

Alyssa Dennis:

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Rosalee de la Forêt:

Hello and welcome to the Herbs with Rosalee Podcast, a show exploring how herbs heal as medicine, as food and through nature connection. I'm your host, Rosalee de la Forêt. I created this YouTube Channel to share trusted herbal wisdom so that you can get the best results when relying on herbs for your health. I love offering up practical knowledge to help you dive deeper into the world of medicinal plants and seasonal living.

Each episode of the Herbs with Rosalee Podcast is shared on YouTube, as well as your favorite podcast app. Transcripts and recipes for each episode can be found at herbswithrosaleepodcast.com or through the link in the video description. Also, in the video description you'll find other helpful resources. For example, to get my best herbal tips as well as fun bonuses, be sure to sign up for my weekly herbal newsletter. Okay, grab your cup of tea and let's dive in.

This week's Student Spotlight is on Mylinda Ogundipe who is currently residing in California. Mylinda is enrolled in several of our courses including the Podcast Circle, Rooted Medicine Circle, and Herbal Energetics Course. She brings warmth, curiosity, and a collaborative spirit to everything she does from learning to grow herbs in a small space, to involving her young daughter and her husband in her studies. Mylinda lives and shares her herbal journey with great heart, and she actively supports classmates by asking thoughtful questions and offering helpful insights.

To honor her contributions, Mountain Rose Herbs is sending Mylinda a \$50 gift certificate to stock up on their incredible selection of sustainably sourced herbal supplies. Mountain Rose Herbs is my go-to for high quality organic spices, herbal remedies, and even hard-to-find botanicals.

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Hey, it's Rosalee. You know, creating this podcast has been one of the most rewarding parts of my herbal work, and if you found something meaningful here, whether it's a new perspective, a favorite recipe or just a sense of calm, I want to let you know there's a good way to go even deeper. It's called the "Podcast Circle." Inside you'll get access to live classes taught by some of my favorite herbal teachers, behind-the-scenes updates, and a beautiful library of herbal resources that we've gathered over the years. But more than that, it's a space to connect with fellow plant lovers who care about the same things you do. And truly, your membership helps make this podcast possible. It's how we keep the episodes coming and the herbal goodness flowing. So, if you're ready to be part of something more, something rooted in connection, head over to HerbalPodcastCircle.com. I'd love to see you there.

What if a plant could hold the morning in its hands? A velvet green leaf perfectly cupped, cradling a single bead of water like it's guarding a secret. In this episode, herbalist Alyssa Dennis invites us into the world of lady's mantle, a plant with a name straight out of a fairytale and history-steeped in both myth and medicine. We wander through the city streets noticing cracks where plants make their home, travel with her to the misty shores of Iona and explore why this unassuming leaf has fascinated herbalists for centuries. Lady's mantle is a botanical treasure both tonifying and mysterious, and this conversation will leave you seeing it with new eyes.

For those of you who don't already know her, Alyssa Dennis is a dedicated earth activist, educator, interdisciplinary artist, and clinical herbalist devoted to the movements of peace, justice, and ecological kinship. Her work has been to reawaken her ancestral traditions of plant medicine, and to guide her community back into relationship with the living world. Melissa has two fine art degrees, advanced training in clinical herbalism, and spent years

within the natural building profession. She's the founder of Eclipta Herbal and steward of a vibrant herbal sanctuary in Baltimore City—a living classroom home to over 100 species of medicinal plants, and counting. The space is a heart-centered venture of ecological conservation of both the human body and the land body, which serves as gathering ground for plant medicine education, community building, earth skills workshops, and collaboration.

Alyssa, welcome to the show.

Alyssa Dennis:

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you, so much.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Oh, I'm really looking forward to this. I'm really looking forward to getting to know you. Actually, that's probably the thing I'm most excited for, followed closely by I'm so into lady's mantle right now. It's been calling my name so I'm really excited about your plant too, so yeah, let's dive in. I would just love to hear from you and how your world has been shaped by the plants and everything that has brought you here to us today.

Alyssa Dennis:

Thanks for that question. Yeah, so much, right? But I guess I have answered this question before, and so it continues to evolve, but as I think about it, it's really just a—for me, then such a deep remembering because I feel like in the last 50 to a hundred years—I mean, before that, everyone had a connection to the land in a very embodied way. I mean, you had to. That's what I think about so much—is that just a couple of generations ago, we were all very subsistence living in a way. A lot of us. Most of the people in the world, and a lot of people in the world still do, right? So, I just think that there is sort of this inherent connection to observing the land, being with the plants, being around them, cultivating plants. And so, I just for whatever reason, my background—I still practice making art. I have an undergrad and a graduate degree. I went to an arts high school, so the arts and just thinking creatively, thinking outside of cultural boxes has been like my norm always. Ecology has always been a deep love of mine just since I was like—did a school assembly on acid rain and stuff like that.

