THE BEAVERS ARE BACK
by Betzy Bancroft

Wandering through Hannah Hill yesterday, UpS’s ‘other’ Sanctuary tucked in the mountains adjacent to Sage Mountain, I was admiring the colors of approaching autumn. Berries of blue cohosh and blue bead lilies, mottled red of false Solomon’s seal and Canada mayflower fruits, blooming whorled asters and bright orange of hobblebush viburnum berries that stood out among the green. As I made my way downhill toward the old wetland, I noticed a small, fresh mud dam … and then a mound of debris topped with freshly stripped branches! Beavers!! I had wondered in the past why the beavers that had lived there no longer inhabited this beautiful, isolated and pristine little wetland, and Rosemary Gladstar wisely told me that they had long ago used up the young saplings they depend on for food and building materials. Indeed, this low patch within Hannah Hill’s old-growth forest didn’t seem to have much young growth. But as I looked around, there were some freshly chewed-off smaller trees with their characteristic pointy stubs.

I thought to myself, “Wouldn’t it be fun to sneak down here very quietly sometime and hope to have a glimpse of the beavers swimming?” As I made my way along the trail heading toward where the original big dam had still held up a shallow pool, I noticed that it was now a much bigger and deeper pond. Stepping down to the clear place where the trail comes closest to the pond, I saw that the dam was freshly repaired with much mud and forest debris … and a beaver was swimming around in the pond! It was beautiful, brown and slick, with its nose, eyes and ears just above water level, cruising around gently in beaver paradise. The beaver swam quite close to me … close enough to see the amazing texture of that flat tail and the webbed feet paddling beneath the green water’s surface. Occasionally, and fortunately more toward the middle of the pond, it would slap that tail with a loud ‘ker-thunk’ and dive underneath.

I’m grateful this beaver family has made a home in such a wonderful, pristine and protected place, and that I am their neighbor!

Betzy Bancroft
office manager, UpS, 802-476-6467
plantsaversmail@earthlink.net
Renowned Herbalist, author, animal advocate, friend of the Gypsies, and the pioneer of holistic veterinary medicine, Juliette was beloved by everyone who had the opportunity to know her. Her life is of mythic dimension. Born on the 11th hour of the 11th day of 1911, of Egyptian Turkish decent, raised in England in a Jewish household by a very wealthy family, educated at some of the best schools in England, Juliette developed early a great love of animals and decided to study veterinary medicine. But she left college after two years, discouraged with the treatments she saw administered to the animals and decided to travel the world in search of natural cures and a more simple way of life. Thus began her odyssey. Her travels led her to the Gypsies and nomadic people of the world, where she learned the best of natural cures and herbal ways. In the 1930’s she developed a line of herbal supplements for animals, the first of their kind, and her work with animals became legendary. She documented her travels in many wonderful books and wrote some of the first herb books on animal care. Later, at the insistence of others, she began writing herb books about natural cures for people. These books have become classics and generations of humans and animals have been raised on her books. More than her accomplishments, however, was the greatness of Juliette’s spirit. She was a bright star, a legend in her time, a great storyteller and teacher, a fascinating individual, and beautiful beyond words. She was also one of my oldest dearest friends and though I mourn my loss, I rejoice in the freedom of her soul as it dances free from her aging tired body into the realm of spirit.

Michael Moore 1941-2009
by Rosemary Gladstar

It’s common for people to canonize others with sentimental remembrances after they die, but Michael was revered even in life by everyone who had the good fortune to know him. Often called ‘grandfather’ and rightly so, of the modern herbal movement, Michael was an icon in the herbal community. A fully original character and a brilliant mind, he was truly one of the great herbalists of our time who left an indelible mark on most everything herbal and had a profound influence on American herbalism.

A brilliant complex human being, he wandered pathways that most of us hardly knew existed and he always seemed to return from those meanderings with something brilliant, a nugget of green truth for the rest of us. His books, too, are treasured for their uniqueness and are among the great legacies he’s left us. We read them as much for those marvelous irreverent truths and bits of humor that jump out throughout the pages as we do for the wonderful original information he presents on western herbs and herbalism, information gathered as much from his own direct experience(s) with the plants as from his extensive research.

But for all his brilliance, his contributions, his utter uniqueness,
As my herbal studies progress and I gain confidence with using our native medicinals in my practice, I’ve noticed that without knowing anything at all about an herb, a patient’s interest is naturally piqued when I make a recommendation. I’ve always known the more a patient can “make friends” with any of my recommendations (herbal or otherwise), the more that patient will benefit from our treatment plan. So, as my knowledge increases about native medicinals, I pass this knowledge on to my patients; a whole garden of native medicinal fans is blossoming right here in cement and steel and asphalt-encased Manhattan!

