



## HERBAL SEASONS

WVHA is a non-profit, educational organization whose mission is to promote the ethical and environmentally sound propagation, cultivation, harvest and use of

### HERB OF THE YEAR

#### BLACKBERRY

#### RUBUS - A RAMBLE THROUGH THE BRAMBLES

By Jane Birdsong

There are many diverse species of flowering plants in the Rose Family, ROSACEAE. In one subfamily ROSOIDEAE, botanists estimate 300 - 700 species. Among them are the "cane fruits" or "bramble fruits" in the Genus Rubus, which includes Blackberry, Dewberry, Boysenberry, Loganberry, and several raspberry hybrids. Their leaves are typically 3 to 7 and they usually have prickly stems. Though raspberries and blackberries both belong in the genus Rubus, they have distinct differences. Blackberry fruits are shiny and have no hairs; raspberry fruits have tiny hairs. Blackberry fruits have a white core while raspberries have no core and are simply hollow in the center.

According to herbalist James Green, author of *The Medicine-Maker's Handbook*, blackberry's main actions are astringent and hemostatic. It is used to treat diarrhea and dysentery. Leaves can be fed to horses for this purpose. It can stop bleeding in the gastro-intestinal tract. Green claims it is best medicinally made into decoction, tincture or syrup, using the bark of the root. Both leaf and root bark have tannins; both are astringent and antipyretic. Herbalist Dr. John Christopher states that a Blackberry (*Rubus villosus*) leaf tea may be used as wash for ulcers & boils. The leaves of red raspberry, *Rubus idaeus*, being high in Calcium, are often used as tea to aid in childbirth, menstrual cramps, and breast feeding.

### LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

As I write this, it is a rainy winter day, (well theoretically winter). Except for one brief cold snap, it has been unseasonably warm.

While I personally have enjoyed the warm and sunny weather, what comes to mind is concern for the plants that need a dormant period of cold and frozen ground.

Undeniably, our climate is changing. At times I find myself feeling despondent over the



rapid loss of species that we are witnessing and my helplessness about my inability to change things. That passes however, and I look for ways that I can participate with nature, offer assistance where I can and protect this beautiful place that I call home. I will continue to reestablish the traditional native flora in my forest, and allow it to progress in its own time and manner. I will invite folks to come and visit and experience the earth and her inhabitants in their own way of being. I also encourage everyone, whether you live in the city, suburbs, or a rural area, to experience the natural world around you.

Blessings  
Barbara

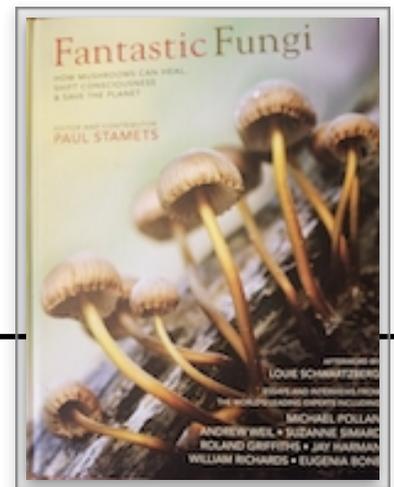
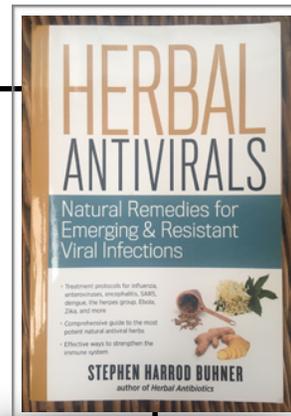
## BOOK REVIEWS

HERBAL ANTIVIRALS  
By  
Stephen Harrod Buhner

This book is a fabulous reverence and because it is so beautifully written, it is a pleasure to read as well. In the first section, Stephen describes the mechanisms of viruses and how they function in the body. Next he goes into specific individual and virus groups with in-depth treatment protocols for each. The last section explains in detail each individual herbs uses as well as formulas for preparation.