I was just indebted to the environment. I was just like, “The environment needs our help,” so I did natural building for many years. I’ve worked as a construction—I worked building straw bale structures and adobe plasters and things like that. I got really interested in Buckminster Fuller and Wes Anderson. Wes Jackson, not Wes Anderson. That’s the filmmaker.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I was like, “Oh, I didn’t know that Wes”—thank you for clarifying that.

Alyssa Dennis:

Wes Jackson, yeah. Students of Buckminster Fuller, but just things like that within the architectural world, and just like how we build a life, how we really think about how we live, really, and just not having cultural norms, and the way that things are determine the structure of our lives. It’s like a really deep thing for me. I was making art about that, being a construction worker and building with straw, building with plants and the earth itself. That just kind of led into “food as medicine,” and then it led into—I started going on walks with a friend of mine who is a botanist around Baltimore City. She would start to point out plants that were familiar to her. One day, she pointed out a plant and said, “Oh, that? You can eat that plant.” It was growing out of the sidewalk crack, which is a lot of people’s story. It’s kind of funny, and it was plantain. Here’s this plant that I had never really even gave a second thought about. I was just so enthralled by what she said. I was like, “What? You can?” This just broke more of that systemic kind of—what kind of system are we living in that I don’t know these things? And so, I just became obsessed and so, that was—I don’t know—15 years ago, and then took all kinds of foraging. I got into all of that and took some classes by Steve Brill in New York City. Wildman Steve Brill, bless his heart.

But that—and then I was living in New York City and I just got so—I was biking everywhere because I just felt like I needed to embody my environment and look at it, and be with it, look who’s on the street. I’ve always been a biker, but in New York City, specifically, was my main form of transportation. And then, you know when you do that, you see all the plants--the consistent things that you see, the biomarkers, the café on the corner, just things that you

consistently see. I was already really interested in plants, not in an herbal or clinical way or anything like that, but just kind of that whole idea of plants in the urban environment. Who thrives there? What kind of plants are thriving there? That to me was just like such a strong pull. Then I just started thinking like there's an herb shop and I went into the herb shop. There were some flyers for an herb school. I went through a three-year herbal program at ArborVitae School of Traditional Herbalism, and I just felt like at the end, my biggest thing—and everyone was like, "Comment on your experience." I was just like, this experience, wholeheartedly, has brought me home. I feel at home. Almost every time I say that I want to cry because it is home to my body and it's home to just being grounded into where I am. You don't have to reach for things constantly and be like, "I'm in lack of. I'm in" ..yeah, and so, yeah. That's just sort of been my path and I feel like it was calling me for a little while—for a long time. Just that being with the land in a really intimate way, and I just had to find my path for that intimacy because I thought straw bale building was that. It is in a lot of ways, but medicine is literally the tether of this vast world that we are in the western—well, west of what, right? In the industrial parts of the world that we have lost a tether to, and so people talk about environmentalism and environmental destruction. I just think herbalism is key to that spiritual embodiment of being with the land and being with the environment, and really nourishing it back to—because—really nourishing ourselves because it's not the land that's the problem. It's just the way that we interact with it. It's our relationship with it, so yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That's so beautiful, Alyssa. I just have to touch back on a couple of things that really struck me. One, I love that it was plantain growing through a crack in the sidewalk and it grabbed you so strongly. I'm just envisioning how you said the plants were just calling to you for so long. You were right on the edge. You just needed the tiniest whisper to push you over, to fall into the rabbit hole of the plant world. That's all it took. It's like, "You can eat that?" and then just like the mind has expanded. So, I love that. I 100% believe you. They were calling you and you were just ready for it, so yeah, I love that. That's really beautiful.

I also feel that herbalism is such a key part of us regaining relationship with the land and living in a good way with this world. Because part of what I love is it's just so practical. It's not—it doesn't—it can be esoteric if people like being esoteric, and it can be so simple, like picking that plantain leaf with respect and making a spit poultice of it or using it to heal our digestion or whatever. It just becomes so practical, such a reminder that we're of this earth, and there's so much magic in healing in this earth all around us. I love the way you put that, so thank you for that.

I'm working on a project with Rich Mandelbaum, so it's cool to hear that you are through ArborVitae too. It's wonderful. Wonderful. I would love to hear—oh, go ahead.

Alyssa Dennis:

Oh, no. I was just going to comment on your—just a comment about it can be so many things in so many ways to so many different people. The access points of being with the earth—it's just—it's not—there's no discrimination, so I think that's really great.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It's often too. Thanks for bringing that up because it's not even that it has to be one or the other. I can say what brought me into herbalism isn't always the same thing that has kept me here. It changes, grows and deepens with time in unexpected ways, so it's wonderful there are all these different tendrils calling us in.