For instance, when I suggest a patient use elderberry syrup (I make my own so they have it freshly made) for a cold or flu or gastrointestinal upset, I let them know that the elderberry is known as the “medicine of the country folk” and that elderberry wine was (and still is, albeit rarely) always a mainstay in traditional people’s autumn preparations for the coming colder months. My littlest patients call my elderberry syrup “Dr. She She’s Purple Medicine” and turn their nose to other preparations. Another beloved native medicinal is the common, prolific, happy dandelion. When I recommend the root of this native medicinal for digestive support or the leaf for diuresis (dandelion leaf is a potassium sparing diuretic; my pregnant patients don’t know from swollen hands or feet!), I’ll tell the patient that the name comes from the French for “tooth of the lion.” And I’ll remind the patient that they’re already old friends with dandelions since they’re the short, bright yellow flowers that grow like crazy on our lawns. In fact, the dandelion flower is probably the first “bouquet” we ever created as children, proudly offering nature’s gifts to our parents, grandparents, and special friends or tucked behind an ear for “decoration.” And who hasn’t made a wish, then blown the seeds from the late-season dandelion?

While I don’t use American ginseng in my practice right now, when I do make a recommendation for another adaptogen, I always let my patient know that some day they’ll come to enjoy this ancient mainstay of good health. I assure them they’ll receive worthy benefits from my substitute, while telling them that I can’t currently give them American ginseng since we used too much too quickly and now it’s considered rare. What a backwards compliment for the “little man” (a loose translation from the Chinese word for ginseng): to be so powerful and popular that we unthinkingly almost remove it from our continent! I assure my patient that we now have loving plant keepers who are seeing to it that the healing roots that have the look of a gnarled man’s body are being allowed to re-establish themselves and regain the “King of North American Medicine” status this beloved native medicinal has earned.

Anything I can do to increase the value of a patient’s relationship with her or his health is a big win. And helping to increase the value of their relationship with native medicinals warms my heart while helping my patients increase their good health.

Dr. Sheilagh Weymouth (www.WholeLifeHealthCare.com) has been practicing holistic primary care in New York City since 1996. She is a proud graduate of Dr. Low Dog’s Clinical Herbalist Program taught by Teresa Boardwine, RH; a proud graduate of David Winston’s Center for Herbal Training; and commenced Professional Clinical Training in the Eclectic Triphasic Medical System with Donald Yance, CN, MH, RH in May.

We are happy to announce that Robert Eidus is the 2009 recipient of this award. Robert is a long-time herbalist, friend and supporter of UpS and steward of Eagle Feather Organic Farm, one of the first Sanctuaries to join our Botanical Sanctuary Network. He currently has an active teaching and program schedule on his sanctuary as well as the exciting work he is doing with a weekly TV show called Plants and Their Friends, which airs on URTV in the Asheville, NC area and streaming on line.

Look for an article in the 2010 annual Journal to hear more about Robert and his work.
Two miles and seven river crossings from the nearest road, a trail enters a thick grove of willow and cottonwood through a protective gate. On one post can be seen the obligatory “no trespassing” sign that sits above a U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service notice that the property is managed for the good of waterfowl and other species, and next to a weathered foam placard ~ a United Plant Savers sign ~ making clear its related mission as a botanical refuge. These have been up for many of the 32 years that I have “owned” and cared for this land. When I moved here, there was no understorey at all thanks to 109 years of cattle grazing – not even weedy plants or grasses – and the cottonwoods had washed down in the resulting floods so that pine, oak, walnut and pinyon were the only existing trees. The exclusion of livestock, selective plantings, erosion control and soil berms have resulted in the appearance of well over a thousand kinds of native plants, with an unbelievable number of them proving to either be edible or have medicinal properties including skullcap, vervain, monkeyflower, yarrow, pointleaf manzanita, butterfly weed, geranium, pennyroyal, goldenrod, healing monarda with its oregano smell and brook mint emanating cool and calm.

My partner and acclaimed herbalist Kiva Rose has not only compiled a growing list of species cataloged by Western and Hispanic healers, but has also discovered previously unexplored or unexpected benefits, such as wild rose vinegar for sunburn and elderberry elixir as an immunomodulator often more effective than echinacea.

While I work hard to pay for the Animá Learning Center and Botanical Sanctuary land, we still consider ourselves not so much as proprietors, but as responsible servants and full partners, with an investment and stake in its lasting health and wholeness. Nor do we consider ourselves “good shepherds” making omnipotent managerial decisions for the perceived benefit of the rest of creation so much as “caretakers,” “tenders” and “healers” witnessing and addressing the needs of other life forms and biomes with their own membership, purpose and direction. A healer of any kind will sometimes have to assertively intervene in order to save a patient’s life, but more often they’re called to work in partnership with the patient to create the conditions for balance and to contribute to wholeness.

Rightful decisions that can positively affect future generations of humans and non-humans alike, proceed from silence and arise from a great listening... yet in the end are manifest only through the song of our deeds.

