifications for this position include:
1. Significant fund-raising & financial management experience
2. Strong track record of successful grant-writing & oversight
3. Well-developed communication & public relations skills
4. Capable program & event development & coordination
5. Passion for plants & a genuine commitment to our mission

We are looking to our membership of friends to help us network to find the right person to fill this position. Interested persons should contact Sara Katz, UpS Board president: sara9@mac.com or 541-846-6999.

Echinacea

by Shannon Algiere

Strong erect flowers on sturdy stoic plants wave in the off river breeze, wafting a honey imbibed scent through the garden. The honeybees pursue the odoriferous invitation and alight onto each conical beacon in search of its pragmatic ambrosia. The orange-brown spiked center of the flower contrasts distinctly from within a radius of thin purple daisy-like petals. This central cone is a predominant feature of the plant, described in nomenclature as echinos, or hedgehog. The flowering body resembles in character the traits relating the plant’s consequence amongst the Compositae family. Echinacea angustifolia, (E. pallida, and E. purpurea) abide in rank in our household materia medica. This household that I speak is infused with young children, aged 5 and 2.

Echinacea seems to be a common household name in most modern medicinal access. Anyone with an interest in self-applied health and healing can enter the herbal therapeutic gateways having been beckoned by this commonly known ambassador. In western medicine it was listed in the US National Formulary from 1916-1950 and at present, alluding to the appropriate statistical proof of its pharmacoeopoiic significance.

As a native plant it is accountably upheld in North American indigenous wisdom as a heal-all. Echinacea is used to treat wounds, and it is said the Dakota use it in veterinary medicine for horses.

As an anti-bacterial and anti-viral it is a trusted ally for bolstering surface immune systems, clearing infection and aiding the production of white blood cells. In a spiritual realm it is an herb of fortification, inner strength and steadfastness. The plant’s steadfast nature is equally characterized in its structural expression. It is a tall rhizomatous perennial, owing to its ability to dominate weed pressure in the gardenscape. This plant proliferates the garden space that I am designing and stewarding. It is a slope friendly plant to grow with broad zonal acclimations (from 3-10). It is a solid system participant, and its hardiness allows it to thrive within an actively working relationship suggested by a cultivator.

There are discussions within permacultural context whereby a plant chosen within the intentional space may offer at least three translational interpretations for the inhabitance. Echinacea is abundantly generous. I have genuine respect for what this plant offers in its presence, such as copious medicinal capacity, marketable flower stalks in fresh and dry form, pollinator allurement and support, accessible seed sourcing and quite importantly as a biologically structural safeguard against erosion.

It is important to note that the placement of echinacea on the United Plant Savers ‘At-Risk’ list is a result of overuse compounded with rapidly increasing land destruction. This has thus afforded its protection of a particular obligation.

We are compelled, as stewards and herbalists of the planet, to act with sustainable and authentic intention. There is a synergy that occurs within the scope of human and plant relations that penetrates the precision of planetary articulation. Our expressions of mindful conduct will facilitate the needful active response to a threatened ecological relationship.

We can be guided into serviceable guidelines when we take into account these United Plant Savers’ appropriate suggestions: one of my favorite slogans is Grow Your Own! Cultivate and use only organically cultivated plants. ‘Meet your native and plant’. When participating in medicinal use, bring a consistent awareness of gratitude and of your impression.

We instigate the momentum for change when we are making these efforts as a community and educating others, whether it is from a preservation, conservation, farming, gardening, designing, herbalist or land use background.

Shannon Algiere is a mother, a gardener, a farmer’s wife, an herbalist and an educator. For the past seven years she has helped to develop an eight-acre vegetable, herb, fruit and flower farm at the Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture located in Pocantico Hills, NY. Stone Barns Center is a non-profit educational center committed to community-based food production.
The Appalachian Forest is the oldest and most diverse ecosystem north of the equator. This complex matrix of rich, rain-soaked woodlands is home to over eighty species of trees and more than 1,000 species of herbaceous plants. Amongst yellow poplar or hemlock, the legendary medicinal plants still thrive: ginseng and goldenseal, lady's slipper orchids, trillium, black cohosh, and a multitude of others. This remarkable biodiversity includes the animal world as well—everything from tiny voles to black bears, songbirds, and the world's most diverse collection of salamanders. A survivor of the great Pleistocene Ice Age, the southern and central Appalachian forest has evolved into one of the world's most intricate webs of interconnected and symbiotic life forms. When the ice receded, it was this forest that provided the seed stock to reforest a continent. The same Appalachian coves that sheltered biodiversity during the ice age could become the ark that shelters species from the extremes of the current climate change.

