

Mason Hutchison:

Hello. How are you today? This is going to be super fun.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Now, I feel really psyched for it.

Mason Hutchison:

I like talking about dandelion–pissenlit.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Pissenlit. You said that really well. I'm impressed.

Mason Hutchison:

Thank you.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Welcome to the Herbs with Rosalee Podcast, a show exploring how herbs heal as medicine, as food and through nature connection. In this episode, we're diving into the world of dandelions, with my good friend, Mason Hutchison of HerbRally. Mason went all out for this episode. He showed up with an armful of dandelion potions, some familiar, and one that completely surprised me. I love that even after decades of working with this plant, it still has new gifts to share. This conversation is fun. It's inspiring. It's brimming with dandelion love and I can't wait for you to join us.

By the way, if you enjoy this episode, it would mean the world to me if you hit the "thumbs up" button. It really helps other plant lovers find this video too, and be sure to stick around to the very end for your herbal tidbit, where I share how dandelions are literally expanding our understanding of physics.

Welcome back to the show, Mason.

Mason Hutchison:

Thanks. It's an honor to be here.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah.

Mason Hutchison:

Thanks for having me back.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It's a pleasure. So, I've been thinking how to start this one. I think probably the most obvious place to start is to set the stage. Folks watching know things are a little different, but if you're listening, you might not know that we are in-person.

Mason Hutchison:

That's right.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

This is the first time for me. This is like old hat for you. You do this all the time, in-person interviews.

Mason Hutchison:

I love the in-person interviews. It's really good to feel the energy of the guest, and that this time, I get to be the guest. It's super fun.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, yeah. We're in-person. We're in Salem, Oregon, and we've been on this kind of epic road trip. It's been Mason, me, and his awesome daughter, Amelia, who is actually behind the camera right now.

Mason Hutchison:

Shout out to Amelia.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

And we started off in Spokane, Washington, and went to see Rainbow Kitten Surprise.

Mason Hutchison:

Epic.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, cool band I taught you about.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah, something like that.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I think Mason felt bad because he only thought that I listen to Tori all the time, which is a weird thing for him to think, but he was trying to get my musical taste a little bit wider so he mentioned Rainbow Kitten Surprise. I've been listening to them constantly, so it's fun to go to the concert, the three of us.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah, it was magical.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It really was.

Mason Hutchison:

They really put on a show.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, it was great. Then we went down to Hood River, saw my honorary family there, chosen family. My niece, Lulu, was having her Bat Mitzvah, so that was an amazing thing to see her down there, and then we came to Salem. So, here we are in person. We got this!

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah! This should be a lot of fun!

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I'm like nervous excited. Mostly excited, but I've never done in-person before, so.

Mason Hutchison:

We've been talking about this for a while.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

This has been months in the making, actually.

Mason Hutchison:

Totally. Yeah, I'm super excited to be here. I'm honored again. I get to be the first in-person interview. Hopefully, many more for you.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, it's kind of in the plan, so we'll see.

Mason Hutchison:

Okay. Cool. All right.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Well, last time you were on, Mason, was a couple of years ago. We talked about oats. I highly recommend the episode if you haven't listened already, or listen to it for a second time.

Third, fourth, that's cool too. Last time, you talked about your origin story, your plant path, and just to recap that, you talked about—you kind of had an entry way through nutrition. You went to a couple of herbal schools, you were at Columbines with Howie Brounstein, Arctos with Missy Rohs.

Mason Hutchison:

And Gradey Proctor.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

And Gradey Proctor, and so, we got to hear about that, just kind of your journey through all of that. I thought this time we'd go into some new territory.

Mason Hutchison:

Sure.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

And since I like the origin story for the beginning, I thought we could do the origin story of HerbRally.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah! That sounds like fun.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Cool.

Mason Hutchison:

So, yeah, basically, what happened was I was the Events & Outreach Coordinator for Mountain Rose Herbs. I probably mentioned that in the last episode. I noticed that there were no websites that talked about what events were happening in the herbal community. Now, granted, I want to say the American Herbalist Guild would list a few of the conferences that

happened, random events here and there, and then other websites kind of did the same thing. My idea was to kind of combine everything that was happening. The goal is for it to be all over the world, but even then, that's quite the undertaking as you can imagine. So, I started with the United States. It turns out, there's a lot of herbalism happening all over the states. As I started becoming more and more into herbalism, I would attend these little plant walks that were happening at Mount Pisgah and Eugene. I would go to these one-off classes at Tsunami Books in Eugene, Oregon. I remember I went and saw CoreyPine Shane there. It was one of my first herbalism lectures that I went to way back in the day. I was like, "This has to be happening all over the country." Sure enough it was. I started subscribing to a ton of newsletters when I was the Events person for Mountain Rose Herbs. I was like, "I should start a website where I just start listing all of these events and helping other people find what's happening in their neck of the woods," as we like to say at HerbRally. Yeah, so, really, it just started out as this list, and it's—have you ever heard of the website where you could go—it's like the Wayback Machine. You could see what the first iteration of your website was.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

No.

Mason Hutchison:

It's really fun. I don't remember the exact URL for it, but anyways, go back and look at HerbRally's early days. It's kind of embarrassing. But that's what they say: If you're not embarrassed by the first iteration of your project, you're not progressing enough. So, all that aside, basically, I just started with this passion project where I just wanted to share everything. I was creating the website that I wished to see exist in the world. With a lot of the projects in my life, I sat on the idea forever, probably literal years. Then finally, I was like, "Hmm. I should at least come up with a name for it. I was like, "HerbalismEvents.com, now that sounds good." There's got to be—there's got to be a better name for it. HerbRally actually just came to my head one day.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I love that.

Mason Hutchison:

I was so excited about that because “rally”—rally almost has this rah-rah feel to it.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Gives a good vibe.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah, and I liked the juxtaposition. A lot of times people spell HerbRally two words, but really, it's one word. Now I'm talking about the name quite a bit. That's maybe not that interesting, but anyways, I sat on the name forever, and then I bought the domain. I probably waited a whole other year before I finally took the plunge. I think I was having some impostor syndrome. A synonym for that is insecurity. Finally, I was just like, “I got to start this website,” so I did. Just started listing the events and I was like, “This is a lot of fun.” I really enjoyed it and then that's when all these other ideas started happening. I think the second thing we started doing was I would pay some of my herbalist friends to write monographs. You wrote a monograph early on hops. So, yeah, then we started doing the—actually, it was events, then we started listing all the herbalism schools, and then monographs, and then just—HerbRally just kind of started building organically and growing, and evolving. One day, I was like, “I'm going to have the audacity to start a podcast,” but I was scared shitless to be a host, so I kind of did the same thing. I would ask my herbalist friends if they wanted to submit lectures for the podcast. I would publish various conference recordings from different conferences that were happening around. It just grew. I could go on and on, but I need to take a breath.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

You did hundreds of episodes like that.

Mason Hutchison:

Totally. Literal hundreds.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

What year did the podcast start?

Mason Hutchison:

HerbRally started in 2015. That's when it started, so HerbRally is ten years old now-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Congrats.

Mason Hutchison:

Which is amazing. I—I can't believe it.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah.

Mason Hutchison:

And the podcast started in 2017.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Oh, wow.

Mason Hutchison:

So, eight years ago.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Wow.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah, at 906 episodes.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Wow!

Mason Hutchison:

Granted some of the episodes are—I was—people say, “How long do you want the podcast episode to be?” I’m like, “Sixty seconds to three and a half hours, totally good,” which is a little vague. There are some short, mini episodes, but all in all, we’ve hit publish 906 times at this moment in time.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Wow. Something I’ve loved about HerbRally because I feel like I’ve been there since the beginning.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah, you really have.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

And I’ve loved to see it grow. Being your friend, I get to hear about your ideas. Your ideas, they do just keep coming and things keep growing. At what point did Schoolhouse come into the-

Mason Hutchison:

Oh, the HerbRally Schoolhouse? Yeah, so—oh, my gosh. I probably should have researched this. I would probably say three years ago. It’s kind of a similar idea. Everything about HerbRally is about building herbal community, so Schoolhouse is no different. It’s just a bunch of my friends, my teachers, different herbalist teachers providing classes on various topics, but it’s behind a paywall. It’s a membership area, ten bucks a month.