One doesn’t need to live in a wilderness paradise to serve this mission. As healers and lovers of planet and plant – aware of their plight and needs – we each have an individual responsibility (an ability-to-respond!). As herbalists who either wildcraft or purchase wildcrafted plants, we rightfully must give back equal to or in excess of what we take, perpetuating and participating in Gaia’s essential gifting cycle by helping spread and encourage key indigenous medicinal species, and not only those we personally use but also those untested plants long extirpated from their native home. By virtue of our noticing and caring alone, we have a responsibility to help protect the threatened land they depend on and try to ensure the conditions for them to not only survive but also thrive. It is the same whether we live on or own the land in question or not, whether it’s an acre of breathing soil or the tiny patches of green surrounding our apartments. Plus with the help of a few like-hearted others we can co-caretake any forested areas nearby, as well as the regional watercourses no matter how far away. We can get permission from neighbors to plant the seeds or sprouts of endangered indigenous herbs, or opt for grinning guerrilla plantings in vacant lots, public spaces and in the strips of soil between the sidewalks and curbs.

We join you in the cause of helping and taking care, giving the nature that provides for us a helping hand, proving to be worthy members of the earthen community not only through those ways we give to others but also in the ways we give back to the ever healing land.

Jesse Wolf Hardin is a teacher and founder of Animá nature-informed practice and the author of 7 books including an illustrated volume for all ages called “I’m a Medicine Woman Too!” www.medicinewomantoo.com. For info on wilderness retreats, herbal intensives, on-line courses and events at the Animá Sanctuary, a wild river canyon and ancient place of power in the enchanted Southwest: Box 688, Reserve, NM 87830 or www.animacenter.org. For info on their 2010 Traditions in Western Herbalism Conference near Santa Fe, please write Kiva kiva@bearmedicineherbals.com
AN "AT-RISK" ADVENTURE
by Robin McGee

I spent Earth Day hiking with a group led by one of the south’s most beloved naturalists. I commented to him that I would love to see ginseng and goldenseal growing in the wild. Without missing a beat he said, “If you promise not to dig it up I’ll tell you where to find it.” I assured him that I would not dig up either of them.

Every plant was medicine: seven species of trillium, Solomon’s seal, false Solomon’s seal, black cohosh, spikenard, pipsissewa, rattlesnake plantain, bloodroot, and ginseng! Such a rare and wonderful place. We learned the history of this special land, and how the current owner has placed it in a conservation agreement. I breathed a sigh of relief knowing that this sanctuary will be protected into perpetuity.

On the ride back to our meeting place, I was told where to find goldenseal and more ginseng, and the next day I set out early in search of them. I parked along the side of the road and walked into the woods. Within just a few feet were hundreds of goldenseal! Suddenly, I heard footsteps crushing leaves. I looked around the forest floor and saw spots where someone had been digging. The footsteps promptly ceased, and I knew someone was hiding and watching me. I began to preach really loudly as if to nobody. “I saw generations of goldenseal dancing all around me. I felt like dancing, too! But I was afraid of stepping on them, so after walking around and touching nearly every plant, I carefully lay down in the middle of the plants, sharing breath, energy, and love. I apologized to the plants for screaming, for their plight. I looked down and saw spots around the forest floor and saw spots where someone had been digging. As I made my way to my truck I couldn’t help but laugh knowing that I was still being watched. I hope I made an impression!

Robin McGee is a community herbalist and naturalist living in South Carolina with her husband on a 500-acre chemical-free, grass-fed beef, free-range egg, and native medicinal herb farm.

IN PRAISE OF THE EARTH
by John O’Donohue

Let us bless
The imagination of the Earth,
That knoe early the patience
To harness the mind of time,
Waited for the seas to warm,
Ready to welcome the emergence
Of things dreaming of voyaging
Among the stillness of land.

And how light knew to nurse
The growth until the face of the Earth
Brightened beneath a vision of color.

When the ages of ice came
And sealed the Earth inside
An endless coma of cold,
The heart of the Earth held hope,
Storing fragments of memory,
Ready for the return of the sun.

Let us thank the Earth
That offers ground for home
And hold our feet firm
To walk in space open
To infinite galaxies.

Let us salute the silence
And certainty of mountains:
Their sublime stillness,
Their dream-filled hearts.

The wonder of a garden
Trusting the first warmth of spring
Until its black infinity of cells
Becomes charged with dream;
Then the silent, slow nurture
Of the seed’s self, coaxing it
To trust the act of death.

The humility of the Earth
That transfigures all
That has fallen
Of outlived growth.

The kindness of the Earth,
Opening to receive
Our worn forms
Into the final stillness.

Let us ask forgiveness of the Earth
For all our sins against her:
For our violence and poisonings
Of her beauty.

Let us remember within us
The ancient clay,
Holding the memory of seasons,
The passion of the wind,
The fluency of water,
The warmth of fire,
The quiver-touch of the sun
And shadowed sureness of the moon.