Tragically, the biological treasure house of Appalachia is threatened by an environmental holocaust that promises to do what the Pleistocene Ice Age could not. In southern West Virginia, southwest Virginia, eastern Kentucky, and northeastern Tennessee, "mountaintop removal mining," a relatively new form of strip mining coal, is spreading like a scourage, devastating human communities, poisoning watersheds, and flattening America's oldest mountains. In this form of mining the soil above a seam of coal is bulldozed away. Then the mountaintop itself is blown up by explosives and the rubble is shoved downhill, entombing and destroying entire watersheds forever. Coal companies have already flattened 1.4 million acres, buried nearly 2,000 miles of streams, and blown up 500 of America's oldest mountains.

As the mountains fall and the watersheds are ruined, once thriving Appalachian communities are destroyed. Coalfield residents live with poisoned well water, massive flooding and landslides, choking dust, and contaminated streams. The Appalachian Regional Commission recently concluded that the Appalachians are home to some of the poorest communities in our nation and coal country residents suffer some of the worst health of any group in the U.S., with high rates of cancer and lung disease. A centuries-old culture and the stories and music and lifestyles born of intimate knowledge of the remarkable natural landscape are falling away with the mountains.

Many people, even those whose homes are lighted and heated by coal-fired power plants, know little or nothing about what is happening in the Appalachian coalfields. The controversy and environmental costs associated with mountaintop removal mining have not been well-covered by the media, and many of us seem to prefer not to face the fact that every time we turn on the lights we participate in the destruction of the mountains.

Kentucky poet and farmer, Wendell Berry has written that "This work is done in violation of all the best things that humans have learned in their long dwelling on the earth: reverence, neighborliness, stewardship, thrift, love." Fortunately, there is a grassroots resistance to mountaintop removal, led by citizens of the coalfields. As in the civil rights movement, churches are making a stand, condemning mountaintop removal as sinful because it is destroying creation. Mountain Justice is a thriving environmental and social justice movement full of young people dedicated to stopping mountaintop removal. The Alliance for Appalachia serves as an umbrella organization dedicated to stopping this devastating practice and finding ways to reduce energy use through efficiency; creating more energy from renewable sources; and helping create and diversify jobs in coal country through sustainable forestry operations, tourism, and less destructive mining practices.

To learn more about mountaintop removal and to join the growing movement to stop it please go to lovmountains.org and to the websites for Appalachian Voices and Coal River Mountain Watch.

Shay Herring Clanton grew up in the Appalachian Mountains in northern Alabama and now lives with her husband and son on Walker Mountain near Deerfield, VA. She is an environmental activist, an artist and teacher, and a student of herbal medicine with Kathleen Maier at Sacred Plant Traditions in Charlottesville, VA and with Appalachian herbalist, Phyllis Light of Alabama.

**FAST TRACK PETASITES WILD CULTIVATION INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Clear planting area of all vegetation or select recently cleared wet sites.
2. Choose damp, clayey soil in partially shaded sites.
3. Preferably, do not harvest the 4-6" rhizomes segments intended for transplanting until the planting site(s) are fully prepared.
4. For best results, dig transplanting rhizomes in the autumn after the leaves have died down.
5. If the rhizomes must be stored or transported prior to actual site planting, keep them packed in wet moss and stored in an open 2-5 gallon bucket. Keep the pieces moss-covered, moist, and with no lid on the bucket so they can breathe.
6. Use labeled stakes to locate each rhizome planted.
7. Wait and watch for up to 18 months for first emergent leaves.
8. Keep patch cleared of competing and shading vegetation.
9. Amend soil with wood ashes mixed with sand to loosen soil for subsequent rhizome harvest.

**CAUTION!**

*Petasites* spp. may contain small amounts of pyrrolizidine alkaloids particularly in the young leaves (but not in the mature leaves, flowers, and rhizomes). Some hyper-cautious authors suggest using petasites medicines for no more than 4 weeks continually. The dosage hazards are actually unknown and caution recommendations based on a minimal or non-existent database. The millennia of satisfied human uses of *Petasites* spp. suggest a well-earned GRAS designation to this plant.