It's one of the ways we help keep the lights on at HerbRally, so thank you to all the HerbRally Schoolhouse members. It's a huge support to us.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

You're welcome.

Mason Hutchison:

Thank you, Rosalee. You're a member.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I am a member.

Mason Hutchison:

I hear you're going to be coming out with a class soon on the Schoolhouse, too.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

You have the inside track on that.

Mason Hutchison:

I do. I'm pretty excited about that.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It's going to be fun.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah.

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.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I love how you said it's about building community at HerbRally. I saw that recently with your nourishing herbal infusions challenge. That was really cool. That was just like, you woke up one day with this idea, basically. Well, you'd been thinking about it for a while you said, but then all of a sudden, you just put it into action.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That was cool. Do you want to talk about that?

Mason Hutchison:

Sure!

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Or I can talk about that.

Mason Hutchison:

Sure, sure. Actually, I would like to hear your perspective on it. Do you want me to go first though?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, you can go first.

Mason Hutchison:

So, basically, what happened was I had this—so, I drink nourishing herbal infusions, I say everyday, but that’s kind of a lie. It’s not every day. It’s definitely, at least, a few times a week. I try to do it every day. I just thought it would be fun to do this thing where I shared what herbal infusion I was drinking that day. Sometimes I show how I do it, different tips and tricks, and just keep myself accountable. I’m big on accountabili-buddies since you’re my accountabili-buddy. “Accountability” I should say, but yeah, I was like I’ll keep myself accountable by making it everyday, by putting on the internet, and then hopefully, the byproduct of that was—would be other people would be inspired to do it everyday as well, because I truly think it’s one of the cheapest, easiest way to nourish yourself. I notice the difference when I—like I said, take it daily—but I notice the difference when I don’t consume these nourishing herbal infusions. Lots of oat straw, lots of linden, lots of raspberry leaf, hawthorn leaf and flower, nettle. I like to rotate it. That’s kind of how the project started.

I’ll say before I did it, just like starting HerbRally, I was so nervous to do it. I was like, why on earth would anybody want to see me drink a nourishing herbal infusion every single day? It seemed very silly, but the feedback was kind of what I was hoping for and not necessarily expecting, but a lot of people were commenting, “Thanks, Mason. This is helping keeping me going.” Because I have this tendency to get overly enthused about projects, I was like, “I’m literally going to do this for the rest of my life. I’m never going to stop. I’m just going to post every single day until I’m old and gray.” Then I realized how much work it actually was. Amelia can attest to that. She helped me edit and record some of them. It was a lot of work. What I thought it might be 15 minutes per day, ended up being maybe an hour a day. I’m trying to focus on some other projects. As a solo person, it’s difficult.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It was really fun. I loved, again, that you brought in other folks too. You put a call out like, “Hey, if you want to do a video, you can do it too,” and told people to promote there. It wasn’t like people are doing your work. You were like, “Come promote yourself.”

Mason Hutchison:

Totally.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

“Come be a part of it,” which I just always love that you’re always garnering community, building community, calling your friends in and stuff. It’s a cool—it’s a cool thing that HerbRally manifests that community building.

Mason Hutchison:

It’s hilarious because I didn’t even anticipate then as you know, because I was talking to you about it behind-the-scenes. It just—I started and then all these other ideas started coming in. So, I should have known that it would turn into like a community endeavor, but I didn’t—I didn’t see that happening, and then probably within the first five days, you made one video as well, so that was cool. It’s always fun to involve the herbal community in basically everything I do.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It’s fun. It’s not my comfort zone.

Mason Hutchison:

Well, you're just getting going. By the way, follow Rosalee on TikTok. She's at Rosalee de la Forêt. She's doing some awesome things on there.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Thank you. From your inspiration, really. I wouldn't be doing it without you, so.

Mason Hutchison:

Thanks.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Anything else about HerbRally?

Mason Hutchison:

You did mention the Schoolhouse. I guess I'll just say it right at the top. I kind of forgot to mention this, but you can get your first 30 days for free. If you want to see behind-the-scenes, you could use coupon code "Rosalee" at checkout at HerbRally.com/Schoolhouse, if you want to see what's behind-the-scenes happening there. Check out all the other offerings.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

You have so many awesome teachers there, really cool stuff.

Mason Hutchison:

Thanks.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I highly recommend.

Mason Hutchison:

Thank you very much.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Well, let's dive into your chosen herb today. I'm so excited because dandelion is one of your favorite herbs as I know, and it's one of my favorite herbs too, so I'm excited. I know you've got a bunch of goodies for us. Where would you like to start with dandelion?

Mason Hutchison:

You said I brought a lot of goodies. That's another perk of doing these in-person interviews because you kind of get to freestyle a little bit more. I think you could probably do something similar on Zoom, but I don't know. The fact that we get to share some of this dandelion medicine, if you will, in person, is I think extra special. But yeah, I think the first place I would start would be a story.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Cool.

Mason Hutchison:

So, I don't know if I've told you this, but maybe you've heard it. I know I've said it elsewhere before, but when I was a young lad, I was a bit of a troubled child, a bit of a troublemaker. I remember just biking around. I don't know. Maybe I was eight years old, but I'll be biking around the neighborhood and I'd see dandelion—dandelion in its seed form. I would get off my bike, and I would rip off the dandelion. I'd start blowing the seeds everywhere with the ill intent of spreading weeds to other people's yards. Have you heard this before?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I have heard it.

Mason Hutchison:

It's just funny because it feels like a nefarious act, but in reality, I think it might have been a little foreshadowing for what was to come.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I like how you maintain the integrity of that story. You're not like, "And then I just thought wouldn't it be lovely if those dandelions"—You're like, "No." I was like, "Let's spread these with the malicious intent."

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah, I wonder what that was. I have no idea. We could get really spiritual about it, but no. It definitely wasn't for spreading herbal goodness at the time. I do like the story though because it shows an early relationship with plants in some way, shape or form.

So, going from eight-year old Mason, fast forward, as you mentioned that as I mentioned in my first episode, I got into herbalism by way of my interest in nutrition, health and wellness, and all that. I was probably 19 or 20 when I was having a party more or less at my house over on campus in Eugene, Oregon. I was hanging out with some of my friends. My friend, Phil, was there. I know Phil was like—he hunts, he fishes, but I didn't know he dabbled in wild edibles. I did not know that side of him. We were in the front yard and he looks down and he says, "That's dandelion," which I think we kind of all knew what dandelion was at the time, but he goes, "Did you know you can eat it?" I was, uh—oh, I'm getting goose bumps. You see that? And that just completely changed the way I look at the world. I truly think that was one of my main gateways into herbalism. I call it my "gateway herb." Actually, I call dandelion my gateway herb specifically because of that story. The very fact that you can just nibble on this wild plant that grows all over. Best believe, right then and there, I took a bite of it because I've always been kind of an adventurous eater. Yeah, so—so, yeah, just a couple brief, little stories about the early days.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

So dandelion has been calling you on this path from a very young age.

Mason Hutchison:

I think so.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It almost feels like that's dandelion's role. I know a lot of people who were told, "Did you know you can eat that?" and it changed their lives.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah, I mean it's even in the HerbRally logo. I think a lot of people will maybe use the dandelion flower and the whole plant, but I just chose the leaf. But yeah, it's been hugely influential and I'm so grateful for that moment. I love dandelion. I even got it tattooed on my arm.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I got it on my leg.