That we may awaken,
To live to the full
The dream of the Earth
Who chose us to emerge
And incarnate its hidden night
In mind, spirit, and light.
ADAWEH PLANT RESCUE MUSINGS
by June Ellen Bradley

It has been an interesting endeavor to plant-save with golf course developers on the same piece of property over a 5-year period. Interesting in the way you critique a painting that you really aren’t sure of when the artist is standing right there. Yes, there are aspects that are wonderful although that dash of paint is disturbing…

To witness acres of wild forest containing ginseng, black cohosh, blood root, wild ginger and trillium become a large golf course and housing community is heart wrenching for sure however, opening the eyes and minds of people who simply do not know what is contained in forests may redeem the development process which goes on regardless.

We identified plants we found and made a list of over 200 different species on the site, and the list has become part of the historical record now. And the course designer became open to leaving wild spaces within the course. It is uplifting to see that people have become more aware of the diversity and value of our woodland habitat and that we can speak for the plants!

We were grateful that the stewardship and honor we were bringing to the land was received and welcomed. Members of the Adawehi community carefully dug, transported and transplanted, cared-for and maintained these plants on our publicly accessible wildflower trail. Come by and visit if you are in the area!

Our trail continues to change over the years and we have a beautiful variety of native species preserved for the future. The land continues to attract plant lovers and folks wanting to learn more about our unique ecosystem. We’ve endured poaching of our ginseng and devils bit (over 200 plants were taken…) however, we’ve continued to persist every other weekend for 7 years to preserve the wild plants that are threatened by clear cutting and over development in the Appalachian Mountains. We estimate that over 10,000 plants have been relocated here.

It is a good practice to develop long-term relationships with the people who are in the business of developing land. Education is the key to increasing awareness about the treasure we have in the plants. It is important to remember that we must work together and find a path that can be walked simultaneously by people with seemingly opposite perspectives. Joining in the energy is critical.

We continue to empower the energies of stewardship and honor because when we bring energetic light to the planet, it changes the consciousness. Independent of the physical outcome, energetic gifts cannot be stolen, destroyed or rescinded. It is a gift for future generations as we hope the plant project will also become as the years go by.

Adawehi Healing Center was founded in Columbus, NC in 1998 by Jackie Woods and her husband Rodney Booth. It is an intentional community devoted to empowering the heart for extraordinary living. We have online and on-site classes. For more information, please visit our website at www.jackiewoods.org or contact the author, June Ellen Bradley at www.JuneEllenBradley.com.
An enthusiastic group of one hundred UpS members, Board of Directors and local supporters came together to debut our stunning Talking Forest Medicine Trail - ten miles spanning 1200 acres of forest over 3 Botanical Sanctuaries. The trail features hand-crafted signs that tell stories describing the hundreds of healing plant species that line the trail as well as the fascinating history of the forest.

Highlights of the day-long inaugural event were guided hikes with herbalists Paul Strauss, Chip Carroll, Rebecca Wood, Betzy Bancroft, Bevin Clare and Diane Don Carlos through some of America’s largest remaining stands of ginseng, goldenseal, black cohosh and other medicinal plants. Attendees could walk for hours in the lush (wet) woods, or attend classes on Herbal First aid with Rosemary Gladstar, Appalachian tree ID with Rebecca Wood, Goldenseal and Her Friends with Bevin Clare, Medicinal Mushrooms with George Vaughn, or Creating a Goldenseal Windcatcher with Tom Softshell Turtle Netz.

Also part of the program were two award presentations. John Lentz, wildcrafter/grower who provided UpS with thousands of baby plants to send to members for the “Plant Give-Away” program was acknowledged and thanked for his many years of partnership with UpS. Lee Wood, UpS Advisory Board member was presented with a Greenman Stewardship Award for his many years of devoted care of Goldenseal Sanctuary.

Most special of all was the Trail blessing led by Tom Softshell Turtle Netz. This beautiful and inspiring Dedication can be found on the sidebar of this page.

Our thanks to Sara de Aloia’s catering, Maureen Burns of Herbal Sage Tea Company who provided organic and orgasmic food and beverages throughout the day. David Hooker took amazing photos. And many thanks to the volunteers who helped with parking, set-up, clearing, cleaning, schlepping and all the large and small tasks necessary to create a great event.

We will be featuring stories about The Talking Forest Medicine Trail in our up-coming journal. It is truly a unique experience, eco-educational tool/venue and an unforgettable way to connect with many of America’s most valuable herbal treasures.

Great Mystery, Creator of all things, we call out to you this day here on this Sacred land for Your guidance.

We have come together, this day, as one prayer, and one people, as stewards to Turtle Island and her Plant People and Tree People, we ask for Your wisdom and blessings in this Sanctuary of Medicine Plants and Trees.

