

Bridget Giuffrida:

I chose borage because it's probably my most favorite plant of all just for the—the energetic feel and because it is so functional on so many levels. It has such an important role for this life and for this planet. What I love about borage is that it's an excellent bridge between internal body and the external skin. But borage is more than just a pretty flower. It's wonderful for glowing skin and stress relief and so, so much more. If someone isn't familiar with borage and they want to integrate it into their life, I highly encourage it.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Welcome to the Herbs with Rosalee Podcast, a show exploring how herbs heal as medicine, as food, and through connecting with the living world around you. Borage is one of those plants many of us know best as a garden beauty. It has these sky blue flowers and these bees buzzing all around it, and it's also making its very first appearance on the show. In this episode, Bridget Giuffrida shares how she works with borage as a cooling, soothing herb for things like skin, hormones, and a frazzled nervous system along with some important safety considerations to know before you start.

With over 30 years of loving plants, Bridget brings a joyful, practical approach that makes this plant feel easy to welcome into your life. By the end, you're going to see why borage is so much more than just a pretty flower, and you'll have a sweet recipe to help you to get to know it. If you enjoy this episode, please give it a thumbs up so more plant lovers can find us and be sure to stay tuned until the very end for your own herbal tidbit.

Welcome to the show, Bridget.

Bridget Giuffrida:

Thank you for having me today. I'm so thrilled and eager to be here to share this time together. It's really special.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

In our few moments before we hit record, I already feel like you're a very calming, grounding, sweet soul so I'm very much looking forward to spending some time with you. Thank you so much for being here. And yeah, I am excited for all of the conversations we're going to have today. I'm excited to hear more about you. I love all the different offerings you have in the world, especially the travel part, so I'm excited to dive into that.

Bridget Giuffrida:

Yeah!

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Then I'm excited to have borage on the show. It's the first time ever, but let's back up. Sweet, sweet borage, let's back up.

Bridget Giuffrida:

Reel it up.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, reel it up. I would love to hear from you first and what you got—what got you started on this plant journey?

Bridget Giuffrida:

Oh, that's such a great question and I really appreciate it because it not only is about me, but it really ties in my family, where I come from, and the places that I've been. Both of my parents, while they were divorced—or were actually never even married—they both were very plant—plant-loving people. My mom always had a garden, always had house plants, and she still does. My dad always had a farm with my stepmom, so animal husbandry was very important, and just living off the land was really important.

But one of the most special parts, my grandmother who is 92 years old—bless her, beautiful soul—she has always loved flowers. She has always had this very calm, reassured presence

about herself even amidst stress and chaos and wild family dynamics and life, she always had a beautiful flower garden. Even still, to this day, she's growing flowers bigger than my face. It's—it's just one of the most special things.

Those were some of the early, early days in introductions to the plant world, and then fast forward about 16 years, and I—my first serious boyfriend, his mom actually loved plants. Not only did she have a beautiful garden, but she used a few key herbs during poignant times of the year for specific ailments or for particular reasons. And so, that was my first real introduction using plants as medicine because I grew up on Vicks so it was “Vicks everything.” To this day, I'm kind of like I need my breathe-easy VapoRub to get me through any stress or ailment. It's always with me. But, you know, it was spirulina in the unfiltered apple juice. It was slippery elm for a sore throat. It was picking the peppermint that was right in the yard that just helped with the uneasiness or the tension and the excitement, so I really pulled on—I pulled on that peppermint today when I was eagerly awaiting our time together.

From there, I moved to Humboldt County and I was studying to be a teacher. I was a very young student but I was very eager to learn and on my own, and found a friend who was an apprentice for Jane Bothwell who was my very first herb teacher.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Oh, lovely!

Bridget Giuffrida:

Yeah, she's just so sweet and so near and dear to my heart. My girl friend, Jen, said, “Hey, I'm an apprentice for this herb class. You should sign up!” I'm like, “Oh, yeah with my 18 units I'm taking, sure, I've got time.” So, I signed up and it was love at first sight and it's then—well, it's been 31 years since that first herb class and I'm still head over heels in love with plants, feeling like I learn something new every day whether it's an action or an interaction or the way that they're growing or most importantly, the way they make me feel. Now, more than ever, I feel that's how I lean on herbs, is how they make me feel.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Oh, I love that. Oddly, I feel like I have questions about your first boyfriend's mom. I'm still stuck on that.

Bridget Giuffrida:

I know! She's such a cool—and we're still Facebook friends.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Nice!

Bridget Giuffrida:

She's such a cool lady! She was a dancer and she was so fit and—I'll plug her name because I'm sure she wouldn't mind. Her first and last name were like the same: Lauren Lauria. I was like, oh, that has such a beautiful ring to it. She was just this gorgeous picture of health! Like I said, the few things that she did were very simple yet very mindful and really targeted to the seasons and to really feeling alive in your body and in the moment, and so-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I think that's what captures me about this is that you said she just did a few things. She probably wasn't calling herself an herbalist, but she had a few things that she did. I just have all the questions like how did she learn those few things, and then I think one thing that just feels so powerful is that she did a few things like you said, but it obviously had a big impact for her. It was important to her and then it had this rippling effect for this big impact on you as being one of the things that led you more towards the plants too.