This is a must have book, not only for the professional herbalist but for anyone who is interested in using plant medicine in their own lives.

reviewed by Barbara Volk



Fantastic Fungi: How Mushrooms Can Heal , Shift Consciousness & Save the Planet

Edited by Paul Stamets

This is a truly beautiful book that you will want to keep on your coffee table or next to your favorite reading chair. It is full of vivid, colorful pictures and short essays by a variety of authors, including Michael Pollan, Andrew Weil, Gary Lincoff, Paul Stamets, and many others. There are also recipes and interviews.

The book is divided into three sections: For the Planet, For the Body, and For the Spirit. The solutions to our ecological, physical, and mental problems can all be found in fungi. Instead of looking for chemical, or mechanical solutions that only make things worse, we can find solutions and lessons in nature. Here are just a few of the many examples:

Fungi can clean polluted soil, mycelium can be used to filter water, and fungal extracts can be fed to bees and help protect them from viruses. Mushrooms are a tasty addition to the diet, but can also build the immune system, defend against diseases and infection, modulate blood pressure and normalize blood sugar levels. Psilocybin mushrooms can affect the mind and if used carefully can treat mental illness, enhance spiritual practices, and cure social anxieties. If this makes you want to know more, you'll want to read the book!

Those who want to grow mushrooms, or who are serious scholars of fungi will want to read (or acquire) Paul Stamets' more technical books, *Growing Gourmet* and *Medicinal Mushrooms* or *Mycelium Running: How Mushrooms Can Help Save the World*, but *Fantastic Fungi* is a visual feast and perfect for neophytes as well as connoisseurs.

reviewed by Laura Yokochi

By Barbara Volk

I love weeds. Seriously! I LOVE WEEDS! Many people find the wild weeds to be unsightly, messy, even ugly, but I find them to be a never ending source of beauty, wonder and inspiration. They are not just plants to me. They are my friends and I have relationships with them. I do have a few beds of cultivated plants that I tend, but I often "tend" to allow them to go wild in there own way. Many of these untamed and disheveled looking wilder folk are great medicines and food for humans. All of them are food and medicine for the other beings that live on and around them; some such as birds, chipmunks and squirrels, butterflies and bees, are obvious to us, yet there is also a whole world of life happening that often passes unnoticed. Get in close. Get some pollen on your nose. At first the tiny creatures will run and hide. I often imagine what they must think about this giant that invades their homes. Be still; be quiet; be patient. Your patience will be rewarded. The tiny ones will come out and continue their employment.

I am particularly enamored by the spiders that live on flowers. Some flowers have their own distinctive spider, living in reciprocity, never to be noticed by the passer by. In my practice of reciprocity, when I harvest a plant, I make every effort to re-home these little ones. I know it must be traumatic for them, but unlike humans, they don't cling to an incident, and soon they are back to their handiwork.

I am also fascinated by the progression of different plants as the years pass. Some stay rooted and spread their roots and seeds into the same area. Others will visit for a year or two and move on to be replaced by someone new. This flux of new vegetation brings with it an ever changing variety of wildlife.

I remember one fall, there was a new type of grass that I hadn't seen much of in previous years. It overtook the other grasses and weeds and my house was surrounded by it. The indigo buntings were migrating and an immense flock of them obviously delighted in the seeds of this particular grass. My whole yard was a shimmering iridescent sea of indigo. After a few days, they had eaten all of the seeds and moved on. All winter the birds partake of the seeds that cling to the dried grass flowers.

So many surprises occur when The weeds are left to themselves. This summer A yellow passion flower (*Passiflora Lutea*) decided to grace my bedroom window. Her flower is tiny, about an inch and a half, and her fruit is the size of a blueberry. Had I been wacking down the weeds to create lawn, this beauty never would have come to live here.

I also have a different response to "invasives". I prefer to call them immigrants; some of which have become beloved to all herbalists. Stinging Nettles (*Urtica dioica*) is the first that comes to mind. That being said, I would prefer to have a bit less Autumn Olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*) on my place, but I choose not to go to war with it. Instead, I will learn about it and begin to incorporate the berries into my life as food and medicine. The berries are quite tasty when ripe, the birds love them, and this year I will make tincture from them and learn about the medicine offered by them.

I encourage everyone to LET THE WILD WEEDS GROW! Even if it is just a small patch. Welcome them into your life, become friends with them and learn how they can feed you and heal you!