Help guide us in our efforts of education and preservation. As our lives spin in an unknown direction, Earth Mother too is changing at an alarming rate. These Sacred Plant and Tree People hold the wisdom for our wellness for our futures.

May we remember the lesson You shared with us long ago. The Plants and the Trees of the World are the care of all Nations.

Over time many will come to this Medicine Sanctuary. Some will come as teachers, some will come as students, others will come only to admire the beauty held within.

We pray to You this day in trust that this Sacred Place will become an Inspiration to many.

We pray that a spark will grow into a flame of urgency to those whose lives were touched by their visits to this Sacred Place.

We pray that Sanctuaries throughout the world will be formed so that the wisdom and the healing properties of these Plant and Tree People will be here for our children, their children, and the next Seven Generations of our People.

For these gifts and blessings, we give our labor of love to You and to the healing of Earth Mother.

Tom Softshell Turtle Netz
May 16, 2009 – Rutland, Ohio

Tom Softshell Turtle Netz ©David Hooker

Talking Forest Medicine Trail Dedication on Goldenseal Sanctuary

Tom Softshell Turtle Netz
May 16, 2009 – Rutland, Ohio
In all my (long) herbal life, I had not yet attended the famous 'International' so I was a ‘newbie’ scurrying from one class to the next on the lush and rainy Wheaton College campus in Norton, Mass. I kept running into herbalists I’d known ‘forever’, and meeting herbalists I’d ‘always wanted to meet’, and then there were the 500 other herbalists I ‘just had to meet’. The “International” is truly an event to touch your heart and soul as well as your mind and spirit. It is an opportunity to learn from the world’s leading experts in botanical medicine and herbal lore. This year there were speakers from 12 countries, over 90 workshops for all levels of interest and experience, herbal intensives for more in-depth study, hands on demonstrations and wild plant walks, not to mention the herbal shopping, dancing and merriment!!

2009 was an especially poignant time for us to gather as we honored our departed mentors and friends Michael Moore and Juliette de Bairacli Levy, two great luminaries of the herb world whom we lost this year. Both have been deemed the “Grandfather” and “Grandmother”, respectfully, of the herbal renaissance.

I was excited to be included in the pre-conference “Teacher’s Tour”, as I got to spend an entire day with herbalists who have been donating their time and efforts to many of our UpS conferences and events. An opportunity to meet with them in person, as we were chauffeured around a Farm Coast tour of New England, was memorable. Together we visited Coggeshall Farm, an evolving living history museum of a 1790’s coastal farm where we were guided and then served a bounteous fresh organic lunch hosted by Kate and Dan Rakowsky, our wonderful UpS friends from Sagewood Farms. We also visited Wheenamoo Woods, a 450 acre nature preserve where we were guided by a knowledgeable docent and saw rare coastal oak-holly forests, a white cedar swamp, and many plants on the state’s endangered plant species list.

The Symposium Schedule cannot be kept up with ~ no matter what herbs you take! The selection of classes alone will have you sipping chamomile tea to calm down. My plan was to attend ‘a few’ classes each session, but not once was I able to tear myself away from the first classes I chose! The teachers and fellow students were so compelling! I had the great honor of moderating classes I chose! The teachers and fellow students were so compelling! I had the great honor of moderating “Stewards of Healing Herbs, Plant Conservation & Preservation” with Tim Blakley, Chris Hobbs and Steven Foster and presenting the UpS slideshow with Betzy Bancroft, Mindy Green, Steven Foster, Bevin Clare and Tim Blakley.

Really, the challenge was what class to choose. How do you choose between “Trees: Their Magic, Their Medicine” with Robin Di Pasquale, “Sexy Herbs” with Ed Smith, “The Six Tissue States” with Matthew Wood, “Magical Herbs” with Susan Weed, “Plant Spirit Healing” with Pam Montgomery, “Sex & Smell, Do Women Really Need Men?” with Mindy Green, or an herb walk “Weeds for your Needs” with the ever-entertaining Doug Elliott?? And that was just the first afternoon! Too many to mention here, I encourage you to take a look at the website for a full list of teachers and classes. (www.internationalherbsymposium.com) We thank these incredible teacher/herbalists/friends of UpS for such generosity of sharing spirit.

A special selection of herbal films were featured. The newly released “Numen: the Nature of Plants” (a film produced in association with UpS) was especially popular as well as “The Meaning of Tea” ~ both available on-line and worth viewing.

UpS hosted a booth, and Betzy Bancroft, Nancy Scarzello and I met many new members, sold some books and t-shirts and we all joined in at mealtimes, play times, rejuvenating massage time at the “Relaxation Oasis” and the (In)famous Herbalists Ball on Saturday night.

The IHS was made possible with the support of these fine-sighted and progressive businesses. 100% of the Sponsors’ contributions are donated to United Plant Savers: New Chapter, Herb Pharm, Frontier, Mountain Rose Herbs, and Traditional Medicinals. Big Green thanks!