Bridget Giuffrida:

Yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

And so, it's just this interesting thing. I think that when we live in this world of "more, more, more," and we can never do enough, and this kind of feeling of that—maybe scarcity, I don't know. It's just like, look how simple seasonal practices that maybe you could count on one hand. I don't know, but these few things really made a difference-

Bridget Giuffrida:

They do.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

And it's really about the quality, really, than the quantity is what we're talking about.

Bridget Giuffrida:

Absolutely! Like you said, the ripple effect has such a huge impact. Also, it is—it's the "now, now, now." It's the—it's the "I need it yesterday," and it's kind of like, "But—but what about this dial-up sort of scenario that we've started out from? Can't we just sort of tone it back and be in the moment and feel it? And just feel the energy of—of what's growing on around us?" I feel it has this energetic awakening and it ties into healing so impactfully and with such a prolonged effect. That—that ripple is just—it comes back. It will bounce off something and then it kind of comes back. If you allow that sensation to—to permeate you in a way that feels right in whatever way that it feels right, then—then it does last. It lasts for 30+ years and going strong like I'm still in kindergarten.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah. I love you mentioned peppermint with Lauren. Is that what you said her name-

Bridget Giuffrida:

Lauren.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Lauren—peppermint with Lauren, and you said—and you relied on peppermint yet again today in over 30 years later. It was like these plants still stay relevant. Like you said, they're still joyful. They still can capture us and engage us just as powerfully then as they do now. I love all of that.

Bridget Giuffrida:

Absolutely. One other quick thing I'll say because I—I'm a mother. I have four beautiful daughters that I've birthed. I have several other children too. When I gave up coffee for pregnancy and being postpartum and just really focusing in, it was the peppermint tea that I went back to. It was—and that became my ritual every—every day, or four or five times a week. I find that that is something that really—it brings me home. It makes me feel good in myself.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I love that peppermint is a place of comfort too.

Bridget Giuffrida:

For sure, for sure. So, here we have it.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Nice, nice. It's such an easy one to love. I mean it's like peppermint wants us to love-

Bridget Giuffrida:

It does! It's so prolific. You can grow it everywhere inside, outside. It's just—I'm surprised I didn't choose that one.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, but you did choose borage which I'm so excited for. I was telling you earlier too it's blooming in my garden right now when many things have gone past their season, so it's lovely. I was actually just staring at borage yesterday when I was out in the garden because I

was just enraptured with all the bees that are loving the borage right now. We have my—the New England asters blooming and the borage is blooming, such important plants right now for the bees, these late, late bloomers. But I would love to start with you in asking why did you choose borage for the show?

Hey, there. Just a quick note: if you'd like to hear from me in a more personal way, I'd love to have you in my free text community. I send a couple of texts every week, things like behind-the-scenes updates, herbal thoughts that I'm chewing on, and little sparks of joy I don't always share anywhere else. To join, just text the word ROOT to 1-509-383-8398, and if you ever want to break up, no hard feelings. Just text STOP to the same number and you'll be opted-out immediately. My goal is to make it so juicy and so fun that you look forward to getting my texts each week. Okay, now back to the show.

Bridget Giuffrida:

So, I chose borage because it's probably my most favorite plant of all just for the—the energetic feel, the beauty of it, all of the properties that it—that it has that are so incredibly useful for us and for our gardens, and also, the caution that comes with it. And so, I chose it because when I started my little herb company, I chose borage as the flower, as the symbol to represent. I just love the color. Everything about it was just—I just gravitated right to it, so the more I grew it, the more I loved it. Like you said, with the pollinators and the bees and this late summer, early fall, it just—it has such an important role for—for this life and for this planet, and for humans, and for—for everything. And so it's—so I chose it because it's delicious and because it is so functional on so many levels. That's why I chose it, yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I love that. I love that that was your flower too. It is such a cool flower! I feel like I could—I feel like I could spend a lot more time looking at the flower than I have—I have, literally, was just staring at it yesterday, but it is—I don't know. There's just something—it's a weed, basically, in many people's gardens. And obviously, I say that with love. Nobody get offended.

Bridget Giuffrida:

No. It's like dandelions, right? A lot of people-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, it's this weed but it's this incredible flower! It's just so—I mean you could just gaze at it for such a long time—at its beauty and everything.

Bridget Giuffrida:

Yeah, yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

So, it's actually a plant that has just—just popped up randomly in my garden. Before that, I didn't really live around it and so I haven't really worked with borage very much, not medicinally. I think the most I've done is gather the flowers and put them on salads or I put them in ice cubes. I've kind of worked with borage as beauty, really, more than anything and-

Bridget Giuffrida:

For sure.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Just a fun plant to have around, so I'm looking forward to learning about how you work with borage.