Mason Hutchison:

Oh, really? Good. I think dandelion—I wonder if—I wonder what the most tattooed herbs are. I always think yarrow is up there, also an Asteraceae, but we will get into the botany. So, I think the botany is the next place that I want to go with this if it sounds good.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah.

Mason Hutchison:

Alright. Cool. So, basically, I guess we could—we could start from the bottom.

Unfortunately—so we're recording this in August. All I saw out there was *Hypochaeris radicata*.

It's a close cousin, sometimes called "false dandelion," "catsear." We're recording this in August. We don't have a nice live plant to be able to talk about. Maybe we could throw in some B roll, I don't know. The dandelion starting from the bottom, we got a taproot. I think—I think maybe what we could do is go through the botanical characteristics, and then later, we could talk about the edibility and certain medicinal uses. So, we'll start at the taproot, which, my understanding is basically just like one straight root that goes—I don't know-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Down, down, down.

Mason Hutchison:

Down, down, down, and then you have what's called a "basal rosette," the leaves, which I think basically just means you got like one bunch of leaves that starts at the center, and spreads out. Does that sound right?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, it sounds good.

Mason Hutchison:

Okay, cool, and the leaves—the leaves are going to be smoother in nature. One of the nicknames of dandelion is "dent-de-leon." Actually, one of the things I wanted to do to start the episode, which I forgot, was to say a whole list—some of the many different nicknames of dandelion.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Cool. Let's hear them.

Mason Hutchison:

This is Brigitte Mars's awesome book, *Dandelion Medicine*. One of the medicinal values of dandelion is it makes great bookmarks. Dandelion has a lot of nicknames: amarga, bitterwort, blowball, cankerwort, chicoria—it sounds kind of like "chicory," almost—clockflower, consuelda, doon-head clock, fairy clock. There are many, many more. I could go on and on and on, but, yes, so, one of the nicknames is dent-de-leon. Is that French also?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Uh hmm, it is.

Mason Hutchison:

So is pissenlit.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah.

Mason Hutchison:

Which I think more refers to the dandelion leaf maybe.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah.

Mason Hutchison:

Piss the bed. Umm, how's my French?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

You know it's pretty good, actually.

Mason Hutchison:

Alright. Sweet. So we were talking about the botanical characteristics of the dandelion leaf. It's kind of got those jagged leaf shape, which looks like the tooth of a lion. Anything else you want to say about the dandelion leaf?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

No, it's good.

Mason Hutchison:

Alright, cool.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

You mentioned the smoothness of it that's like an identification thing. People often are like, "Oh, is this dandelion?" If there's like prickles on the bottom, like prickles underneath a vein, or if it's hairy-

Mason Hutchison:

Totally.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Not dandelion.

Mason Hutchison:

Typically, at least around here in the Pacific Northwest, that's going to be its cousin, catsear, *Hypochaeris radicata*. Another distinguishing feature is the one stem, whereas, again, like a lot of the lookalikes will have like the multiple stems, stems off of stems.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

One stem per flower.

Mason Hutchison:

One stem per—thank you. Yes, exactly, like the catsear will have a bunch of different flowers. I can't tell you how many times I've been walking around, people are like, "That's dandelion!" It's not dandelion.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Because the flower looks the exact same.

Mason Hutchison:

Totally.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Maybe if you took just the two top flower heads and put them side to side, you would probably not be able to tell the difference.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah. You know what's funny? I'm very colorblind. I don't know if it's just me making this up because I know what dandelion and catsear looks like, but I almost notice a distinct difference slightly in the color of dandelion flowers.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Interesting.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah. We could test me on that at some point, but, umm-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I feel like I could be tested on that.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. I do feel like there's a slight difference, but not 100%. But I'm going to quiz the audience.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Okay.

Mason Hutchison:

Okay. So, if you're looking at a dandelion and you see the flower head, I'm going to say, how many flowers are there? It kind of sounds like a trick question, right? Do you know the answer?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I do.

Mason Hutchison:

So, a lot of people will look at it and be like, “That’s a really pretty singular dandelion flower,” but in reality, it’s actually—it’s in the Asteraceae, formerly known as the Compositae family. Basically, one of the distinguishing characteristics of that plant family is its many flowers packed into a head. So, if I’m recalling correctly, when you look at the single dandelion flower, it’s actually like 150 to 200 flowers or florets packed into a head. Really, you’re looking at hundreds of tiny, little flowers. Does that sound right?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah.

Mason Hutchison:

Cool.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I was going to say 300, but I was guessing.

Mason Hutchison:

Really?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I was just guessing, but just a lot.

Mason Hutchison:

For sure.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Three hundred [crosstalk]

Mason Hutchison:

A shitload perhaps.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah.

Mason Hutchison:

Okay. Yeah, so that's fun. I remember first hearing it, like when I took Columbine School of Botanical Studies, when I first learned about that, that blew me away. I was like, oh, my gosh! There are so many flowers in this one plant. It's so cool. It's pretty magical like that.

So, we went over some of the botanical characteristics, and we talked a little bit about some of the lookalikes. I'll talk maybe a little bit more about the safety and precautions later on. I did want to bring up once you start developing a relationship with these plants, you'll notice the difference between dandelion and catsear. You just—you just know it. It's one of my favorite parts about going out in the woods, building relationships with these plants. You just start to notice the differences. Slowly but surely, the being in nature, being in the woods, it no longer becomes a wall of green. I think it's one of my favorite parts about learning the botanical characteristics of various plants. I just wanted to mention that. Botany is fun.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah.

Mason Hutchison:

I guess there's a lot to botany more than just that, but, yeah. So, did you have anything you wanted to add about any of that?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

No. It's fantastic.

Mason Hutchison:

Cool.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I'll echo the wall of green. That was one of the most transformative aspects of becoming an herbalist for me too. I'm kind of botany light. I'm not going to take out Hitchcock's and key out things to the very fine tune, but to know the basics is really, really helpful and really does help you see individual characteristics and get to know the plants a little bit better.

Mason Hutchison:

I love having herbalist friends too, because I was just down in Eugene, hanging out with Nick—shoutout to Nick. He, still to this day, will bust out the Hitchcock and identify plants and stuff. You're awesome.

Okay. Cool. We could delve into some of the medicinal, edible virtues of the dandelion if you want. Again, I think we'll start with the root and work our way up. Thanks for preparing a couple of different beverages for us.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, cheers.

Mason Hutchison:

So, as part of this episode, Rosalee provided an awesome dandelion chai. I know a lot of times your guests bring forth a recipe, so thanks for taking care of that for me. Do you want to tell us a little bit about the chai, and then we could try it out?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Sure! This is a recipe-

Mason Hutchison:

This one?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yes, that one. It's a new recipe I haven't shared before. I made it for the first time last winter solstice, and I made it for a huge party. Cheers, my friend!

Mason Hutchison:

Ooh. That's nice. It's earthy and spicy.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Earthy, smells good, yeah, and kind of creamy. I like the creaminess of it. Yes, I made it for winter solstice for a party. I made a huge batch of it. For the recipe that you all are getting, you can make this amount for two people or I included the party amounts because it's a really fun one. I felt like I was really popular at that party because of the tea. I got a lot of compliments on it. I make it with oat milk, so it's really creamy. It's just a little bit sweet, but not overly, I don't think. It's got all your—it's got your roasted dandelion, roasted chicory, and then it's got all the favorite spices like ginger, and cardamom, allspice, cloves, star anise, maybe some others. You all get the recipe, so if I forgot anything in there-

Mason Hutchison:

Totally.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I put a touch of honey in there. The oat milk already makes it kind of—I used unsweetened oat milk but it still kind of brings in some sweetness to it.

Mason Hutchison:

Okay, so how do folks get access to the recipe?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

They can go to herbswithrosaleepodcast.com, get it there. Just check out the show notes, it will be there as well.