We thank Rosemary Gladstar, founder of both UpS and the International Herb Symposium who presented UpS with a generous donation from the event. We thank her for these resources, but more so for her inspiration, guidance, patient teaching and unfailing love and spirit. Without her calling together of the tribe, we would not have this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be in such fine herbal communion. Don’t wait as long as I did to attend The International! I hope not to miss the next one in 2011!
On a brilliant Saturday, May 30th, the little mountain community of Williams, Oregon was once again the setting for a fundraiser conference for United Plant Savers. Over 300 people gathered on Herb Pharm’s 85-acre organic herb farm, which UpS Executive Director, Lynda LeMole, described as ‘the herbiest place on earth’, to learn about the cultivation, use and preservation of our dwindling populations of native wild medicinal plants.

Herb Pharm’s farm is one of about 80 member sanctuaries of UpS’s Botanical Sanctuary Network. As such, on this farm you will find just about every plant on UpS’s “At-Risk” list growing as a crop and/or in the landscape. Slippery elm trees line the streams, patches of goldenseal are found in every shady edge and corner, and black cohosh waves its tall white racemes to the wind. The 3-acre Botanical Education Garden is a sanctuary of its own. Wild yam, helonias, ginseng, black cohosh, blue cohosh, and mayapple are among the residents of the ‘UpS bed’. A variety of botanical family beds filled with their medicinal herb members make this garden a perfect outdoor classroom.

But an ideal herb setting alone does not a conference make. This conference was blessed with abundance of an essential ingredient - a healthy helping of inspiring herbal teachers who share their knowledge and experiences about the healing plants and their relationship with humans and animals. What is particularly noteworthy is that these teachers travel to and teach at these events as a donation to United Plant Savers. Our humble gratitude goes to all of these wonderful herbalists: Tim Blakely, Bruce Burger, Jane Bothwell, Richo Cech, Holly Crosson, Harry Fuller, Rosemary Gladstar, Christopher Hobbs, Dr. Tori Hudson, N.D., David Hoffman, Kathi Keville, Ed Smith, Jonathan Treasure, George Vaughn and Mark Wheeler.

Enhancing the festivities was a busy herbal marketplace, bustling with a colorful array of plants, seeds, essential oils, handmade organic baby clothes, herb books…the necessities of an earthy life! A special treat for the attendees at this conference was that Herb Pharm’s farm team and student interns grew over 200 ‘At-Risk’ seedlings to give away. People left with their own baby medicine plants — goldenseal, echinacea, pleurisy root, lomatium, osha and mayapple — to nurture, speak with, and remind them of a magical day of learning about and honoring the magic of the healing plants.

Many thanks to the other herb companies that co-sponsored this event: Pacific Botanicals, Horizon Herbs and Traditional Medicinals. Corporate sponsorship is the seed resource that makes conference planning possible for months in advance of the event. It was my honor as UpS president and cofounder of Herb Pharm to welcome the UpS team and conference attendees to this enriching event.

Editor’s note: UpS thanks Sara Katz, Ed Smith (Herb Pharm co-founders) Anita Gomez, Liz Butler and the service of Herb Pharm’s farm team and interns for their complete generosity of time, spirit and resources. Sara was our conference leader, hostess and ‘go-to’ for all and everything!

Michael will be remembered for his sweetness of character, his humility, and his tremendous generosity of spirit. It comes through in all his books, in his teachings, his friendships, his relationship to Donna, his loving wife, and most of all, it comes through in the rich legacy he’s left behind. His teachings live on through his books, his many students who all seemed to be stamped with a similar original brilliant quality that Michael imparted, the endless work he did to make resources available to other herbalists, his soulful original music and the many other gifts he leaves for the rest of the herbal community to learn from and pass on. It’s hard to comprehend that his big kind hearted brilliant character is gone, but his place in the circle will be long honored and his place as ‘grandfather’ of the herbal community will be held in the circle as long as we all live.
Published this year by Columbia University Press, *Thin Places* recounts author, anthropologist and long-time UpS member Ann Armbrecht’s various journeys to a remote area in northeastern Nepal, where she researched how the Yamphu Rai people obtained and farmed their land and elicited their opinions about the recent designation of their homeland as a national park and conservation area. Most importantly she probed them to discover if they maintained an innate wisdom about living on the land that has been largely lost in Western culture. This premise that reconnecting people to the land is a prerequisite for healing our culture’s relationship with the earth is an undercurrent of this interesting book and will surely endear it to readers of this publication. *Thin Places* received the Gold Medal for personal journey/memoir from the Nautilus Book Awards, which are given to books that have the potential to change the world. Although the Yamphu Rai people were not always forthcoming when Armbrecht questioned them, they unfailingly welcomed her when she joined them in the fields and forests to help as they scratched out their living. It was these experiences of carrying wood or planting rice that led to the requisite transformation that enabled her to begin to understand the local culture and how it differed from her own—“I was so focused on understanding…land tenure, on discovering the right vision for protecting the villagers’ land and culture, that I did not see that my relationships with them, the way I began to care for them and they for me, were the sparks that connected across the boxes that divided. Without that connection— without that love—knowledge was simply power and a vision was nothing but arrogance.”