Alyssa Dennis:

Yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I would love to hear a little bit more about your urban experience. That's something I cannot speak to. I live—I literally cannot see my neighbors. I live in a forest. I loved what you said about being in the environment everyday and biking. For me, it's walking. I generally walk every day and so I'm seeing the plants every single day.

I have that experience that I can relate to, but I'm in a town. The town I live in, I'm like eight miles from town and there's like a hundred people in that town, so it's very rural. I love the urban. I think sometimes there's false belief that to be an herbalist, you have to live in the forest, for example. I would love to hear about just the urban experience. If you wouldn't mind speaking a little bit about your gardens too, I'd love to hear about that.

Alyssa Dennis:

Thanks. I know. I think about this all the time. I'm like, "Why did I choose the city?" I do. I think about people who live in rural areas and just being able to be surrounded by the woods just feels so idyllic in my mind, and I wish I had more access to that. Although Baltimore is really great in that it is very close to—a ten-minute drive I can be in the woods. They're not woods that are like Upstate New York or Maine or something like that. It is a little different but—and I can definitely feel and I can see the trees, how old they are. Just the diversity is very—I'm aware of all of that, but the city just felt like a place where it was, you know, yeah, like you said, it's just a place people don't think of it with—that has a lot of ecology outside of human ecology. It's very much a human reflection of cities and hard surfaces, the human-made.

I think that was—I felt like that was such a good challenge for me—how can—and a lot of cities have such a dense population of people. It's like, wow. I could really reach people in this language of the earth in a more concentrated way because I live around more people. But so—but yeah, I felt like it was just the challenge that I wanted to have where to connect people to ecology that's outside of human ecology. I saw a lot of people doing that in New York City too. I wasn't the only person and I just got so excited by those people. We inspired each other. A lot of it was around invasive plants, and so I got—my thesis project, basically, if you can call it "thesis project," at herb school was to—was called the "invasive apothecary." Just speaking about those plants specifically and what is their role, whether people think they have a role or not. That could be a role—ecological role, a social role, all of those things.

I'm from Baltimore and I moved back here during the pandemic just to be closer to family, my husband's family as well. Just to have a little bit more land.

I couldn't own land in New York City. It was impossible although the parks are just such an inspiration. There's a lot of really wonderful work happening in New York City parks, which is only 14% of the land mass of—which is incredible. So, I just—yeah, it was kind of the best of both worlds being in Baltimore. I could have a little piece of land that could present that challenge of how do I create an ecology of an herbal sanctuary in a city. So far, so good that we have about half to three-quarter acre. We have over 125 different species, and that's always growing. Just being able to go outside and have this postage stamp of like—there's good. There's positives and negatives as well because I love going to other places to see where plants unintentionally grow because I've learned so much more about why they thrive there in their habitat, their ideal habitat. I'm sort of missing a little bit of that, but I sort of try and simulate that in a way and only have plants that are of my bioregion, learning so much about what does thrive well here, and specifically, in this space. So, it's a lot of just learning from the plants themselves. That was really the impetus for growing the plants here in a small scale and not like a farm production scale—was to learn from the plants themselves, but also to be able to bring people here to see the plants growing, embody—be embodied in their sensory system to sit with the plants, feel the plants, not have someone just talk at them. You can learn so much from books. There are so many great books out there, but just having people sit with the plants, look at them, just have a sensory experience of the urban ecology in this way, which is like a huge goal of mine. We are—seem to be achieving that, so that's good.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

What a gift that must be to have that many medicinal plants in this little spot that people can go and enjoy and have a sensorial experience like you said. How long—I know a garden is never done per se, but how long did it take would you say to get that going because that's no small, small feat?

Alyssa Dennis:

Yeah. We had a really warm winter. I think it was 2021, and so I got started as soon as—I mean, we really got started as soon as we moved into this house just planning things.

We're in our fifth season now and every—it seems to get a little easier every year. This year I was really planning on being out there a lot more just to—because it needed it. As long as we're getting rain, which isn't always the case, but the herbs, they're good. They are really happy. I just have to pull up some gra—I make it sound really easy, but there's a lot of harvesting going on. There's a lot of weeding. The weeding gets better and better every year, mulching and just keeping things covered. All the perennials—perennials are so great at—they just take up that space. I also have a woodland medicinal garden. We have a lot of shade in one area. I just love that I'm trying to—I don't know. For a lack of a better word, simulate this woodland experience. We have a lot of endangered plants that we're cultivating. I haven't harvested any yet, but we have goldenseal. I did have ginseng at one point, did not survive. We have pawpaws, and what else? Black cohosh, blue cohosh, bloodroot, coltsfoot—

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That's lovely. You've got a little microclimate going on there.