Bridget Giuffrida:

Yes, so I think that that's wonderful that that's how you use it. I think that's how a lot of people use it because it is so attractive. It is so unique—the shape of it. The “starflower” is what it's also called. That color—you really don't get that—that beautiful blue color, purple color in a lot of plants, and so it is very attractive. Plus, the size—just the size of it. It does get so large. It can get up to two or three feet. It can just get so leggy and all of that. Borage is more than just a pretty flower. It's wonderful for glowing skin and stress relief and so much

more. I love that you use it in your salads and maybe for decoration and for tea. Many people like to put it in ice cubes because it's quite—quite pretty and kind of a showstopper.

Borage has another name that people refer to it as starflower, simply by the shape of the—the blue flower. It holds great promise for treating a variety of inflammatory disease, and scientists are coming more and more into this as they do more studies about it, and so I find that to be really promising. I'm continually learning. Like—like I said earlier, that's one of my favorite things about being human is that I get to learn something new every day. It does have hairy leaves on—on the stalk and on the branches and the leaves, which the leaves are edible as well—the hairy leaves and the stunning blue flowers. They also come in another variety—a white variety. Have you ever grown that?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I have seen that.

Bridget Giuffrida:

Or seen it?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It seems like they just kind of will pop up here and there. Sometimes I've even seen a light pink.

Bridget Giuffrida:

Uh-huh. Probably just a little-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Which could be the hybrid or something.

Bridget Giuffrida:

A little hybrid or underdeveloped or a new flower. I've seen that happen too, but that white variety does have a name. It's called "alba" and it produces this pure white flower. How beautiful is that?

It's an effortless, prolific bloomer. It is an annual, but it is a prolific self-seeder so it will come back year after year. It tends to pop up in your garden right where you need it. It's a wonderful companion plant, especially to strawberries and squashes and tomatoes so that's really nice because those are fun ones to pick, and also will give you a lot of fruit and vegetables. What I love about borage and growing it and being able to pick it is the more you pick it, the more it produces. That's a fun thing, especially for children or big kids, and so the classic color—

The taste of it is like a cucumber. I've always described it as like a cucumber and honey combination; not the texture or the silkiness or the texture of honey, but the sweetness is so beautiful. I think because it is so popular with pollinators, you've got that really rich nectar that they're going for. You have the sweetness and then the cucumber essence that comes through it, so to eat them plain is so yummy, and then, of course, adding it to your ice cubes or your syrups or mocktails or even a gin or a vodka-infused, botanical-infused alcohol for a cocktail.

But it is a legendary companion plant for strawberries. It's an excellent pollinator. It's like a biological neon sign for—for bees. For this time of year, we want to see them. We want to continue to see them as long as we can.

It is very high in Vitamins A and C. It's also very high in potassium and calcium. It makes an excellent green manure. If you do cut it back or if it dies back, then adding it into your compost or tilling it up and returning it to your soil, it will reward you later in those minerals that you're recycling back into your garden. That's a really—also a really great way to continue to keep borage alive as we've done for thousands of years because borage does have such a—such a huge historical and folklore history.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Hey, friends. It's Rosalee. If you've been nourished by this podcast, if it has helped you feel more connected to the plants or more grounded in your own herbal path, then I'd love to invite you to join the Herbs with Rosalee Podcast Circle. This special membership helps make the podcast possible. It supports everything we do behind the scenes, and it gives you a chance to go even deeper with the content that you love. Inside the circle, you'll get exclusive herbal resources, live classes each season with some of my favorite herbal teachers, and a private space to connect with fellow plant lovers. It's where the heart of our herbal community continues to grow. To learn more and join us, visit HerbalPodcastCircle.com. Your support means the world and it helps this podcast continue to bloom.

I love that the—I've never heard the word starflower before. Every time I've said "borage" today, it feels weird. I'm like willing—I'm already like wanting to adopt the new name. This is starflower now.

Bridget Giuffrida:

You can call it that. You can call it that. When you come back to *Borago officinalis*, then you'll be like, "Okay. I can do that too," right? Yeah, so it's fun because when you think about the history of plants and the lore of plants and the Latin name of plants, our genus and our species—*Borago* or deriving from the word "burra" meaning—what does it mean? It's the—the roughness. It's the hairy. It's the hairs—the hairs that are on the stem, which don't necessarily taste so good, but if you pick the tender, green, young shoots and the young leaves, it too has that—not as much sweetness but it definitely has the cucumber essence in it—so you've got that fuzzy leaf there. Yeah, yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

When I was learning about borage when I was a baby herbalist, I remember harvesting the fresh leaves but then we would chop them up really well, which would help, to add it to salads chopped. I think that took away the remaining kind of "hairiness" of it.

Bridget Giuffrida:

Fuzziness, yeah, because those don't really taste so good. It's not like a—like a sting like of nettles, but when you pick its distant cousin or maybe not so distant—they are in the same family—of comfrey, you get that same feeling. That kind of coarseness almost like a sandpaper-ish sort of a feeling that isn't quite so palatable but it is edible. Yeah, yeah.