To see more from Barbara, go to:  
<https://www.spottedhorsefarm.com/>

## GARDEN PLANNING IN THE DARK

By Kara Vaneck

As the days slowly start to get longer and darkness begins to brighten, it's time for me to dig out my seeds from the deep freeze and ready them for their new life in the ground. I'm always amazed at how tiny seeds can hold so much information. The seed contains all of the information a plant needs to "know" for sprouting, interacting with bacteria in the soil to amass nutrients, defending itself and reproducing, all of which a plant manages to do without ever uprooting itself. Plants and their seeds appear to be quite advanced, evolutionarily-speaking. According to Nature News, "A rice gene is usually about 4,500 DNA letters long. The average human gene probably stretches to over 30,000 letters." So, when I say garden planning, I really mean seed tossing because these little DNA packets have plans that I can only merely attempt to understand.

I do understand that certain seeds require certain temperatures for germination.

I love this chart by Steve Albert that shows germination temperatures for many many crops.

Taking this handy chart and typical temperature patterns of my region, central West Virginia, into account, I sort my seeds into a box like the one shown by the date that I want to plant them, with each compartment representing a time window of one week. This allows me to keep my bulk seed supply in the freezer and still have the seeds I need for the season on hand. So as you set about planning your garden, keep in mind that seeds have "minds" of their own and will thrive with even minimal effort, so long as they're put in the ground at the right time.



To see more from Kara, go to  
<https://www.smokecampcrafts.com/>

**SPRING ALONG THE RAIL-TRAILS OF WV ARE OVERALL FLAT WITH A SLIGHT GRADE, AND ARE EASY WALKING OR BICYCLING TRAILS. THE RAIL-TRAILS WERE ONCE RAIL-ROADS AND ARE LOCATED THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE STATE OF WV. THESE TRAILS OFFER US SCENIC RIVER VIEWS, MOUNTAINS, WOODLANDS AND GRASSY FIELDS; ALL OF WHICH BOAST A VARIETY OF WILD FLOWERS AND HERBS!**

By Diana Catherine Druga

**Harrison Rail Trails (HRT)** located in Harrison County, WV is a non-profit organization that hosts a variety of walks throughout the year. The WVHA has partnered with them on various "Wild flower and Herb walks" since 2016; and we plan to do even more walks and events with them in 2020!

HRT is also currently working on self-guided walks that you can do using the "iNaturalist" application; which can be downloaded for free into your smartphone. This application allows a trail visitor to pull up locations, pictures, and information on various plants, herbs, and wildlife viewed along each trail. As a visitor, you can also capture pictures of your own and download them into the iNaturalist application for future guests to view. The application will help you to identify what you are viewing.

Spring is not far off, and the rail-trails are a great way to get outdoors and active, while enjoying the beauty of nature!

**BLOOD ROOT**



Blood Root's leaf will curl around the base of the plant and the leaves will emerge after the flower. The leaves also have unique shapes which are round and deeply lobed, often

appearing as a glove like shape, and can be seen along the trails most all summer. Blood root prefers moisture and



**COLTSFOOT**

Coltsfoot looks similar to the dandelion, but you will note the stem will have what looks like scales, and there is no leaf structure when they bloom.

Coltsfoot tend to like damp areas along the trail. The leaves look similar to a colt's

**TRILLIUM**



Trillium colors are often white, pink or red. All of which can be seen along the rail-trails in various areas and prefer shaded hillsides.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE RAIL-TRAILS OF WV: VISIT FB PAGES SUCH AS [HARRISON RAIL TRAILS](#) & [WV RAILS- TO -TRAILS COUNCIL](#).**

## Hidden Magic

*Artemisia Vulgaris*, Mugwort

By Laura Yokochi

Like a fairy tale princess disguised in rags and cinders, mugwort is a powerful herb disguised as a common weed. Its silver beauty and power are hidden and only shown to those who know where to look. When found growing in a garden, or gathered in a bundle over a front door, it is the sign of a wise woman or healer. Its healing and protective value are legendary.

Herbalist Susun Weed calls it "Cronewort" because it represents the grandmotherly wise woman and the waning of the moon. Along with Maidenwort (*stellaria media*) and motherwort (*leonurus cardiaca*), mugwort (*artemisia vulgaris*) completes the triple moon, representing the stages of womanhood and the reproductive cycle.