Alyssa Dennis:

Yeah, and some stuff does better than others and you just see what works. I lose stuff all the time, but mostly—mostly doing good.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Oh, good. Some of my best friends are farmers and my dear friend, he once told me when I first started my garden, he said, “By year five, you might start to feel like you know a little something.” I kind of found that to be true though. Like you're saying too, the things about the weeding and the mulching, and just beginning to feel a little bit more on top of things by year five.

Alyssa Dennis:

Just the insect population, I could see just the difference from season to season and year to year. We also have mites. We have thrips. We have leaf mold, so it's like learning how to mitigate that and why it's happening, so it's all very exciting.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I imagine you must have lady's mantle growing. I'm excited to dive in.

Alyssa Dennis:

I do.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Then why did lady's mantle pop out at you as the herb you wanted to chat about today?

Alyssa Dennis:

I had this experience. I went to Scotland in June of this year, and I had this just blew me away experience. It didn't really hit me until later when I got back, just that day when I got back and it was like I was winding down for the day back at the house we were renting in Scotland. I was just—I don't even know where to start with it (0:24:04.5) the story.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Absolutely.

Alyssa Dennis:

Okay. Well, so—so I have this—I also wrote a little article about this which we can put in the show notes if you want, but just going a little deeper, I'll just kind of give the short of it—is that I've always just tangentially heard stories about Iona, which is little, tiny three-mile island off the coast of Western Scotland. We were on the Isle of Mull, so it's right off the coast of Mull. Mull is a bigger island, and then Iona is a smaller. And so, Iona always spoke stories to me about the divine feminine. That's what I knew and that wasn't generously shared, really. I sort of asking people. People, especially in the US, I don't think really have a pretty—they don't have an understanding of a lot of the longer history of the British Isles. When I went there, I was like, "Okay, great. I'm going to see what kind of information I can grasp," but the only thing I can really—the whole island is dedicated to St. Columba, which historically, he was someone who was a Christian missionary that came from Ireland.

There's an abbey that was built in his name in the 13th century, but he was there with his monastery long, long before that. That was the historic grounding of that place, but then—so I was just like, “Where are these references to women?” I just know that they're there. Even the name “Iona”—so, basically, I went into the nunnery. There's a nunnery there. Of course, the nunnery has never been restored, whereas, the abbey has been restored several times, the abbey to St. Columba, but the nunnery that was housed by women has never been restored. It doesn't even have a roof anymore. It's just ruined walls. I go into the nunnery and there is a little mention of Sheela na gig. I don't know if you're familiar, but they are these sculptural—rudimentary sculptures of what looks like a squatting woman with very exaggerated vulva. They're all over the British Isles and some in France and Spain. There are hundreds of them and they're all different. Studies have shown that they were sculpted during the medieval period when these churches were being built. Maybe they were influenced by the earlier Celtic Druidic traditions. It was just a lot of unknowns about these figurines, but some of them have been destroyed, covered up. A lot of them have just gone into a complete disrepair, but there is one on the nunnery on Iona. Very hard to see. I actually couldn't even see the makeup of those sculpture, but it's very, very faint. So, that was just on reference there. I was like, “Oh, my gosh! Okay. At least they're mentioning that,” but it was also just a little note on the side of a plaque. (0:27:31.0) Then I went in going around through the nunnery, and the first plant that I saw was lady's mantle. I go, “Oh, my God!” I just start kind of freaking out because I know the plant medicine of lady's mantle. I've just studied this plant. I have this plant in my garden, and so—everyone I'm traveling with, they're like, “What is she freaking out about?” I just kind of locked off on my own, so I'm just reeling about it. I'm just taking pictures. I'm just like, “Hi, lady's mantle!” It's just like this—this invisibility that was happening was also in the invisibility of this plant that was staring at me that I knew. I was like—it was like seeing a friend, an old friend or just a friend that has a story to tell me. Just a really deep story to tell me about the island and about the sacred feminine, and about the lost history of women on this island. There's one other mention of women on the island which was they—during excavations, they did find the bones of women. I'm not really sure when those excavations happened that dated—predated Columba is what they say. There's a lot of mystery around the island.

There are secret wells on the island which are always usually the well maidens of the British Isles is a long and broad history and has a lot of stories around that as well.