Mason Hutchison:

Cool. Did you put medicinal mushrooms in here?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I did not in this one.

Mason Hutchison:

Okay, cool. Gotcha. Cool.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

But I often do.

Mason Hutchison:

It is delicious. I'm not just saying that because you're right next to me.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Uh hmm. Sure.

Mason Hutchison:

It's wonderful. It's really good. Mils, you got to try this after the show. I guess we—it would be a nice transition-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I can tell how much you loved it by how much you drank it.

Mason Hutchison:

Well, we got many other beverages to try. Just you wait.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Okay.

Mason Hutchison:

You want to try the Dandy Blend?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yep. Can I trade you?

Mason Hutchison:

Yep. So, dandelion coffee, very popular recipe. I know—okay, so this is Dandy Blend.

Shockingly, I've been in the herbal community for like 20 years, and I've never had Dandy Blend.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I was literally shocked, folks. He said something and I was like, "Wait. Have you never had Dandy Blend?" He said never in his life, and it was a jaw-dropping moment for me. I drink this especially during the winter, almost every day. It's the lazy person's way to do dandelion.

Mason Hutchison:

It's kind of like an instant coffee.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, I'm not ashamed. I like it.

Mason Hutchison:

But it's got dandelion, chicory. I don't know if there's anything else in there, but I can look up the ingredients. This is not a sponsored ad, but it is kind of an herbal community staple and it's been around for a long time.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Cheers.

Mason Hutchison:

Cheers. And yeah, so, what I like to do—I'm a big fan of New Orleans, and so, there's this place called "Cafe du Monde." They're famous for selling half coffee, half chicory root powder. What I like to do is I like to buy their tin, their beautiful yellow tin, and then I buy my own organic—I'll probably consume it. I don't just dump out their stuff. I like to buy organic, nice, high quality organic coffee half way full—and then half way full, I'll fill it up with roast chicory root, dandelion root powder—roasted dandelion powder—and stuff like that. I think part of the reason I never had Dandy Blend was because I worked at Mountain Rose Herbs forever. They had the roast dandelion coffee. That's my excuse.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It's just so—they just make it so easy-

Mason Hutchison:

Totally.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Just powder that you put in hot water.

Mason Hutchison:

I'll be a customer for sure from now on.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I love this hot. I love it cold, and did—Xavier, my husband, did he make that for you, Dandy Blend ice cream? Did we talk about that?

Mason Hutchison:

Okay, so I guess I have had.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

You had it? Yeah.

Mason Hutchison:

Just in ice cream form.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

He makes a coconut milk-dandelion, Dandy Blend.

Mason Hutchison:

It's quite good. Yeah, so, dandelion root, there's lot of things you could do with that if you like. The most stereotypical answer is a coffee substitute. But actually, in one of your books—okay, so, in *Alchemy of Herbs*, by bestselling author, Rosalee de la Forêt, Rosalee's got a dandelion root vinegar. One of the beautiful things about herbalism is you could just experiment and make all sorts of fun concoctions and—I haven't made this, but I just wanted to point out that lots of herbalists get super creative. Is there anything you want to say about the dandelion root vinegar?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I have made countless quarts of this. It's one of my favorite ways because the root is so nutritive, and then the vinegar is really great at pulling out minerals. The root doesn't have a super strong bitter taste, so the vinegar is quite pleasant. And then what we do is we just—we

make that, and then we use that as the basis of our salad dressings, which is a cool way to engage with dandelion in a nutritive way.

Mason Hutchison:

Cool. I want to say David Winston calls dandelion root his favorite liver tonic, which that's pretty high praise.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah.

Mason Hutchison:

Actually, I want to say I heard Brigitte Mars say *Taraxacum officinale*, which is the Latin name. I think I heard her say when I interviewed her, it's the official remedy of the disorder. Have you heard that before?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I've not heard that before.

Mason Hutchison:

It just randomly popped in my brain. I figured I'd say that.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Can we circle back to something?

Mason Hutchison:

Sure.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It popped in my head. You said that David said that dandelion root is one of his favorite liver tonics?

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

So, I was in class many years ago. I want to say 20 years ago, with an herbalist whose name I'm not going to say. Anyway, it was like a liver herbs class and he went through all these different liver herbs. We get to the end of it and then it's over, and I was like, "You didn't mention dandelion."

Mason Hutchison:

Oh, yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

And the teacher said, "Oh, well, yeah, it's just like so common." You know, just totally dismissed dandelion. I remember just feeling really bad on behalf of dandelion in that moment, and also just I also think it's one of our best. Just because it's common, just because it's a weed, just because everyone knows about it, it doesn't make it any less special.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah. Sometimes I wonder if dandelion was like this rare alpine plant that you only saw—it's the exact same plant, but it's just rare, it would be sexier to people?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Maybe. How lucky we are.

Mason Hutchison:

I know.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

You know.

Mason Hutchison:

It's abundant and that should be—can be one of the medicines we use. I don't know about "should be." I also wanted to say I struggled with acne when I was a teenager. I've read dandelion root can be a part of that protocol. That's the keyword there. It could be a part of it. Obviously, you still have to have a holistic approach because every time, say, I take a class with Paul Bergner. This is one of my favorite things. He'll go in-depth on all these different case studies and will go in-depth on the science of herbs and all that, but then the thesis at the end is always sleep, nutrition, exercise, which I always find hilarious. I'm like, "Okay, that's so good. That's how it should be approached." If you do want to use dandelion root for any number of reasons, always approach it in a holistic manner.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I do love it for the liver. Like you said, for—so often, our skin issues originate in the liver, sluggishness in the body. It's just showing up on the skin, but it's not necessarily where the issue is, and so it's so lovely for that. It works so well. Interesting thing with skin is it will often make things worse before it gets better because it's kind of like pushing things out. It's like getting it out. So I always like to give that caution especially with skin stuff because it can be so like—I don't know. It can be a very vulnerable thing to have a skin issue since we show that to the world.

Mason Hutchison:

Absolutely.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It's good to even go slow with it, instead of heavy at first. Just kind of go slow, see how things go, get things moving through your body, etc.

Mason Hutchison:

I think that's one of the reasons David was saying that he likes dandelion so much because he talks about it as like a tonic. It's gentle. Use it for a long time. I could be misquoting him,

I don't know, but he was comparing it to, say, maybe potentially stronger liver herbs like you said, milk thistle or *Schisandra*, or something like that.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I think—I think of stronger ones like *Bupleurum* or Oregon grape—

Mason Hutchison:

Gotcha.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Kind of next level bitter, maybe.

Mason Hutchison:

Totally. So, let's see. What's after the root? If you move up, it will probably be the leaves. So, I actually brought some dandelion leaves from a grocery store, and, Rosalee, guess what?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

What?

Mason Hutchison:

This isn't dandelion leaves. You were trying to convince me it was—actually, it's the reverse. Rosalee taught me that if you buy organic dandelion leaves from a grocery store, it's mostly likely trickery. I called BS on it, and she was right. I looked it up, so-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

You know, I looked it up too because you called BS on it. I was like, "Yeah, I knew I was right." I wasn't going to tell you though. I was going to let you live the dream.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Here's the thing though: What are they called at the store?

Mason Hutchison:

Dandelion.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, they are.

Mason Hutchison:

I have to imagine-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

As far as I'm concerned, anyway.

Mason Hutchison:

They still have great bitterness to them. There's probably a lot of similar medicinal-nutritional value to them.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Actually, those red stems got more anthocyanins in there.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah, good point, yeah. So-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

We've been putting this in our salads. We love the super salad. When we're together, we just make super salads. We've been putting them in there. It's delicious.

Mason Hutchison:

You want to try a bite?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Sure, yeah.

Mason Hutchison:

Cool.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Always.