The author describes how she endured hunger, tasteless food, cold, and often boredom while staying in a tiny village—and daunting pain from her bleeding feet while walking 10-12 hour stretches on the rocky Nepalese terrain, yet how she longed to be there again once back in the confines of her northeastern home. For it was in Nepal that she was able to experience the sacred in the everyday, not only in the wild.

The many meaningful insights shared by the author make this book especially worthwhile. While on a trek with others from the village, she writes, “We experience the sacred not simply by visiting places that are sacred. We enter the sacred when we let go of the fear of being exposed and begin to open our hearts to the world around us. Only when I gave up trying to hide what was inside did the boundaries between the other pilgrims and me begin to dissolve.”

For me a pleasant surprise came near the end of *Thin Places* when the author has returned from Nepal and attends the annual Women’s Herbal Conference in New Hampshire. It is here where she first becomes enchanted with the herbalists’ nurturing way of being in the world. Her desire to learn more from Rosemary Gladstar about how she brought a sense of the sacred nature of plants into teaching about their medicinal uses led her to attend an herbal apprenticeship program at Sage Mountain in Vermont. The philosophy of herbal medicine seems to resonate deeply with Ann Armbrecht. In her words, “…herbalism is based on a sense of the sacredness of the earth, a quality of respect and restraint in interactions with the environment, a focus of relationship rather than ownership, and an understanding of the spiritual and cultural dimensions of healing.”

*Thin Places* is published by Columbia University Press, $27.00. Since the publication of this book, she has co-produced a documentary called *Numen: The Nature of Plants*, which was shown at both the International Herb Symposium and the annual Womens Herbal Conference in NH. *Numen* is a 95-minute documentary film focusing on the healing power of plants and the natural world. Featuring stunning footage of medicinal plants and moving interviews with leading herbalists, doctors, ethnobotanists and others, *Numen* provides a vision of healthcare rooted in the traditions of herbal medicine and offers concrete steps to improve individual health and well-being that enhance the health of the earth.

*Numen: The Nature of Plants* is for sale; go to www.numenfilm.com for updates. During the first week of sales there will be bonuses and discounts offered from herb suppliers, teachers and more, so stay tuned.
2009 CONFERENCE REPORT
by Betzy Bancroft, Office Manager

It’s been another wonderful year for herbal events! In May, UpS held the Grand Opening of the Talking Forest Trail project at Goldenseal Sanctuary in Ohio. It had been quite some time since we invited a large group of people to our amazing and beautiful Sanctuary, so this event was especially exciting for us. Herb walks with Paul Strauss, Rebecca Wood and Chip Carroll are awesome experiences within such botanical paradise. Bevin Clare held her class on the medicinal uses of goldenseal surrounded by a carpet of them and world traveler Rosemary Gladstar gave an inspiring class on her favorite first aid remedies. UpS President Sara Katz, Executive Director Lynda LeMole, Board member Tania Hannan, office manager Betzy Bancroft and Tom Softshell Turtle Netz (who so eloquently gave the blessing on the Sanctuary when it first opened more than ten years ago) were all there to officiate at the Grand Opening celebration. UpS gained 26 new members, and we all had a truly wonderful time there with the plants.

At the International Herb Symposium in Norton, Massachusetts in June, quite a few of our Advisory and BOD members were presenters. Lynda LeMole, Tim Blakley, Bevin Clare, Steven Foster and Betzy Bancroft offered a showing of the UpS “At-Risk” slide show during the free time on Saturday afternoon. Thirty-five new members joined UpS at the conference and 21 members renewed. Betzy and Nancy Scarzello very much enjoyed meeting and speaking with so many herbalists, sanctuary stewards and plant lovers from around the country!

The New England Women’s Herbal Conference in New Hampshire is always a highlight of our summer. Great thanks to the many women who always renew their membership at WHC! Twenty-eight renewing members and 19 new members received our colorful new tote bags with the ‘Stewards of Healing Herbs’ logo printed on it or a great price on our “Planting the Future” book. The afternoon floods in the vendor tent ~ courtesy of Hurricane Bill ~ did not dampen our enthusiasm for the plants or the great teachings!

We’ve had several members staff tables and offer UpS information at other events as well. If you’ve been a UpS member for a while and are interested in representing UpS at an herbal or environmental event near you, please contact the Vermont office.

Next year we are planning a Planting the Future conference in Northern California in the springtime and one at Goldenseal Sanctuary on September 25th. We hope to see you then!