To me—I guess I'll talk about lady's mantle. In case anyone doesn't know is that lady's mantle is an herb to—one, it's just a bitter astringent herb. When I think bitter astringent, it's going to clean up any dampness and pull the tissues back together when they are relaxed and pulled apart. When does that happen? This happens when you—people who can't get pregnant usually have relaxed tissue states. They're not being able to hold a pregnancy. So, lady's mantle is used both to prepare for a pregnancy, during pregnancy safely, and then also, postpartum to help tone the tissues back together. Giving birth is a very—you're also in a very damp, relaxed state. All that surge of progesterone and just all those hormones are there to relax your body, relax all the tissues so that you can accept this human being that's now growing inside of you. The leaf is a holding. The lady's mantle refers to Lady Mary. Actually, it's a cloak, a veiled woman wearing a protective cloak that can also protect her environment with this cloak. The environment itself is protected by this cloak of the leaf, really. I have one here. You can see those broad, kidney-shape—it's a low-growing ground cover. It literally is a cloak that is—each leaf is like a cloak protecting the earth. The Latin name, *Alchemilla*—who I was seeing on Iona was *vulgaris*, but I have a native lady's mantle here, *Alchemilla mollis*. *Alchemilla* refers to “little alchemist.” The alchemist would just revere this plant because literally, the plant itself and their relationship with water and how water becomes purified. Lady's mantle literally has—scientifically has a way to distill water, which is just amazing because it's doing what an alembic or a retort would do. You think about the way that essential oils are made and how a hydrosol is made, that's how dew forms. Dew is forming because it's a refined process of—or it's purifying water, basically, because it has gone through all of the elements of the day, and condensed down and forming all over the plants. Lady's mantle has some of these cells that make up the leaf are—the word is “hydathode.” This process of distilling water is made possible by the hydathodes, which are specialized plant structures. They are pores, actually, of the leaves, and they release water from the plant's xylem in this process of filtration. This phenomenon is visible in very, very early morning--the little beads of water right at the tip of the leaves.

That's where you can tell that process is happening. It's just like little jewels on the edge of the leaf. Then, of course, everyone knows when it rains, it can actually collect water. It's actually collecting a lot of water, just rain water pooling up. You see those beads of water everywhere around, so it looks like mercury in a way. I have a lot more about this. I could keep going forever and ever, but this dew that's like this—is a purification process that is—that really is essential to life. Purified water, we can't live without it. When you're surrounded by salt water—water purification was really hard to do before industrialization on a mass scale. You have to really know where to get it. I feel like the alchemist really knew this plant in this way and that this dew was collected to use as medicine or it was the “mercurius,” the medium, the medicine. There's just so much about water there. We come from an inner ocean within the womb of our mother's body--this womb or tomb of Mama Earth. There's the ancient Cailleach who is a—she's a primordial mother. She's basically like Mother Mary in the Juridic Celtic traditions. She is the land itself. She is also the veiled one. She wears a veil. So, this overlay of Christian mythology and Christian traditional symbolism, and with this sheela na gig—basically, this image of the squatting woman with an exaggerated vulva, I was like, “Oh, my God. Have you ever seen a person giving birth?” This is what it looks like. There's an invisibility to that because most of us will say, “No, I have not seen someone giving birth,” but literally, that exaggerated vulva is what happens when your head is coming out. When your head is coming out. I just think that these are such taboo things that happen everyday. There's 360,000 people born every day. I think that's the average. This is happening so many times a day, but it's something that's so invisible, just that birthing process. I'm just starting to feel like lady's mantle was really teaching me this primordial origin story from the British Isles. I was like, “Oh, my God. That's what Iona is!” Because lady's mantle has such an affinity for the uterus and for toning the tissues of the uterus, I'm really bringing back the balance between water and just the astringency needed to hold water, but also expel excess water. That's what the kidneys do. You can also think in Chinese medicine, the kidneys are the life gate. They are the pre-imposed natal chi--are the kidneys, the hot water heater of our bodies. We need the chi, but also that yin—the yin and yang together. It's balancing water. It's balancing the heat vs. the amount of water, and that's our inner ocean, basically. You need to balance the life force, the energy, the chi throughout your body, and how much water you