So, going back to the—the leaves, with chopping them up is a great way to dry them out better and to kind of preserve your harvest. You can certainly use the leaves along with the flowers in making your herbal teas, making your tincture, and also, those are really quite delicious when—because I love food so much, I really believe that food is medicine and however you can get your herbs into your food, it makes you feel better without trying or feeling like you're having to try so hard. Those flavors, especially now with our late summer is—and even summertime—is with citrus or brightening the soups that we're starting to eat a little bit more of, or the broth—more heavier, hardier, it just kind of lightens it up and brightens the flavor. And then, of course, you can fold it into butter and into goat cheese, and then use that on a bread or—I love sourdough bread.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It's kind of my love language. That's what I say.

Bridget Giuffrida:

Right? Yeah. Absolutely, yes. So, folding that in there and then that's another way to preserve it – to keep borage around even when the flowers aren't available, so that's really nice. Muddling those either leaves and/or flowers into your lemonade or—and things like that is really quite delicious.

One of the special things about borage is that it's a very cooling plant, not like it tastes really cool—well, it kind of actually does because of the cucumber essence gives you the vibe or the energy of the coolness. That's what it does in your body too, and so it really does cool you

down. As a summertime beverage, it's fantastic mixed in with lemonades or your mocktails or even a cocktail and/or mixing it into syrups and adding that to your tea or making an instant cup of tea with that—that sky blue syrup that it will produce.

But the cooling effect itself is wonderful in the body, making it really fantastic for hormonal balancing. It's regulating for premenstrual syndrome or even for menopausal symptoms, and so due to the GLAs or the gamma-linolenic acid, you have that really strong anti-inflammatory properties that really have a huge impact on the hormones and in balancing the hormones.

Not only is it wonderful for that, in cooling the body in that way and having that strong anti-inflammatory impact, it's wonderful for skin and for the vitality of your skin. It does have essential fatty acids, the omega-6s which are really, really important—making it very soothing for skin conditions like eczema or acne. Again, overheating of the body and that eruption in the skin that you feel that produces the discomfort and—and the pain, but-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I'm curious, Bridget, for the skin care. Are you talking primarily about using it internally? For those-

Bridget Giuffrida:

Both, both.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Both. Okay.

Bridget Giuffrida:

Yeah. What I love about borage is that it's an excellent bridge between the internal body and the external skin. With a plant like borage, you can really use it internally as well as topically. You find it in a lot of skin creams and toners, and that sort of thing. Maybe not a lot, but you definitely find it in more specialized products like that, and so it can be used internally as well

as externally. When you are working with a specific situation, then it's nice to have the internal and the external bridge making that beautiful connection in the middle.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

And so externally, are people infusing the whole plant into oil or—I want to say that I've seen borage seed oil.

Bridget Giuffrida:

Absolutely. That is one of the most popular ways to use it and that is the—and actually, it has the highest concentration of the—the GLAs. Other things that you can find with that would be evening-primrose oil, hemp seed and black currant – those are three other ingredients that are really high in the GLAs, but borage is the highest natural form in green-based action of the GLAs, so very effective.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Is that mostly how it's used as that oil rather than an infused oil, kind of like a homemade herbal product. It's more the oil?

Bridget Giuffrida:

Yeah. That's what I—yeah. That's what I see most. You can buy it in the store. NOW makes it. There are a lot of different producers of it but in a soft gel tab, that's how you're going to find it and that's how it's primarily used, and so, yes. But to answer your question furthermore, you can certainly use it as an infusion, as a face wash or as a hair rinse, it's fabulous. It makes a wonderful poultice to apply topically directly to your skin, and of course, a liniment adding it to witch hazel or other hydrosols or vinegar. I like to use white vinegar on my skin. I do use apple cider vinegar quite a bit, but I like the white because you pick up the color. I feel sometimes that color therapy can be really beneficial, just healing on another level. You don't always have to eat the rainbow if you can see the rainbow. That's going to be healing too.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I like it.

Bridget Giuffrida:

Yeah, yeah. So, externally in an oil is great. You can certainly make your own infused oil, but pre-prepared oils and a soft gel is most commonly used for the gamma-linolenic acid intake as an anti-inflammatory. And then, of course, for skin care, for increasing and promoting elasticity, and soothing and reducing inflammation.

Most importantly, however, I have found that borage, personally, has been incredibly effective for mood support, for providing gentle courage, and—or cheerful courage, and soothing and reducing the adrenals—the adrenal glands in helping to manage stress. It definitely helps to manage adrenalin. It takes it down a notch if you're vibrating at 11 and you need to rein it down to a six. We're—we're all kind of going full throttle these days and that is so very taxing, not only on your nervous system, but then again, that ripple effect has such an impact on everything else too. It's a powerful ally for the nervous system and it's a great tonic for those who feel emotionally overwhelmed. It definitely helps to restore internal balance. Again, it's like—it's like the Libra of plants. Well of course, we are in Libra season. It's just very internally and externally, it's just kind of giving this—this balance, but historically, it's known to lift the spirits and to bring courage.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

And when you're working with it in that way, how do you like to work with borage? Are we talking tea or tincture or salad? All the ways?