Mason Hutchison:

Hopefully, the mic picks up our chewing sounds, little dandelion ASMR.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Today, Mason told me that taste is a really important part of herbal medicine. Someone will be able to find that funny, I'm sure.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah, it's bitter.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It's such a perfect salad green or pesto. This is hands down my favorite pesto.

Mason Hutchison:

Is there a time of year you think it's the best to harvest the dandelion greens? That's kind of a rhetorical question I know.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I mean, for eating them? The spring is going to be the best.

Mason Hutchison:

Okay.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Because they're just a little bit less bitter, and it's not just less bitter. The bitter has a freshness to it that just seems like in a really good way. But also, because as the dandelion greens get older, they can get really tough too, so it's both like a palatability mouth feel and the taste thing.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

But sometimes, you'll get fresh growth in the fall too. It's really just how do the leaves taste? Are they tender?

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That sort of thing. I'm kind of nervous I'm going to have green leaves in my teeth now.

Mason Hutchison:

Maybe we should save that for the end of the episode.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I am good. I'll let you know if I see anything.

Mason Hutchison:

You're good, so far. Well, this is the part of the show where we're going to try dandelion leaf infusion.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Oh

Mason Hutchison:

So, prepare yourself. You can rinse out those leaves in your mouth.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

You've been really excited. I want to tell people. He's been very excited for this. I'm trepidatious. That's how I feel right now, like, "Yay! I'm going to drink something really bitter on video."

Mason Hutchison:

So, as you know, I like nourishing herbal infusions, right?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Uh hmm.

Mason Hutchison:

And when I had David on my show, I was like, "Why don't people drink dandelion nourishing herbal infusion?" You hear about all the other ones. I've researched myself. I was like, "Am I doing something dangerous by consuming this?" I'm kind of worried about it. It was like I need to look into this more, and I asked David. Obviously, he's a very well-respected herbalist. He said it's totally fine. The only thing I could find about the downside of drinking dandelion leaf nourishing herbal infusion—you know what it is?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Oh, it's really freaking bitter.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah, exactly. It's just the taste thing, but we're herbalists, so it doesn't matter.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, totally fine.

Mason Hutchison:

So, we'll-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Does Mils want some too?

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Amelia—that's a lot of-

Mason Hutchison:

So, we'll—you're going to finish it.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Okay. For people listening, Mason has just poured me a very inappropriately large wine glassful of this very bitter infusion, and he's got like a half. He's got one finger, like half inch.

Mason Hutchison:

It's your first time, so-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Cheers, my friend.

Mason Hutchison:

Cheers. It's pretty good!

Rosalee de la Forêt:

You know what? That's not that bad.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah. Honestly, the leaf itself was bitter—more bitter.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

More bitter. Actually, maybe it helped.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah, probably was.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

You know what would be good with this is you put just a little bit of salt in it because salt helps to kind of smooth out bitterness.

Mason Hutchison:

That's good call. Pro tip from Rosalee, bestselling author.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I don't know that I would reach for this everyday, but it's not as bad as I thought it's going to be.

Mason Hutchison:

Throw it in the rotation.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Umm, not even sure about that, but it's not as bad as I thought it was going to be.

Mason Hutchison:

So, I want to call out to the audience. Do you drink dandelion nourishing herbal infusion? Is there something I'm not thinking about? I'm just genuinely curious because I never hear anyone ever talking about it. It seems so silly because it's so abundant and available and nutritious. People are talking about how nutritious dandelion leaves are, probably more than spinach or kale. I mean, it's a very nutritionally dense food--wild food.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I could see putting it part of an infusion. You mix this in with some oat straw.

Mason Hutchison:

Now, we're talking.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah.

Mason Hutchison:

Cool.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That can be good.

Mason Hutchison:

I like that.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I'm not going to drink all this.

Mason Hutchison:

I don't expect you to.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It is called—it is called “pissenlit,” so-

Mason Hutchison:

I do—like, it's the energy of herbs is so interesting. I do feel an amazing feeling in my head now. I like dandelion.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah.

Mason Hutchison:

So, we could talk a little bit about the medicinal benefits of dandelion leaf. It's popular as a diuretic. I keep bringing up David, but I just listened—relistened to my interview with him, so it's kind of top of mind. He used this term “aquaretic.” Have you heard that before?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

No.

Mason Hutchison:

Okay. He said—so a diuretic basically makes you pee, right? In peeing, you're presumably depleting yourself of minerals. By the definition, I recall David saying was an aquaretic is when you're replacing the minerality in your body by consuming a diuretic herb. Does that make sense? You're peeing out a lot of, say, potassium, but then you're net positive in

potassium because the dandelion leaves contain so much of it. I just heard him say that term, I was like, “It’s a really cool term.”

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, it is cool. Also, it makes me think of just like the dandelion moves the waters of your body because it is. We’ll use it for edema that’s non-complicated. We always want to rule out heart disease. You just have stagnant fluids in the body, dandelion is just going to help get everything moving again.

Mason Hutchison:

Okay. So, moving up from the leaves, we got the stem and I have almost zero experience with the stem.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

You’re talking about the flower stem.

Mason Hutchison:

Yes. Thank you again. Yes, yes, yes. Not the leaf stem which we know is now high in anthocyanins.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

If it’s chicory.

Mason Hutchison:

If it’s chicory, exactly. Oh, I should point out, we got a baggy of dried green dandelion. This was like \$2.80 an ounce, so you can make a nourishing herbal infusion for pretty cheap. And that was from the grocery store.

So, the flower stem: hollow, contains the milky sap, latex of some sort, which I've heard—I've never tested this, but you could dab it on some worts, and it's effective. I don't know. Is that true?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I've heard that too.

Mason Hutchison:

Okay.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I've heard you have to be very persistent. It's not a one-time deal, so it's like-

Mason Hutchison:

Tonic.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

a daily thing.

Mason Hutchison:

Besides that, I know it contains some bitter compounds. As far as edibility, when I was interviewing Brigitte Mars, she said that she learned—I can't remember where she learned it from, but people will parboil it, and then a bunch of stems, and then sauté it with something like olive oil, salt and pepper, and have noodles, which I thought was really fun.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I really want to try that.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah, totally.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I'm uncertain of whether that's going to be good or not, but I want to try it anyway.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah, I wish it was springtime right now. Next year.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Okay, let's do it.

Mason Hutchison:

On our accountabili-buddy list, we'll make some dandelion stem noodles. That will be sweet. Anything else you want to say about the stem? I don't have much of a spiel on that. But then, yeah, going up to the flower head, many flowers. I mean, there are countless things you could do with that. The stereotypical thing is dandelion fritters. People make dandelion wine.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Have you had dandelion fritters?

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah, yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Not sure if you hadn't had Dandy Blend.

Mason Hutchison:

Herbalist's rite of passage. I've had—I've had the fritters. I don't remember when or where, but it has definitely happened. Dandelion wine, which I know—do you have any stories about that? Because I know you and Xavier make it with the mead or something.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, it's been a couple of years since we've made it, but when the dandelions just go all out for us is late April, and the flowers are just everywhere. Harvest those flowers. You get rid of the bracts because they're a little bit bitter on the backend. Just give that a fermentation with some honey and it's lovely. It's really fun to make it in the springtime. The tradition I was always taught is you open up the bottle in the winter solstice. It's like bringing in the sunshine, so that's nice.

Mason Hutchison:

Cool! So, I actually bought a bottle of wild flower beer.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Ale.

Mason Hutchison:

Ale.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It's like elevated to call it "ale," I think.

Mason Hutchison:

From Block 15. They're a local brewery. Local to Oregon, at least. I want to say they're in Bend. This wild ale with wild flowers, haven't tried it yet, but presumably, it has dandelion flowers because they said they've used it before. I'm just interested to try. Do you want to try it out?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, let's try that.