have. I've seen clients all the time where—I have a client right now where her pulse—her blood pulse is so weak. I couldn't feel it. I couldn't find it. It was not there at all on all three points, but her chi side, totally there. But she's anemic. She's—her tongue is really white and a little blue. She's fatigued. She literally has—if you think of the blood and the chi as an ocean, so the ocean water is the blood, your blood, and then the chi is the waves. So, if you have a bunch of waves going and no water, imagine what that can do to upset your body. Just that balance between the chi and the water is what's really all speaking to me with lady's mantle. The fact that I was on the ocean, I was on this island, and I had to get on a boat to get to this place. I had to cross the ocean to get here. I'm looking at these white sand beaches and looking out at the water and thinking just—I mean that's so much a process of learning about the plants and where they thrive. When I looked at lady's mantle, it's like, “Is this the descendant of all these women that were here? This lady's mantle that I'm seeing, are you descended from all of these women who were here before?” and just being able to read the landscape in that way. She's just speaking to me in all of these ways. If I had not seen lady's mantle, I don't know if all of this would have come about. There's so much more that I have written about this experience, but hopefully, that gives you a little bit of—about lady's mantle and just giving that kind of balance to the tone. Originally, lady's mantle was always used as a wound herb. You can see that in the same light, just helping to heal and bring tissues back together, and bring integrity back to the tissues in a very balanced way. I just felt like knowing the remedial gifts of lady's mantle was just like a small yet powerful thread taking me back to this vast web of knowledge about place and country, that I was just like I need to write a book.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Just on lady's mantle.

Alyssa Dennis:

Well, I guess—then it made me think about all my other experiences with other plants and just how I see—why I'm seeing plantain growing up a sidewalk crack. Why is couch grass growing out of a sidewalk crack? Or, you know, that tells you so much about what the medicine is because couch grass is—breaks up stones. What is it doing in the sidewalk crack?

It's breaking the stones. So, I was just learning about the plants in this way through an embodied experience of the environment. It's just—it blows me away and I just feel so grounded by it.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It's fun to hear you speak about that. I was in Ireland for some time this year, and so I also saw the—I'm not going to say it right—en sheela gig? Is that right?

Alyssa Dennis:

Sheela na gig, yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Sheela na gig, yeah. So, we visited churches and that was pointed out to us, and then we had lots and lots of stories about the Cailleach witch.

Alyssa Dennis:

Oh, you did?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, yeah. So, thank you for sharing that – your experience there, your love of lady's mantle. How do you like to work with lady's mantle in terms of preparations?

Alyssa Dennis:

I like to work with lady's mantle as a tincture, and then I always add a little bit, just about 10% glycerin to a tincture, which actually does sweeten it up quite a bit. But really, just because there are a lot of tannins in there, and the tannins are really that astringent nature of the plant, so just to pull those out, and putting them—putting that into formulas. I actually haven't worked with lady's mantle that much just because it's not a big market herb and I've only been growing it—growing lady's mantle for a short time, and so I don't always have a lot to harvest to make for big batches and things.

I do just go out and visit her in the mornings and look at the dew, and have just been learning from her over the years, and so, yeah, but I do have my little tincture here.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Nice, and you've shared a recipe with us on how you make the tincture. Folks can download that at herbswithrosaleepodcast.com or check out the show notes. I'd love to hear all folks who are working with lady's mantle too, so feel free to share that with us, tincture or tea or however folks might be working with it. Lately, I've been wondering. I told you lady's mantle has been like calling to me and I keep thinking about lady's mantle. Lately, I've been wondering what it would be like to infuse lady's mantle and rose into an oil. I don't know. I've never done that. Never heard of it. It probably exists. I'm not saying I made it up or anything, but I've been wondering about that. That's kind of on my mind to make something like that.

Alyssa Dennis:

Lady's mantle is in the Rose family, so I think about agrimony and just all those plants that you don't really think of as in the Rose family, but it definitely doesn't fit. It just looks so different than a lot of the other Rose family plants, but—and actually, the-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

(crosstalk 0:44:04.2) flowers.

Alyssa Dennis:

Yeah, the little, tiny flowers, they're almost—and they—you know, if you look at the little, tiny flowers in a loop, they kind of look like the little stamen sort of making—you know when there's a drop of water, a drop that goes into a bigger pool of water and it makes that sort of—I don't even know what it's called, but just that ripple effect and that kind of washing back up of the water that's on the surface, it looks like that. It looks like that's what's happening where the stamen comes up and there's this little—sorry. My thumb. Actually, I made some—if anyone's wondering, I made some black walnut and it just totally made my whole thumb black, but anyway-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

This is not (crosstalk 0:44:54.9) You're okay.

Alyssa Dennis:

No. I had gloves on, but the thumb had a hole. There's just like this circular cavity. It's very small. It's very hard to tell and then it looks like there's a drop of water that went in and is rippling out. What was I going to say? The *Alchemilla mollis* really actually likes quite a bit of shade. I have the *mollis* species in the woodland medicinal area, but when I saw *Alchemilla vulgaris* in Iona, it was just lots of bright sunlight. Actually, growing out of some of the—just all growing out of the stone walls and the stone walkways. The leaves were much smaller, so I'm excited to get the *Alchemilla vulgaris* here in the garden and see their differences. A lot of people will say there aren't that many differences, but I think the *mollis* is a little more hairy, the more fuzzy. I think that's what *mollis* might mean because there's *Crataegus mollis*, I think, which is the native hawthorn here too. I have that one. The leaves are much more downy. You can also—there's a—here's a little tiny leaf, but they're pleated when they're small, and so even like a pleated mantle, just gathering. Actually, Matthew Wood talks about the pleated leaf as sort of the “gathering of the intestine walls,” so I see that as a good signature as well, just tightening that leaky gut state. And you think of any kind of wound remedies, really the stomach lining in the esophagus is sort of almost like the surface of your skin. You really can work with other wound herbs in that way internally as well, so yeah (crosstalk 0:47:09.9)