Bridget Giuffrida:

Yes. Again, yeah, all the ways—all the ways that you can. Going back to the—like preservation, like how are you able to hold on to it? How are you able to bring it in to the next season to be able to call on it when you need it? Crystallizing the flowers which makes it really fun and yummy because why not? They look pretty and they taste good too. So, that. Tincture—you could certainly tincture it. I am a big fan of glycerites with a very low alcohol dose. Working a

lot with children and babies and new moms, I think it's really important too, and then, of course, you know our over-inflamed lifestyle that a lot of us live, just decreasing the heat, and naturally encouraging some of those—those properties that borage already has but accentuating it, so a really nice glycerite is a wonderful thing to have. And then flower essences. I love flower essences. And so harvesting those when they're abundant, and then preserving that so you have a good stock of it for the year or at least the next six months is really nice. Those are my favorite ways to have them. And then, of course, having borage in the apothecary is a—a special way to just call on it when you want to make a tea or prepare something special for somebody.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Perhaps now, Bridget, would be a good time to talk about the recipe that you've shared with us, Borage Blossom Honey, which sounds spectacular. In fact, I think I'm going to make it right after we hang up because-

Bridget Giuffrida:

I hope you do.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It sounds so, so lovely. Will you please tell us about it? And also, for people who are listening or watching, you can download your beautifully illustrated recipe card. Just look at the show notes in the video description, we'll have it there for you, or visit herbswithrosaleepodcast.com. Alright, so yeah, tell us about this recipe.

Bridget Giuffrida:

You're the best! I love your illustrations, by the way.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Shout out to Tatiana! She's the one that does them.

Bridget Giuffrida:

Shout out to Tatiana!

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Tatiana Rusakova, yeah, she does stellar work.

Bridget Giuffrida:

That's beautiful. So, borage honey. Honey is like an apothecary unto itself. We owe so much to our pollinator friends and to the bees and to the beekeepers. What a beautiful way to preserve borage. When you're making your borage honey, it's quite simple. These are my favorite recipes, the simple ones, because you can remember it and just call on it and easily make it when you want to and when you have the stuff.

Using flowers and also using your herbs, your leaf—you don't necessarily want to use the stalk, but the tender leaves are ideal. Some bigger ones. You don't want to get it too big. No more than four or five inches, ideally. Chop them up and dehydrate them or lay them out in a basket to dry, and then fill your clean glass jar a half to two-thirds full with your beautiful dried blossoms and chopped up herb material. I like to make sure that the herb material is small and garbled nice and fine, just so you have the surface area to fully extract the medicinal properties of that borage, and also kind of invigorate the lasting essences that are in there. Cover it completely and fill your jar with honey, nice tight-fitting lid. Label and date it. Don't forget to label it and date it because even after all of these years, I'll find something that I didn't label and date, and then I'll just have to sit with it until I remember what it is. Leaving-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That has never happened to me but I hear it happens to other people.

Bridget Giuffrida:

Oh, it hasn't?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, never. That's never ever—not like last week or anything.

Bridget Giuffrida:

I'm a double winker. I got ya. Oh, gosh. That's fine. That's the science project—the scientist in us.

Cover it, let it sit in—not direct sun, I don't like to put my honeys in direct sun—but in a nice lit countertop, somewhere close by where you can put your energy into it by turning it over a couple of times a day, every couple days. Just don't forget about it. I like to put some—a little vase of flowers next to my infusing or macerating jars of goodness just to add to the abundance and the energetic vibrations that are getting close and infusing in there.

Once you're done, I like to heat my honey in a double boiler just enough to thin it out a little bit so then I can strain it. You certainly don't have to strain it, but I like to strain mine because I don't really want bits in my honey all the time or in my tea, or if I'm using honey in a recipe like I made this incredible vegan cornbread the other day while I was teaching this last weekend, and drizzling some honey over it. Don't always want the bits, but also, those bits can potentially cause bacteria to grow. While honey has this beautiful effect, again, an apothecary unto its own, doesn't necessarily mold, we just don't want to invite any of those foreign invaders in there to ruin our good time. Strain it out, re-jar it, rebottle it in a pretty, pretty jar that you like and use it as you will.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It's lovely! Thank you so much for sharing that with us.

Bridget Giuffrida:

Absolutely, you're welcome.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

One question I have for you is the recipe I'm looking at has fresh borage being used, not dried.

Bridget Giuffrida:

Okay.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah. Do you recommend both?

Bridget Giuffrida:

I recommend both but I definitely prefer the dry that is fresh dried, so it's then—I like to put the fresh flowers in there because I think it looks beautiful. When borage flowers dry, they shrivel up into very little. The one thing that I will note and why I did say fresh is that borage leaves don't have a tremendous amount of water, and so that's not going to invite or create any kind of mold growth or problem areas there. You certainly can use fresh if you have it available. So, I think appealing to the masses we suggest the borage in a dry form.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Alright. It's good to have options.