Some informative petasites (butterbur) references:

- Culpepper, N. ca 1650. *Culpepper’s Complete Herbal*. pp 68-9

Ryan Drum is a US Advisory Board Member. He will send Petasites palmatus rhizomes for $12.00 (shipping) to those who think they have suitable transplanting, wild habitat. This plant is hardy to 80°F and down to 10°F in moist damp places. Contact: Ryan Drum, PO Box 2, Waldron Island, WA, 98297.
Late this past winter, I was meeting with my “tree whisperer” friend Frank, surveying our newly-acquired little patch of heaven in the woods of Bucks County, Pennsylvania for any trees that were dead and needed culling before a good storm landed them on our cabin, when I decided to ask him for a primer on what trees actually lived there. When Frank got to the large tree just south of our front deck, he identified a “basswood.” I had never heard the name, so went to my handy reference book and read that this is another name for linden.

Ah, linden … I remember being a young girl one evening in late spring and asking my gardening grandmother what smelled so good and her replying “That’s the linden flower, and mind you don’t go the way of many fools who got themselves drunk on the aroma!” And then she giggled as if remembering a time when she did just that. Whenever I smell the pervasive perfume of the linden flower, it kind of does make me a drunken fool.

American linden, of the Tilia species, did indeed grace our country cabin with heady perfume this season. I’d watch the honey bees dance and gather from the flowers for as long as beckoning chores allowed. I’d remember how one of my herbal medicine teachers, David Winston, would always change his demeanor a little bit when linden came into a discussion; he’d mellow slightly, look a bit wistful, and recommend tasty linden for calming. Linden flower is also used by herbalists in tincture and teas for helping people with many stress-related conditions, such as headaches, mild depression, insomnia, mild hypertension, irritability, and ADHD, as well as upper respiratory tract inflammations and mild fevers. Linden is not a dramatic medicine, but its gentle ability to temper these situations is well documented.

Later in the season, with the fleeting memories of spring ephemerals urging more native medicinal searches, I was hounded for a week in the steel and asphalt of New York City by memories of finding a lone Jack-in-the-Pulpit the previous year in Orange County, New York. I promised myself a “jack search” at the cabin the next weekend. However, I was disappointed that a two-hour herb walk in the woods of our community revealed not one jack. “Our” woods mustn’t be jack territory. Yet later that day as I was clearing out old wood around the cabin to be dried for next winter’s fires, I found myself unconsciously hesitating to take another step. Looking down, expecting to find a snake or young mammal not deserving to be tread upon, there in all his glory was a Jack-in-the-Pulpit, right in our backyard. Eureka! Hoping there might be another somewhere close, I looked a little farther, and yes! There’s another jack. Thirty-seven jacks later, and this was one happy herbalist. Thirty-seven jacks on our little bit of heaven … and while Jack-in-the-Pulpit is not known as an oft-used Native American medicinal, it still holds a place dear to me. You see, that first jack I encountered freely spoke to me, suggesting that the person who named this plant had also been “preached” to.

The first jack I ever came upon pointed out that although he was the only jack in the woods, he got along quite nicely with all the other plants, and that this would be a good realization for mankind. No kidding!

Sometimes when I’m really lucky and the moon is in the right phase and the stars are aligned and I-don’t-know-what other magic is afoot, I awaken in the early morning hearing a whisper of a message. And the day after I found those proud thirty-seven jacks, there was indeed a whisper. I’m sure it’s from the jacks, from those thirty-seven jacks, who whispered from their pulpits, “Linden is a gateway to heaven.”

You may rest assured that linden, just a little bit of linden, is in all my special formulas for my patients. Who couldn’t use a gateway to heaven?

Dr. Sheilagh Weymouth has been practicing holistic primary care in New York, NY since 1996.
LEAVES & SEEDS: MEMBER VOICES

We invite our members to send us articles, brief notes and messages about their plant experiences. Here are a few we’d like to share with you…enjoy!

CULTIVATION OF YERBA MANSA IN IOWA
by Kathy Larson

Yerba mansa (Anemopsis Californica) is a low growing perennial herb found in the Southwestern United States. At the time I acquired my three plants (1989), the only information I had about growing requirements was that yerba mansa liked wet, alkaline soils and that over time the plants would improve the quality and lower the pH of the soil. I didn’t even know whether they would winter over in Iowa (zone 5). My plants were obtained from one wild population in New Mexico on one of Feather Jones’ Desert Herb trips (also my source of the cultural information).