Rosalee de la Forêt:

(0:47:12.0) you mentioned lady's mantle for wounds because that's something that you just don't—you'll see it, like you said, kind of historical knowledge, but I don't hear a lot of herbalists working with that—with lady's mantle in that way. I'd love to hear more about that so folks out there using lady's mantle for wounds either external like you're describing for healing the digestive tract, I'd love to hear about that too.

Alyssa Dennis:

Uh hmm. Yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Is there anything else you'd like to share about lady's mantle before we move on?

Alyssa Dennis:

There's always so, so much, but that was—that was the main perch, is that I was making this connection and that she was telling me that Iona was this primordial birthplace and that she helped women give birth. I don't know. I mean maybe even in a mythic sense too. Who knows? Like maybe, but they were—yeah, I just—yeah, something about birth and just helping that whole process. If you're going to be called lady's mantle and you're referring to Mother Mary, there's got to be—there's got to be some history there. She—because Mother Mary, she is a being that gave birth from her own body--conception through her own body, and that just speaks to me as like the land, like she is the land. We were born from kind of like Venus on her shell (0:48:55.8) That shell just looks so much like the lady's mantle leaf.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That's true.

Alyssa Dennis:

Yeah, so just all of those connections. I hope listeners are (0:49:11.6)

Rosalee de la Forêt:

We'll put the links to your article, like you suggested as well too. We'll be sure to put that in the show notes.

Alyssa Dennis:

Yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Alyssa, I'd love to hear what's going on in your herbal world, like what projects do you have working on right now?

Alyssa Dennis:

So, let's see. I am getting ready to do my first group consultations, which I'm pretty excited about. I really love one-on-one consultations are a whole thing, but it can be challenging for a lot of people both financially, but also in a paradigm way because a lot—most people who come to me are coming to me for the first time. There's just a very big shift that has to happen because herbs, like we know, don't work like modern medicine. My first group consultation want to be on menopause, perimenopause and menopause, and just really create a circle of women who have bodies that are going through menopause or perimenopause are about to and really need support in that area. But in the group setting, I'm going to try it out and see how it goes, and then I'm actually planning a second year program with a friend of mine of Collective Wonder Herb School. Her name is Olivia Fite. And always planning more programming here within the herbal sanctuary. I do collaborative stuff. I have what's called the "Herbal Compass CSA." We follow the calendar wheel and a lot of the associations with each of the seasons. We just sort of plug in the plants, where can they support us during each of these seasons and learn about their organ affinities and things like that, and then just being able to be with the plants each month throughout the calendar wheel be in the garden. So, I'm always adding that kind of programming and I do that programming. That's always really a special nugget there. I just really want to write more. I want to write this article that I'm—I really was the inspiration. I mean, my experience in June in Scotland was the inspiration for me choosing to speak to about lady's mantle today, and then this article came out, and so now, I'm just sort of wanting to write. I've always written here and there about plants for sure, but just more extensively, so we'll see what comes of all of those things. Yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That all sound lovely, working with the plants through the seasons and following the calendar year. That's just one of my happy spaces. I love that as well. I'm really intrigued about this group consultation. I feel like it's the melding of a class and personal health too. It sounds really fascinating. That's going to be interesting to see how that develops. That could just be a really interesting model for all the reasons that you've explained, and just a powerful experience for the participants as well.

Alyssa Dennis:

Yeah, and that's actually something that even doctors and nurses are practicing, so there's a—yeah. So, there's definitely a lot of research out there as to why it's a lot more helpful, actually, so I'm enjoying those statistics as well.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That's fascinating.

Alyssa Dennis:

See how it applies to herbalism.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, absolutely. Before you go, Alyssa, I would love to ask you one last question, and that question is, "How do herbs instill hope in you?"