Bridget Giuffrida:

Absolutely.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

And then what's your favorite way to enjoy the honey once it's done?

Bridget Giuffrida:

By the spoonful.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

There we go.

Bridget Giuffrida:

I love honey. I love it many different ways. I definitely enjoy it by the spoonful. I find it to be a really good treat. I'll add it to my tea. I like to mix it with my yogurt. I do—and then also to chia seed pudding. If I'm having that in the morning, I like to add it. I like to be able to taste it because I love the flavor. If I put it in a smoothie or I mix it in a salad dressing, the flavor almost gets lost because there's other stuff that is stronger. But if I just am adding it to one other thing, then I can really taste it. I like to put it on my ice cream too.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Alright. I have more incentives to go make it now. Thank you.

Bridget Giuffrida:

Yeah, absolutely.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Where would you like to go next with starflower?

Bridget Giuffrida:

Okay, so with this—so, starflower. I love that you're calling it that.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I adopted it already.

Bridget Giuffrida:

You are! I love that, yeah. Borage or starflower—it's steeped. It's steeped in bravery. It's steeped in courage. For thousands of years, it's been a popular plant among our elders, like Pliny the Elder, the Celts and the Romans. It's a giver of joy. It was infused in wine to promote fearlessness as they went into battle. The herb was rubbed on swords to give courage. And so

to plant borage today is—it's a testament to borage enduring time, enduring centuries of use and of acknowledgment and importance and value.

Historically, it's been used for—to lift the spirit and to bring courage. It is a powerful ally for managing stress. It's one of my most favorite ones when I'm feeling particularly nervous in an unfamiliar way, and a way that really brings down my mood. Not like today where I was—I was nervous but I was excited, and probably it was more excitement in just like, “Oh, my gosh! Yes! I'm just so happy!” but nervous like that sort of feeling. The other side of it is when that nervousness turns into melancholy or depression and dips the mood and creates a mental fatigue, borage is a gentle pick-me-up. Looking at the flowers, looking at the life and the energy that grows and goes on around borage with all of the bees, the happiness that is produced in the other flowers and plants that grow nearby, it's a pick-me-up for the person, the recipient who is taking it or receiving it and enjoying it, and those that are around it. And that it restores internal balance and it provides a calm resilience in this busy and demanding world that we live in and lifestyle that many of us—that many of us choose. So, it helps to give grace amidst our daily challenges.

It provides strength and resilience and also very steady courage to help rebuild body energy and vitality, and especially helpful for recovery after an illness. We're still having these lingering effects of folks with COVID and that kind of tie-in where we have this—a lot of virus happening. Those are things that really depress us for a long time, not just we have a cold or we have the flu when it's a few days or a couple of weeks. Some people are really struggling and suffering for—for weeks and months even. I think that it's—it's really important to think about that.

Something that is really important you had mentioned with the PLAs. There is caution that comes with using borage as in with using comfrey, its cousin in the same family. Not all plants within the same family and are—are—have the same contraindications or have the same warnings, but borage definitely does have those PLAs that are important to acknowledge. It's important to not use them for an extended period of time. You're not wanting to use it

consistently for two weeks in a row. This is a plant to be sure that you are eating with caution and not overutilizing, and also taking into effect or into account other herbs that you might be taking or other medicines that you might be taking that may have some contraindicated effect for. So, in moderation, borage can be very, very effective, especially for topical or flower essences. It has just a really steadfast, solid energy for uplifting the spirits and bringing gentle courage, and of course, taste.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It is pretty incredible this plant has been known for courage for so long. Before we were chatting, that's probably one of the three things I could have told you about starflower, is that it's known "borage for courage." It's the thing that it's long been known for. I just think—yeah, I just think that's fascinating that that is a-

Bridget Giuffrida:

It is.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

A gift that humans have been tracing for so long.

Bridget Giuffrida:

Absolutely. It really has. I mean—and so—I mean thousands of years, right? So, it's fantastic. It's fantastic. People grow it. They'll plant it in their gardens not only for the simple beauty and what it does for the soil, and how it is so attracting to the pollinators. Again, it's just a testament to the value and the importance and the historical use and how we've been using it and utilizing it for—for so, so long. It's special, yeah. There is a—there's a quote and I won't say it in Latin, but there's a quote about borage that has long been known, and it is, "I, borage, always bring courage," and that is something that, like you had said, it's a reminder. That is generally, the first thing that people think of when they think of borage, *Borago* – "corago" meaning "courage."

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Nice. Thank you so much, Bridget, for sharing so much about starflower. I don't want to stop you if you've got more, but you came incredibly prepared. That was absolutely lovely.

Bridget Giuffrida:

I'm so excited to be here, Rosalee. This is just a beautiful—a beautiful day and what—what an honor. I'm so happy.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Likewise, this has been lovely for me too.

Bridget Giuffrida:

Yeah, yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I would love to hear—or did you have more about borage? Am I cutting you off? I don't mean to be.