Mason Hutchison:

Cool. I've also heard dandelion flowers are high in something called "lutein."

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Great for the eyes.

Mason Hutchison:

Oh, my gosh. This is not going to work. Here we go. Now, we're talking. I was struggling.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

The flowers are so fun to work with in so many ways. I always-

Mason Hutchison:

Ooh, that is a live beer.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Ooh. My experience is that the dandelion flowers bring joy. I think they do just looking at them. They're just yellow and joyful and bright, but actually working with them is pretty fun.

Mason Hutchison:

That smells good.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Alright, for those of you listening, I have now gotten an inappropriately little part of ale. Mason has got the bulk of the ale. Okay.

Sláinte.

Mason Hutchison:

It's still early, I'm just gonna take a little sippy-poo. It's like a sour.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It's a sour ale. That's lovely.

Mason Hutchison:

It's really good.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Can I have the bottle over here?

Mason Hutchison:

Yes. Yeah, it's pretty tasty. I know you're a sour person.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I do like sour ales, yeah.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah, so, anything else you want to say about the flowers?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I do have something that might sound self-promotional. I don't mean it to be, but-

Mason Hutchison:

Let's hear it. We're here for it. It's your show.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It kind of surprised me when Emily Han and I published *Wild Remedies*, my second book. The dande—there's a dandelion flower maple syrup cake, and that was like—it was that was the most popular recipe of the whole thing. People got really into that, and so that was pretty fun. I feel like hundreds of people made that recipe. I honestly think it was the joy of the flowers that people want to play with them. It's in the springtime when they're just everywhere, it's a really fun thing. It's crazy to think how many people see the flowers and want to spray them, and how many people see the flowers and want to be joyful.

Mason Hutchison:

It's disturbing, the former part, not the latter part. I almost forgot about this part, but back when I worked at Mountain Rose Herbs, I want to say my co-worker Erin, had this recipe for pickled dandelion buds.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Erin McIntosh.

Mason Hutchison:

Erin McIntosh.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Who is also a Tori Amos fan.

Mason Hutchison:

That's right. Tori who? Okay. But that was really good. I remember it had apple cider vinegar, tamari, maybe some honey. And then you and I were looking up some recipes the other day, or maybe it was just me. They're basically dandelion capers because that's what a caper is. It's the bud of some plant. I don't actually know which plant it is. There are so many different things you could do with the dandelion. It's so versatile, so lovely. This phenomenal book from bestselling author, Rosalee de la Forêt, and her good friend, Emily Han, there's a fermented dandelion buds and radishes. That sounds nice.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, it's a fun one.

Mason Hutchison:

You could pick up these two books at a local bookstore near you.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Thanks, Mason.

Mason Hutchison:

Talk to you about—I was going to start interviewing you, but that’s inappropriate, so we’ll save it for next time. The last thing I’ll say about the flowering heads is actually, when it’s in seed—this is another thing I learned from Brigitte Mars, which is another thing that I don’t know if she has dabbled in yet or not, but I think she heard about it. I also haven’t dabbled in this yet. She talked about you could potentially make dandelion seed microgreens by sprouting them, which I thought was just a brilliant way that you could experiment with the plants. Have you ever heard that before?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I haven’t heard that, but I was reminded that I learned from Cascade Anderson Geller. I remember it’s just like I thought I knew dandelion. I’m on a plant walk with her. I mean, she would just blow my mind all the time. She said, “Oh, yeah. You can just gather up the seed heads, hold all the little parachutes together, and then eat the seeds.” She’s like, “Very high in protein.” I was kind of like, “Whoa!” like never would it have occurred to me to do that. One of my favorite things in the springtime is we have pine siskin birds. They’re like these little, small birds. Sparrows will do this too, but they’ll come into the lawn and they will eat those seeds off the dandelion, and I love watching that. It’s just so sweet.

Mason Hutchison:

I’m going to have to try that microgreen thing sometime.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

We’ll put it on our accountability-buddy list.

Mason Hutchison:

There you go. Cool. That's kind of where I wanted to go as far as the botany and edibility, then we can briefly run down certain safety precautions.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Sounds good.

Mason Hutchison:

If that sounds good. As I mentioned earlier—maybe I didn't—but positive ID on any harvesting of plants is incredibly important. Just be sure you have a positive identification. I did want to say, with dandelion, it's incredibly important to know where you're harvesting because you don't really know who's spraying, who's not, even if someone doesn't have a sign up, that doesn't mean there hasn't been pesticides sprayed there, whatever. But most of all, I want to point folks in the direction of my herbal mentor, Howie Brounstein. On his website, he has the wildcrafting checklist at botanicalstudies.net. There's like—maybe 19 different—19 or 20 different bullet points on what you should go over before harvesting any plant, which I love. They go in-depth on that in their course. I pulled four from this list that I thought were particularly important for dandelion: Do you have a positive identification? Is the stand away from roads and trails? Is there any chemical contamination? Is there any natural contamination? Of course, you could go through the whole list with every plant if you want, but those are, I think-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

You're basically talking dog shit right now.

Mason Hutchison:

Dog shit, dog pee, yeah, yeah, pesticides. Something that herbalist Shana Lipner Grover down in SoCal. One of the things that Shana teaches is building relationships with organic farms. It's actually a cool way to build community and harvest clean plants, because I bet you,

a lot of these farms will prefer to get rid of some of their dandelions. That's a way to get a nice, clean herbal resource. Any thoughts on that?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I love the ones you chose. I often like to teach, too, with dandelion that sometimes because it's not a rare, exotic plant, we can still—maybe it's easy to feel like we're entitled to taking them. I think that dandelion still offers a beautiful opportunity to practice mindset and reciprocity and thankfulness and gratitude. So, just because it's common doesn't mean that it's like ours for the taking.

Mason Hutchison:

Totally.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It's still a time for us to be thankful and joyful with the dandelion as well.

Mason Hutchison:

Amen. It's such a classic when you get into herbalism, you make way too much tincture.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah. Way too much everything.

Mason Hutchison:

Exactly. Then you got to learn, but that's a good point. You have some respect.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Have we covered everything you want to cover about dandelion? Is there anything else you'd like to leave us with?

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah. I guess I started with a story, I'll kind of end with a story. One time, when I was traveling across the country, I visited an RV park. It was interesting because this was an RV park. It's not where people lived full time. It's just where people come and go. I was walking around the RV park and I saw this person, presumably passing by just like I was. It was in the morning, and they were outside with one of those Roundup backpacks or whatever. They're like spraying and killing dandelions on the front porch of their RV that they don't even live at. They had such disdain for this beautiful healing plant that they were just killing it, poisoning the earth, and poisoning the animals around.

I don't know. I just wish that we, as a society—I think herbalists kind of have it covered—but I wish we, as a society, kind of started—I don't know—started living a little bit more in tune with our natural environment, and not demonizing plants because they're quote unquote “ugly.” I don't know. It just really ticked me off to see that. I low key wanted to go over there and talk to them about it, but I kind of cowered away from that. What do you all do when you see ridiculous stuff like that? I don't know, but yeah, I just—I am hopeful that as herbal medicine becomes more popular—I just saw Simon Mills was on the Diary of the CEO Podcast, which is the second largest podcast in the world. Here's this well-respected, revered herbalist, spreading the good word of herbalism and herbal medicine. I just hope with each step like that, people will become more and more aware that these plants are not our enemies. They are things that we can have relationships with, utilizing in our everyday life for healing for ourselves, for our community. What do you think?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That's an interesting story. I'm thinking about different iterations of my life, like if I was 20 years old, I would have probably rushed over there, and then kind of like, “You shouldn't do that.” I would have been angry and upset, and probably kind of hostile. Now, this is the joy of dandelion pesto. I think it's such a radical act to make dandelion pesto or any other of the beautiful dandelion things that we've been talking about today, and bring that to potlucks and start a conversation. Because I bet that person thinks that they're doing the greater good.