I put the three little plants in a bed that was a grassy pasture area just a few years before. The bed was in a low-lying area that was usually pretty soggy in the spring and dried out during a normal summer. With heavy rainfall, it was prone to flooding, after which the soil would remain boggy for a while, but it was never under water for very long. The soil was a rich loam, typical of Iowa bottom ground.

I mulched my plants each winter with a thick layer of old hay or straw in the late fall after we had experienced a hard freeze and the weather had turned cold. The mulch was removed each spring. The plants spread slowly the first three or four years, eventually turning into a thick 15 to 20 square foot bed. I never had any insect or disease problems and the plants flowered well each year. The only maintenance I did, besides the winter mulching, was weeding. Eventually I stopped the mulching and the plants continued to do well with little or no winter die-off.

Staying up on weed control was difficult. The yerba mansa did not compete well with aggressive perennial weeds like yellow dock, quack grass, reed canary grass and wild mint. It is also possible that, after growing the plants in the same place for so many years, changes in the soil acidity and structure took place, favoring weed growth over the yerba mansa. Certainly the weeds became more and more difficult to control in later years; in 2007 I had a severe die out of most of the plants, which I attribute mainly to the weeds taking over the bed.

Kathy Larson is a UpS Advisory Board Member.

VOLUNTEER CITIZEN SCIENTISTS NEEDED

Jim Chamberlain, USFS and UpS Board Member and Liz Hiebert, graduate student, are inviting citizen scientist volunteers to join the data collection activities at one or both of two study locations on the following dates: June 10–13 at Reddish Knob (west of Harrisonburg, VA) and/or July 15–18 at Mount Rogers (near Marion, VA).

Here is a brief description of the work and why it is important: Black cohosh (Actaea racemosa) is a shade growing herbaceous perennial used to help ameliorate symptoms of menopause. Market interest is growing for many wild-harvested medicinal plants. In 2001 over 92 tons of black cohosh were harvested (USFWS 2002). More than 98% of black cohosh was harvested from the wild. Monitoring this natural resource is essential to identifying sustainable harvest levels.

About 25 volunteers are needed to inventory, monitor and harvest black cohosh plants in the woods and have an interesting, productive and fun time contributing to vital research that will help identify better management practices for this significant medicinal plant.

For more information contact Dr. Jim Chamberlain: jachambe@vt.edu or 540–231–3611 or Liz Hiebert: ehiebert@vt.edu.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Hello,
I’ve used much of the information you’ve provided on herbs for a children’s garden club I help out with. Thanks for the great stuff. We just started our own classroom herb garden, and the kids are all excited to see what comes of it. I also wanted to mention a page that I found to be another great herbal resource: www.kyatu.co.uk/Article/herbal-resources. As I was browsing, the thought occurred to me that other teachers may also find it a helpful addition to your page www.unitedplantsavers.org/Internet_Resources.html.

Thanks again,
Lillie Bennett, Corpus Christi, TX

2010 INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Hard working? Motivated to learn about medicinal plants?
Want to experience UpS’ 360-acre plant sanctuary in Ohio?

Join us in our UpS Sanctuary Intern Program!

FALL: August 30 – Oct. 8, 2010
(DEADLINE FOR FALL APPLICATIONS: Monday, August 2nd. Check in - Aug. 29)
Apply early for early acceptance!
LIMTED TO 8 PARTICIPANTS

Details & an application are available online at unitedplantsavers.org by calling 802-476-6467 or email plants@unitedplantsavers.org
PLANTING THE FUTURE

A conference on the conservation and cultivation of native medicinal plants

GOLDENSEAL SANCTUARY – RUTLAND, OHIO
Saturday October 2nd, 2010

TEACHERS INCLUDE:
Paul Strauss, Robert Eidus, Maureen Burns-Hooker, Cindy Parker, Chip Carroll, Rebecca Wood, Camille Freeman, George Vaughn & Betzy Bancroft

PRESENTATIONS FOR BEGINNERS & SEASONED HERBALISTS & PLANT-LOVERS!

Herb Walks in Herbal Paradise!
Hands-on Planting and Medicine Making Workshops!
Free Camping!

Sponsors: Mountain Rose, Herbal Sage Tea Co., Twelve Corners, Mushroom Harvest

For information and/or registration, contact Betzy at UpS, PO Box 400, East Barre, VT 05649, or email plants@unitedplantsavers.org or phone 802-476-6467.

$50 member, $60 non member

Veggie or Turkey Lunch: $10