Bridget Giuffrida:

No. I mean I could probably keep going but I would just say that if someone isn't familiar with borage and they want to integrate it into their life, I highly encourage it because it is so easy to grow. Again, it is such an important and valuable plant for your garden. It doesn't take much to grow it. They're very self-sufficient. They have a nice, deep taproot. Once you get it, in addition to it being relatively drought-tolerant, you can kind of set it and forget it. It's one of those beautiful plants that sort of does the work on its own, and then you can slowly get to know it. I think that it's really important that getting to know a plant before you dive in head first and using it in all the ways is so—such an important and impactful way to get to know a plant. Having it in tea, having it in salad, using it as decorations is really important.

Knowing a plant is so important too, and to really know it, you have to grow it. And so, starting some seeds which—very effortless, putting it, self-sowing right into the ground is—you won't be disappointed, so plant the starflower. Get it going. Sprinkle the packet of seeds and just with—without—no caution to the wind. Just let it go. Just let it happen.

It also has something that I think is very important to know with—with its cooling and anti-inflammatory properties is that it is a diuretic, so will make you pee. It is also a diaphoretic so—which will make you sweat. With those diuretic and diaphoretic qualities, that helps to really cool down the body. Again, if we're learning about plants and the action of certain qualities in this anti-inflammatory aspect and attribute, we're really cooling the body down. I think that that's important to know too, so grow it and get to know it! It will be your friend, and shortly, it will become one of your most favorite plant allies like it is for me and many others. And you too—I can't wait to see your starflower honey.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Thanks for the encouragement to grow it. In my garden, it just—it must have come in with another plant, or somehow it just showed up magically one year and not sure how. Now, like you said, I live in a pretty harsh climate. I'm Zone 4. It's very hot, dry summers and it just thrives year after year.

Bridget Giuffrida:

It does!

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Like you said, I've never tried to replant it or anything but it keeps growing. I do remember somebody—this was years ago—somebody was walking through my garden and they saw the starflower growing. They said, "Oh, watch out. That's a weed. It'll take over." I was like, "Cool! That would be great! Awesome!"

Bridget Giuffrida:

I love that. I love that. I did that. One of the first years I had a garden, I was so excited to grow burdock. Same thing. Like I'm growing a thistle—that was smart! I invite them. I invite all the crazies to the party.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I love it. Thanks again for sharing so much about starflower. I appreciate it.

Bridget Giuffrida:

You're welcome. My pleasure.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Bridget, I would love to hear about the herbal offerings you have in the world. You have several that sound very exciting, so I'm here for it.

Bridget Giuffrida:

Thank you. I—you know, I've always said there's no time to be bored. Only boring people get bored. I am such a busy body. As much as I really honor my quiet and I love being calm and regulated nervous system, I have a lot of irons in the fire and it's a lot of fun. One of my most favorite projects that I am working on right now is my Herbalism for Youth program. I teach a homeschool group every Thursday morning and it just brings so much joy to my life. Every week—even though they're little guys, every week I have a handout for them so they can take it with their—give it to their parents, who a lot of times, the parents love to attend too because they're learning big kid stuff in little kid ways. And I, with those weekly handouts that I've been making for the last few years, I—I'm going to turn that into a book, and-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Oh, cool.

Bridget Giuffrida:

It's a project that I am really excited about. It's going to be part coloring book, part workbook, lots of recipes. It will be a compilation of all of the projects that we do on a week-to-week basis. Given that what I work on is very seasonal and plants are very seasonal, yet seasons overlap so you've got this overlap that's really fun. I'm super excited about that project and that class that I do.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It's lovely. I can see it's just an inspiration to you. That's fun.

Bridget Giuffrida:

It totally is! It's so fun, yeah, because my kids are big. My oldest is 21 and my youngest is 14. Nobody wants to come to mom's herb classes very much anymore!

Rosalee de la Forêt:

You gotta farm that out now. Find the littles.

Bridget Giuffrida:

I'm like, "Come on, guys. You could do this. We'll have fun!"

Another thing that I—is really near and dear to my heart is people. Obviously, being an educator and having—I love people, being a mom, and travel. You can meet so—you can learn so much about people when you get into their environment. So my husband and I lead international tours. We take small groups of people on curated excursions and trips to Belize and to Sicily. We've taken folks to Tuscany, and so—but the two places that really kind of hit home and feel like home because we've been to several times now is—are Belize and Sicily. Coming up, we've got a couple of trips happening and it's just a wonderful opportunity to immerse people in the culture and food, and just the whole energy of a country, and so it's—that's just fabulous. It's just a wonderful way to share a unique experience with somebody. It makes the world feel very small. It's like, "I've done this" or "I've seen something like this," or "I do something like this." It's like, yeah, we're—we're all living in the same planet here. We're

all doing a little bit of the different kind of the same thing, and so—travel—our international tours and travels are just fabulous.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Oh, lovely. That's Bella Flora Expeditions Tour. For people that are interested in learning more about you or doing a tour, what are some ways they can get in touch with you?