The artemisias, a large genus of herbs in the daisy family (*asteraceae*), are named for Artemis, Greek goddess of the hunt., wilderness, the moon, childbirth, and chastity. Many of the remedies attributed to mugwort are associated with Artemis. It has historically been used by women to ease symptoms of menstruation, to stimulate contractions, to expel dead fetal tissue, and to terminate a pregnancy, It was known to relieve various aches and pains. Ancient hunters and warriors even put sprigs of mugwort in their shoes to increase stamina as well as prevent sore feet.



Mugwort was both an early insect repellent and a relief for the itchiness that come from insect bites, poison ivy and stinging nettle. "Mug" comes from the Old English word for midge (a type of fly) or Old Norse for marsh. "Wort" means weed or plant. Perhaps because it provided protection from flying insects, people also believed it provided protection from evil spirits, ghosts or witches.

Mugwort is known to inspire vivid or lucid dreaming! Sleeping with mugwort under your pillow is certainly restful and relaxing, and breathing the smoke from a smudge stick or putting a fresh leaf in your bedtime tea can help you get a good night's sleep. Some claim that it is a hallucinogen and can bring about prophetic visions.

Mugwort is a bitter herb, so it is usually not eaten as a vegetable, but is safe for most people when used sparingly in tea, dream pillows, smudge sticks, moxibustion, poultices, tinctures, or smoked as a substitute for tobacco. Some people may be allergic to mugwort, but it is possible they are mistaking it for ragweed.

Mugwort is native to Europe and Eastern Asia, but was brought over with the first settlers and has naturalized in North America. There are some who consider it rampant and invasive, but I believe its abundance should be appreciated as one of nature's many healing gifts.

## Adventures with Asparagus Beetles

By Jane Birdsong

It's been about four years since I wrote about my adventures with the asparagus beetle (*Crioceris*), so I thought it's time to report on my success. For those of you who didn't read my first article, all I need say is my asparagus patch is approximately 3 rows in a square about 6' X 6'. It was planted 2007. I had never seen the beetles until the summer they appeared, 2015. There were dozens of adults and the eggs they laid hatched into dark grey larvae which consumed the feathery foliage of my asparagus plants.

So I set about smashing the larvae (easies and quickest way I could thing of) and then researched how to eradicate pests. What I found was that asparagus beetles hate calendula and tomatoes. So of course, being an organic gardener, those were my weapons of choice. I happen to have several volunteer cherry tomatoes that come up every year, and a few calendula volunteers that do the same. I transplanted several of each into the asparagus bed, and continues to be on the lookout for adults and large that season.

The next year, as memory serves, I saw very few larvae but no adults. I squashed those I saw and moved a few volunteer tomatoes and calendula into the patch.

since 2017 to the present, there have been ZERO asparagus beetles in my asparagus patch! Is it luck or constant vigilance? Probably a little of each, but mostly I give credit to my army of calendula and cherry tomatoes.



Congratulations  
Ed and Carol Daniels  
and

Thank you for the great work  
that you do in educating  
Our youth

SMITHSONIAN  
FOLKLIFE  
FESTIVAL



2020

**EARTH  
OPTIMISM  
INNOVATION  
COMMONS**



Shady Grove Botanicals, a family owned business, began on a small mountain-top farm in Randolph County, West Virginia. It was established by Ed and Carole Daniels, who raise American ginseng

and other medicinal plants on their twenty acre farm. They started the "Plant the Seed" program in an effort to educate the younger generation in proper stewardship and respect for at-risk botanicals in hopes of sustaining these plants for future generations. Ed makes presentations in area schools and to youth organizations about forest farming and incorporates hand-on demonstrations to allow the students the opportunity to plant ginseng or goldenseal seeds to raise on their own.

In 2019, they were interviewed by Rosalie and Clara Haizlett and Emily Hilliard, who were selected as virtual interns for the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. Their mission was to research the history, culture, ecology and economy of American ginseng in Appalachia. The Daniels' efforts to preserve the future of American ginseng will be featured at the 2020 Smithsonian Folklife Festival in Washington, D.C.