Alyssa Dennis:

Herbs instill so much hope in me because they teach me all the time. They're just full of lessons, life lessons and practical lessons. I think just my experience that I just shared with Iona and lady's mantle, that is so hopeful to me because I just feel like that is so much of the grounding part, the "bringing home" that I was speaking of that even brought me to herbal medicine in the first place. When you feel home, it's feeling safe. It's feeling held. It's all these things, and you know you can give yourself that. The plants will give you that. You don't, you know—I mean, there's just so much strife in the world and I just think about so much pain and so much destruction that is happening. I think if we can be with the earth, I mean that's just—I mean it's not to ignore what's going on. It's just help yourself be embodied. You have to be grounded if you're going to help the world, and to be grounded is to be with the earth. Herbal medicine is that. It will be that for you, for anyone. This retreat—just a little (0:54:37.5) retreat with my mom. It was really sweet and the theme was grounded warrior. It's not that we're going out fighting. The point isn't fighting, but it's to be grounded in your own body to be a better steward to whatever is happening, to whatever is going to blow you over,

whatever is going to rock your world, you know. So, and there's just that to me is so hopeful. They're just all around. They're all around us waiting. They're waiting for us to be with them. Be with the plants, so-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, it feels full circle, like plantain was there waiting--waiting to be pointed out to Alyssa. Thank you so much for sharing your experience with Iona, for speaking on lady's mantle, and for being with us today, Alyssa. Thank you.

Alyssa Dennis:

Yeah. Thanks so much for this opportunity, and you're just such a gem for even doing all of this. It's a gift. It's a gift to all of us and everybody listening.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Thank you. Before we go, Alyssa, how can folks find you? What's the best way for them to stay in touch with you?

Alyssa Dennis:

My business is called "Eclipta Herbal." It's like eclipse, but with an "a" at the end. Also, if you're familiar with bhringraj, the Latin name is *Eclipta alba* or *prostrata*. That is where that name comes from. Ecliptaherbal.com, and that's me.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Awesome. Wonderful. Alright, thanks again.

Alyssa Dennis:

Yeah. Thank you.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Bye.

Thanks for being here. Don't forget to head over to the show notes at herbswithrosaleepodcast.com to download your beautifully illustrated recipe card. There you'll also be able to sign up for my newsletter, which is the best way to stay in touch with me, and you can find more from Alyssa at her website, ecliptaherbal.com. If you'd like more herbal episodes to head your way, then one of the best ways to support this podcast is by subscribing on YouTube or your favorite podcast app.

I deeply believe that this world needs more herbalists and plant-centered folks, and I'm so glad that you're here as part of this herbal community. Also, a big round of thanks to the people all over the world who make this podcast happen week to week:

Emilie Thomas-Anderson is the Project Manager who oversees the entire podcast operation from guest outreach, to writing show notes, and on and on. I often tell people I just show up! Emilie does most of the heavy lifting.

Nicole Paull is the operator for the entire Herbs with Rosalee School and Community. She keeps an eagle eye view on everything to ensure it's running smoothly.

Francesca is our fabulous video and audio editor. She not only makes listening more pleasant. She also adds beauty to the YouTube videos with plant images and video overlays. Tatiana Rusakova is the botanical illustrator who creates gorgeous plant and recipe illustrations for us. I love them and I know you love them. Once the illustration is ready, Jenny creates the recipe cards, as well as the thumbnail images for YouTube.

Alex is our behind-the-scenes tech support and Social Media Manager, and Karin and Emilie are our Student Services Coordinators and Community Support. If you've written in with a question, undoubtedly, you got help from them.

For those of you who like to read along, Jennifer is who creates the transcripts each week. Xavier, my handsome French husband, is the cameraman and website IT guy.

It takes an herbal village to make it all happen including you. Thank you so much for your support through your comments, reviews and ratings.

One of my favorite things about this podcast is hearing from you. I read every comment that comes in and I'm excited to hear your thoughts.

Alright. You've lasted to the very end of the show which means you get a gold star, and this herbal tidbit:

Before we wrap up, I wanted to share something inspired by Alyssa's mention of the Cailleach, an ancient figure from Irish and Scottish folklore. She's often called "the veiled one" or "the old woman," and she's a goddess of winter, storms and wild landscapes. In some tales, she shapes the land itself by dropping stones from her apron to form mountains and islands, and others, she is the land, the keeper of endings clearing the way for new beginnings.

When I was in Southwest Ireland earlier this year, I visited a hag stone, which has a story of the Cailleach with it, and standing there with the wind and the waves all around. It really felt like the land itself was alive with her presence – wild, weathered, and full of stories.

Thank you for joining me on this herbal adventure. I'll see you next time.

Hi, it's Rosalee. If this podcast has brought you inspiration or grounded you in your love of herbs, I'd love to invite you to join the Podcast Circle. Your membership helps support the show and it gives you access to live herbal classes, exclusive resources, and a warm community of fellow plant lovers. Learn more and join us at HerbalPodcastCircle.com. Your support truly helps this podcast thrive.

Thank you.