Bridget Giuffrida:

You can always call me or text me. You could email me, and then of course, you could visit my website. Those are the—the three best ways, and then of course, social media. We're all connected by social media on Facebook and Instagram and TikTok.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Nice.

Bridget Giuffrida:

I haven't done any dances, alright, but I'm thinking about it. Those are all the ways to—the top four ways.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

We'll sure to put your links in the show notes. We'll keep your number private so it doesn't go out to a lot of people.

Bridget Giuffrida:

They can find it. If they—if they look it up, they'll find it.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Alright. We'll put your website and social out there so folks can find you.

Bridget Giuffrida:

I love it. I love it so much. Thank you very much.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, thank you! Before you go, I have one last question for you. That question is: how has working with herbs changed the way you see the world?

Bridget Giuffrida:

Oh, that is such a good question. It really has changed my view in—it's #1, the interconnectedness of people, and then also, the emotional balance of myself. More and more I have leaned on herbs in a personal or emotional way where it's like an old friend. I learned very young—very early on when I was a baby herbalist that there are plant allies and that plants really can show up for you in ways that you least expect them. For every season of my life, every big, monumental change or difference in kind of “evolution of Bridget as a human,” herbs have shown up for me on different levels, but the one that across the board resonates and has the biggest impact is its emotional and psychological stability, where it's the friend that I can always lean on. It might be a different friend and maybe I only have ten best friends when it comes to plant allies, but there's always someone that's there. There's always—there's always a plant that shows up when the time is right or when the time is needed. So, yeah, it's that.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That's beautiful. I feel like it's starflower showing up for me right now in beautiful ways. Truly, so many—so much of what you shared today is what I needed to hear, so I'm looking forward to go spending more time with starflower out in the garden. Thank you so much, Bridget, for being here and just sharing your enthusiasm and love for this beautiful plant.

Bridget Giuffrida:

I love that. I'm tremendously grateful and it's been an honor to share this time with you. Thank you. It's been really, really sweet. Thanks, Rosalee.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Likewise, thank you.

Thank you so much for listening. You can download your illustrated recipe card from today's episode. Just head over to herbswithrosaleepodcast.com or check out the show notes for a link. If you're not already subscribed, I'd love to have you as part of this herbal community so I can deliver even more herbal goodies your way.

This podcast is made possible in part by our awesome students. This week's Student Spotlight is on Amanda Johnson in Colorado.

Amanda is currently enrolled in both Rooted Medicine Circle and The Healing Power of Teas, where she's been exploring the beautiful connections between plants, people, seasons, and everyday life. One of her most meaningful projects was making lilac honey after discovering a lilac bush on her property that she had never noticed in more than ten years of living there. As she harvested the blossoms, she thought of her neighbor Dale, who had recently passed away and who had deeply loved lilacs and caring for them. Amanda wondered if, in some way, he had left her with his passion for these beautiful flowers, and gathering the lilacs became a meaningful way to honor him. The finished honey was fragrant and delicate—and Amanda says she would absolutely make it again. I love how her story shows how herbalism can deepen our connection to the plants and places that surround us, and even connect us with those who came before us.

To honor her contributions, Mountain Rose Herbs is sending Amanda a \$50 gift certificate to stock up on their incredible selection of organically and sustainably sourced herbal supplies. Thank you, Mountain Rose Herbs, for supporting our amazing students!

And if you'd like to be an herbalist, you can check out my foundational courses at HerbsWithRosalee.com.

Okay, you've made it to the end of the show which means you get a gold star and this herbal tidbit.

Borage puts a lot of energy into its flowers and that's true in more ways than one. This three-year study in Poland looked closely at just how generous borage is to its pollinators. A single plant produced an average of 953 flowers over about eight weeks of blooming. That's impressive. Each flower lives for less than a day, but it starts offering nectar before it's even fully open and it keeps going until it fades, so all together, one borage plant can offer over a gram of nectar sugars and a gram of pollen. So, no wonder bees make up nearly three quarters of all the insect visitors, right?

But here's the thing: borage also protects those precious flowers. Like its cousin, comfrey, borage does contain pyrrolizidine alkaloids or PAs. These compounds can be hard on the liver. A recent German study found that the PAs are highest in the youngest parts of the plant, especially borage microgreens and young leaves, and the flowers themselves had more PAs than the leaves. PAs, the pyrrolizidine alkaloids, a bit of a controversy in the herbal world. People have varying degrees of comfort about it. There are people who will drink comfrey infusions and people who absolutely will not. There are risks with consuming plants high in PAs, especially if you have liver disease or you're pregnant or nursing. So, please do your research. Assess the risks before consuming borage internally. Good news is that borage seed oil is typically free of PAs so you can actually find ones that are labelled "certified PA-free." Also, using borage topically on unbroken skin like in washes and compresses, poultice, etc., that's a much lower risk way to enjoy the plant. Alright, if you want more information about pyrrolizidine alkaloids, check out my comfrey video where I discuss the risks of PAs more in-depth.

As always, thank you for joining me. I'll see you next time.