They're actually helping out. They're like, "Oh, I'm going to do my part," and there are these plants. It's like they're doing the world a favor. I could see, again, I have to own this because I was a very charged activist, young 20-year old, that I just would have gone over there to tell them my piece of mind. It would have been such a clash to their reality, I'm guessing. Obviously, this is all guesswork that they might not have heard me in that situation, but there's something about the sideline step, and just be like, "Did you know you can eat that?" How many people whose minds are just waiting to be changed? So, I like the dandelion pesto. It just opens up a conversation of how amazing this plant is, or the dandelion flower cake--just all of that.

Mason Hutchison:

Your answer was a lot more peaceful. Mine came more from anger. I like that. That's good, yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Well, if I had seen it. I've heard the story before.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah, yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I've had the chance to sit on it.

Mason Hutchison:

Sure.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I have also put my foot in my mouth a lot. Actually, I did that not too long ago. Somebody came over to our house and they have mullein growing. They like—said some negative things about mullein and were like, "Why don't you pull that?" and just were very upset that I had

mullein in my yard. I just like—bam! I was so in it! Afterwards, I was like, “Oh, my gosh. Why did I react?” I’m still reactive sometimes, but I wished I hadn’t in that moment.

Mason Hutchison:

I love the pesto example. It’s like if that could be their gateway herb for them as well. It’s kind of like spiritually cliché, but it shows how much more powerful love is transforming people than like hating, berating people, and stuff like that. So, yeah, I will remember that next time. “Here, want some pesto?”

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah.

Mason Hutchison:

“Made with that plant.”

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It’s better without pesticides, FYI.

Mason Hutchison:

Oh, yeah. Poisoning yourself, yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Thanks for sharing so much about dandelion. I love this plant. You love this plant. So many people love this plant. I feel like we can’t talk about those plant enough to—you know-

Mason Hutchison:

It’s been on your show before at least once. I know that.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Mark Williams came and talked about dandelion, but it is a plant that I think—sometimes I think I could be an herbalist that only works with one plant, and dandelion could be that plant. There's just so much richness there, so much knowing. It is my first day—how many times have I worked with dandelion? And this is my first full dandelion leaf infusion-

Mason Hutchison:

I know.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I've never had that before, so thank you.

Mason Hutchison:

You're welcome.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

As your friend, I'm kind of privy to some projects you have going on, so I'm pretty excited for you to share those--just things—herbal things that are bubbling up for you right now.

Mason Hutchison:

Totally. I already forgot what I was going to talk about.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Do you want me to tell you?

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I know.

Mason Hutchison:

I think I know one of them, but yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Okay. Well, I want to hear about your book.

Mason Hutchison:

Cool. Yeah, so, just like everything else in my life, I sit on things forever. I have to work the nerve up to do it. It's one of those things where it's like you don't want to die with regrets, so you just—you just like, you succumb to the power of the inspiration, and you start moving forward with it, one foot in front of the other, and, basically, that's what this book is, or is going to be. I want to call it, The Art of Frugal Nutrition, which HerbRally does have a free course on it as of now. We call it “an ever expanding course free of charge,” sliding scale, actually. HerbRally.com/frugalnutrition. You could learn more about it there. Really, this idea, this concept has always lived in my head as a book. I was like, “You know what? Maybe I'll just start it as a course and get the ball rolling.” That was years ago. Just the other day, I was like, “You know what? I'm going to start writing it.” Technically, I have been reached out by publishers—a publisher, and still deciding on that route. But as of now, at least, I'm getting the wheels turning. The premise is going to be eating healthy on a budget. I mean, it's pretty basic. (0:59:40.6) there's a million books out there like that, but I think I have a unique take.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

You do.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah. There's going to be a lot of really—I want it to be story-driven. I want it to also involve the community a lot. Obviously, we'll talk about nourishing herbal infusions. I call it “herbal adjacent,” but really, this is just another one of those projects where I feel like I have to do this. So, you hold me accountable. You hold me accountable, and yeah. It's even nervous—nerve-racking talking about it, but thanks for bringing it up.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, it's good. Talk about it.

Mason Hutchison:

Get it out there.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It's going to be really fun to see it evolve.

Mason Hutchison:

Even if I write a couple hours a week. As long as I'm working towards it, I'll be happy with that.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Awesome. Looking forward to that.

Mason Hutchison:

Thanks.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

We mentioned Schoolhouse, but I feel like I just want to mention it again. You've got some ideas for new teachers coming up and-

Mason Hutchison:

Yep, yep.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I'm one of them.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah, thank you.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It's just a really great resource, and that's like a big part. Like you said, it keeps the lights on at HerbRally. It's a really great place to hear from different herbalists, support different herbalists.

Mason Hutchison:

Totally.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, so that's mentioned, and, again, you're very generous giving a discount count code. Will you mention that again?

Mason Hutchison:

Totally, yes. So, HerbRally.com/schoolhouse, you'd learn more and register there. Use coupon code, "Rosalee," you could get your first 30 days for free. Check out behind-the-scenes. As of now, I want to say we have 60+ classes on there with a wide range of teachers. I don't even know how many teachers are in there. Probably like 30, something like that. The goal is to add new classes all the time. I've been going through some life-changes the past few months, and also moving back here, so it's been a little stagnant. Still released a couple recently, but the goal is to get that up and running even more so, and just continually add to the library, and stuff like that. Oh, I guess dental herbalism too.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That was the next thing, yeah. I'm really excited for this.

Mason Hutchison:

We're going to produce a one-off outside of the HerbRally Schoolhouse. A course on herbs for dental health, and we're going to be working with my good friend, Kyle Denton, from Tippecanoe Herbs, who is also on Herbalist Hour (1:01:45.9) He's been on the show.

We've done an herb shop tour with him on our YouTube Channel, so check out his work at Tippecanoe Herbs. He's awesome.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

He was just on my show.

Mason Hutchison:

That's right. He talked about St. John's wort, or as he likes to call it, "solstice wort," which I love because it blooms on the solstice according to Kyle.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I really like that.

Mason Hutchison:

It probably does.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, it does. I like that. Which everyone needs to do it, so I don't have to say, "solstice wort which other people call St. John's wort."

Mason Hutchison:

Or St. John's wort. Totally. (1:02:13.7) awesome. He was in the dental industry for over a decade, so—and he's a brilliant herbalist. He's going to combine all this together. Hopefully, we're planning a February launch for that.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Cool. Should we talk about our project?

Mason Hutchison:

Sure, yeah, yeah. Totally. You want to lead it off?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Sure. We have numerous ideas of collaborating together. This one is really starting to take shape. We're going to do a collaborative podcast, kind of a sidestep of our other podcasts, and it's going to be called, Herbalists After Hours. That's kind of the vibe of it. It's like herbalists after hours and that is not going to be necessarily herbal learning intensive, but it's like who are—who is our community, how are people—it was like real people, real lives, and-

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah, it's just going to be fun.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Fun--that's a big part of it, actually.

Mason Hutchison:

The intent is to have fun with our herbalist house, get to know a little bit more about them behind-the-scenes, because people sometimes say, "Mason, do you like plants or people more?" I think it's kind of a funny question. It's probably asked in jest too, but I'm always like, "I like plant people." I love working (1:03:33.4) I have since Day One. Why? Because mostly they're funny, eclectic, kind, caring, and we get to, with this project expose that as opposed to—I think, obviously, there's a time and place to go in-depth on these herbs, but I really want to showcase what amazing people these are.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

We're going to do this in-person. We're going to go to the herb fairs and conferences together. We'll do it in-person, so it's going to be a new adventure.

Mason Hutchison:

Totally.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I'm excited for it.