Growing At-Risk Medicinal Herbs
by Richo Cech, illustrated by Sena Cech

Provides organic farmers and gardeners with the information about the cultivation, conservation, and ecology of “At-Risk” native healing plants. Twenty-one chapters include detailed line drawings and descriptions; native range and distribution maps; hardness and adaptability; preferred environment and plant associates; soil, water and sun requirements; propagation techniques; naturalization; medicine; harvest and processing; seed collecting, storage and longevity; conservation status and alternate species. 330 pg.

TO ORDER: send a $15 (plus $5 S/H) check or money order to:
UpS, Po Box 400, E. Barre, VT 05649

PLANTING THE FUTURE
OCTOBER 17, 2009
HOSTED BY ARIZONA - SONORA DESERT MUSEUM
TUCSON, ARIZONA

PRESENTERS
Phyllis Hogan
Richard Felger
Jim Verrier
Monica Rude
Frank Rose
Martha Burgess
Linda Sherwood
Meg Keoppen
Monica King-Ellerby
Laurie Metrod
Mimi Camp
Pam Hyde-Nakai
John Slattery
Meg Quinn
Darcey Blue

TOPICS
The Work of AERA
Ethnomedicine of Sonoran Desert Peoples
Cultivation of Arid Land Plants
Cultivation of High Desert Medicinals
Plant Photography
Desert Foods as Medicine
The Magic of Creosote
Yerba Mansa
Ritual & Ceremonial Herbs of the SW
Seed Saving of SW Plants
Habitat Sustainability in the SW
Plant Walks on Museum Grounds
and more...!

COST:
$60 for current UpS members, $70 for non members. Turkey or veg lunch available.
Contact the UpS office, PO Box 400, East Barre, VT 05649, www.unitedplantsavers.org
plants@unitedplantsavers.org

SPONSORS:
Traditional Medicinals,
Winter Sun Trading Co.,
Super Salve Co., Tucson Herb Store,
Sunflower Market,
Dr. Maureen Schwehr,
Tucson Herbalist Collective
Printed on recycled paper with soy ink

**UpS GOES FEM!!**

UpS LADIES: Be among the first to wear our beautiful new **100% ORGANIC COTTON 'GIRLIE-STYLE' T-Shirt.**

Soft organic cotton, fitted women’s T with cap sleeve, scooped neckline. Natural color with beautiful goldenseal plant illustration. Sizes Small, Med, Large, XL (sizes are true to size, not oversized)

Send $20 to UpS TShirt P.O. Box 400 E. Barre, VT 05649

---

**WILD ROOT STIR FRY**

by Annie McCleary

Burdock root, Evening primrose root
Dandelion root, Wild leek bulbs
Wild ginger root, Onion
Optional: carrots, turnips, parsnip or other seasonal vegetables.

Dig burdock roots (*Arctium* spp.) and evening primrose roots (*Oenothera biennis*) in the autumn of the first year of their growth or in the spring of the second year, when the plants are a rosette of basal leaves and have not yet sent up their stalks. Check the edges of gardens for dandelion roots (*Taraxacum officinale*) for easy digging. Wild leeks (*Allium tricoccum*) can be found in the fall by their seed stalk. Wild ginger root (*Asarum canadense*) is close to the surface and can be harvested by hand; harvest a small piece of the root from between the leaves being careful not to disturb the plants’ growth. Wash all roots well. There is no need to peel the roots. Chop the roots well and stir-fry with onions. Make sure roots are well cooked. Add cultivated vegetables as desired.

UpS GOES FEM!!

UpS LADIES: Be among the first to wear our beautiful new **100% ORGANIC COTTON 'GIRLIE-STYLE' T-Shirt.**

Soft organic cotton, fitted women’s T with cap sleeve, scooped neckline. Natural color with beautiful goldenseal plant illustration. Sizes Small, Med, Large, XL (sizes are true to size, not oversized)

Send $20 to UpS TShirt P.O. Box 400 E. Barre, VT 05649

---

**WILD ROOT STIR FRY**

by Annie McCleary

Burdock root, Evening primrose root
Dandelion root, Wild leek bulbs
Wild ginger root, Onion
Optional: carrots, turnips, parsnip or other seasonal vegetables.

Dig burdock roots (*Arctium* spp.) and evening primrose roots (*Oenothera biennis*) in the autumn of the first year of their growth or in the spring of the second year, when the plants are a rosette of basal leaves and have not yet sent up their stalks. Check the edges of gardens for dandelion roots (*Taraxacum officinale*) for easy digging. Wild leeks (*Allium tricoccum*) can be found in the fall by their seed stalk. Wild ginger root (*Asarum canadense*) is close to the surface and can be harvested by hand; harvest a small piece of the root from between the leaves being careful not to disturb the plants’ growth. Wash all roots well. There is no need to peel the roots. Chop the roots well and stir-fry with onions. Make sure roots are well cooked. Add cultivated vegetables as desired.