Mason Hutchison:

We got some interviews scheduled for International Herb Symposium and Great Lakes Herb Faire, and then we've got lots of other adventures planned.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Train rides? I don't know.

Mason Hutchison:

Yep. So, yes, exactly (1:04:14.7) be a good one. Hopefully, I think the goal is to release one per month starting whenever, and then—and then they'll be on both of our YouTube feeds and our podcast feeds, so check it out.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It's going to be fun.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Do you feel ready for your last question?

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah, I guess so.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, alright. Well, so I wrote a last question for you specifically.

Mason Hutchison:

Thank you.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I was just reflecting on you, your herbal path. You've created a very unique herbal path for yourself. There's these traditional roles of being a clinical herbalist or maybe a medicinal herb grower or a medicine maker, a teacher or something. There are all these traditional roles, but you created—you forged your own path, and I'm curious about that in a couple of different ways. One, how do you define herbalism? Do you have any words of advice for someone who is also maybe wanting to forge their own path within this?

Mason Hutchison:

Cool. So, yeah, I think I'll tackle the second part first, and then I'll kind of define what an herbalist, in my opinion, is.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Sure

Mason Hutchison:

Because I think it will lead nicely into that. But don't be like me. Don't—don't sit on an idea for years on end and wait. I mean, you could do that if you want, but it's always best just to take the plunge. I think the plunge is getting yourself in the vicinity of the type of work you want to do. So, if you are really into lab equipment and stuff like that, see if you could go and get a job at an herb company in the lab. There are countless answers to this. You could go work on Herb Farm. Just get in the general vicinity of where you want to be, hone your craft, learn from the people that are doing that work, and work your way towards that. If you're kind of a little fuzzy on where you want to be, I think that you'll know inside that there's something that's calling you. I would not settle for something that's peripherally related. I would go as specific as possible and work your way towards that. It's exactly what I did with Mountain Rose Herbs. I had this pull. Actually, before I worked at Mountain Rose Herbs, it was just,

“I want to be in herbalism. Oh, and here’s this company that’s moving into town.” I was like, “I’m going to work there.” I think if you start very broad and get more and more specific, your heart is going to call you, and just follow that lead. I call it “following the golden thread.” I actually got that from Stephen Buhner, and I don’t know if I’m quoting it correctly, but that’s how I interpret it as. My life is following the golden thread of following my heart, seeing where the path kind of takes me, and take risks. I mean, before I worked at Mountain Rose Herbs, I had a reasonably paying job with great benefits. I worked with all my friends and I was like, “I’m going to go start at the bottom of this company.” That felt like a big risk, but it changed my life for the better. I mean, big time, I can’t even explain it, and then making the leap from Mountain Rose Herbs to HerbRally full time. So, there’s going to be risk involved. There’s going to be uncomfortability. You might get some weird looks from your family and friends, but I think it’s incredibly important. I don’t know if you have anything to add to that.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, I like that. I feel like I followed the golden thread. I would add to that is you keep going from one thing to the next. It doesn’t have to be for everything. I used to make products to sell at the Farmers Market—I did that for a couple of years. It was very clear that that was not my gift, but I’m so grateful for the experience of it because I do have that experience that I can share with others and my students now. I like getting the periphery, try things out, play around, keep following the golden thread.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah, yeah. I love that. As far as defining “herbalist,” you’re an herbalist. You’re an herbalist. You’re an herbalist. But I had this like—I was telling you before bed last night, I was kind of—you kind of think about questions. Sometimes when you’re going to bed, things come to you. I never thought about it this way. I’ve heard this explanation a lot as far as like, “What makes you an herbalist?” For the first time, I’m sure people have kind of answered in this way, but this is kind of what came to me. So, I play basketball a lot, like it’s always been a life passion of mine. If someone came up to me and they’re like, “Mason, you’re not in the NBA, so you’re not a basketball player.” That seems kind of silly when you say it that way, doesn’t it?

Or I play chess obsessively everyday, but I'm not Magnus Carlsen. I'm not getting paid to play chess, but I will still consider myself a chess player. I do herbal things everyday. Actually, my whole life revolves around herbalism, so I do the practice of herbalism. I'm an herbalist by the sheer fact. You don't even need to be paid to do herbalism. It doesn't need to be a profession. It's literally just a practice. It's you building relationships with the plants around you, the fungi around you, the nature around you. Building relationship with the plants, utilizing it for your own personal nourishment, and nourishing it for the community around you – that's what being an herbalist is. It's not—clinical herbalist is an herbalist. Farmer is an herbalist. The person who is making tea everyday utilizing these medicines, these plants--that makes you an herbalist.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I love that.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah. There had been times where you said something like—I don't know—like, “Oh, I'm not a real herbalist,” and my response to you has always been like, “Dude, if you're not an herbalist, I'm not an herbalist. This is like a major problem because this is my identity.”

Mason Hutchison:

Oh, I know.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

So, I like this approach to it.

Mason Hutchison:

I mean, it makes so much sense, like, yeah. I don't know. I just love that I don't have to be in the NBA to be a basketball player, so it really comes down to practice and, uh...I think if you think otherwise, if you disagree with me—well, it's totally fine to disagree with me, but I just don't want the disagreement to come out of elitism or something like that, so-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That's not my crowd.

Mason Hutchison:

Thanks crowd. But, yeah. I don't know. I just—I just love it and it will forever be part of my life, and I'm so thankful for it.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Exciting to see how things continue to evolve, keep seeing your ideas coming out, and excited to work on projects with you.

Mason Hutchison:

Totally.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Thanks for helping me make this leap of doing it in person.

Mason Hutchison:

Absolutely.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It's fun to do this. Thanks for bringing all these goodies too.

Mason Hutchison:

Absolutely, yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Your pouring (1:11:07.1) It's been really fun. Thanks again for coming back. Thanks for sharing dandelion wisdom, and thanks for being on the show again.

Mason Hutchison:

Thanks for having me, and thanks to all—you all for tuning in. Cool.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Cool. Hoo!

Mason Hutchison:

Yow!

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Thanks so much for listening. You can download the illustrated dandelion spiced tea recipe card from today's episode by heading over to herbswithrosaleepodcast.com or check out the show notes. And if you're not already subscribed to this podcast, I'd love to have you a part in this herbal community so I can deliver even more herbal goodies your way.

This week's Student Spotlight is on Jessie Brill in New South Wales, Australia. Jessie is a student in both the Herbal Energetics Course and Cooling Inflammation, and her reflections are thoughtful, earthy, and full of insight. Jessie's connection with the plants is rooted in a life lived close to the land. As a homesteader and practicing astrologer, she brings practical creativity to her studies, like making thyme and lavender vinegar cleaner or using cayenne oil for shoulder pain. Her reflections invite us all to listen more closely to the plants and to ourselves. It's been a pleasure to have you in the school, Jessie.

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

Dandelions may be common, but they hold so much quiet magic. Take their fluffy seed head. It turns out they've been quietly rewriting the rules of physics. So, for years, researchers assume those little seed head parachutes worked the same way as like, well, a parachute, right? But when scientists at the University of Edinburgh put dandelion seeds in a wind tunnel, they discovered something completely new--a kind of air flow that had only been imagined in theory and never seen in the real world. So, what happens is each dandelion seed creates its tiny, separated vortex ring. This is a stable ring of swirling air that hovers right above the parachute. So, it's like the seed is carrying around its own invisible halo of wind. This hidden vortex, basically, slows the seeds fall and lets it drift on the breeze for miles four times more efficiently than if it had a solid parachute. So, what looks like a little fragile puff ball in your garden is actually this natural aeronautical engineer pulling off a feat of physics that scientists didn't even think was possible. The dandelion is not just common. It's quietly expanding the very limits of what we know about the living world. It's like the dandelion has woven together engineering, magic and immortality, all in one fragile, silvery sphere.

Thanks for joining me on this adventure. I look forward to seeing you on the next.