

Amy Boldt:

The thought that comes to me a lot with marshmallow is just like this softening the edges. I just always think that there's no—there's not a lot of reason that I wouldn't want to put it in something, I guess is what I'm kind of getting at.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It is, to me, it speaks to the profound practicality of herbalism and there's no pharmaceutical over-the-counter drug that does that.

Welcome to the Herbs with Rosalee Podcast, a show exploring how herbs heal as medicine, as food, and through connecting with the living world around you. In this episode, I'm joined by Amy Boldt to spend some time with marshmallow, *Althaea officinalis*, a plant so gentle and so useful that it's easy to walk right past it, but in the end, you'll understand why a slippery, gooey root turns out to be one of the most soothing remedies we have for hot, irritated tissues anywhere from the throat to the gut, and why softening the edges might be exactly what your body and maybe the rest of your life is asking for right now. You'll also hear how the marshmallow of the candy aisle traces back to this real living plant, and how something this simple can become a mainstay for you to reach for again and again. If you enjoy this episode, please give it a thumbs up so more plant lovers can find us and be sure to stay tuned until the very end for your herbal tidbit.

Amy, I'm so glad you're here. Thanks for being on the show.

Amy Boldt:

Yeah, thanks for having me. It's a pleasure.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It's a pleasure. We just had a nice little mini chat before we hit record, finding out we are both enjoying the same beverage. Everything is going well. We've had a day. We're excited to be here.

This is our first time meeting, so I'm really excited to hear about your story, what has called you on this plant path.

Amy Boldt:

Yeah! Cool. Well, I did not have the—the cool hippie parents that already birthed me into this wonderful, holistic lifestyle. I came through just really basic, kind of middle class, suburban string cheese and Lunchables and Kool-Aid, you know what I mean? That was just your life.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

You're speaking my language.

Amy Boldt:

Which I actually value finding this on my own a little bit more because of that. It's almost like choosing your religion, you know what I mean? You get to kind of find it for yourself. That's kind of what happened to me. I was a high school English teacher for my whole profession as an adult until—not until—in addition to, then, herbalism. I had been—I guess this was like 2011. I had been teaching a lot of post-apocalyptic stuff at the time. It was like everything—remember when everything was that zombie apocalypse and all that? I remember getting in my car one morning to go to work. We always lived around the woods. I remember just looking at the woods while I'm putting my bags in my car and being like, man, I do not know how to use anything out there. We'd gone camping and everything. I'm outdoorsy but I just never really had any inkling toward that or thought about it all of a sudden until then. I was like, "You know, if I'm"—because I'm—I was a prepper just like as a hobby. I was like, "What's my skill going to be? What am I going to do during the zombie apocalypse?" I was like, "I want to learn what I can use out here" because I felt like it was such a waste. I just wanted to find a foraging class. I just wanted one weekend class or just even an hour. At the time, I couldn't find anything, not like now. I had been searching online and it brought me to this school called Tai Sophia. I don't know if you are familiar with Tai Sophia.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, of course.

Amy Boldt:

When I went there, it was still Tai Sophia and it changed over to MUIH while I was there. They had a certification for herbalism. I was like, “That sounds really cool! That’s totally different.” I have three little kids and I’m separated all of a sudden from my husband. I’m like, “This sounds like a great thing to just start to endeavor!” So, I took the classes. They were in-person there and it just happened to be like 45 minutes from my house, which is kind of crazy.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

So, you’re kind of like, sight-unseen, you’re kind of like, “I should do something to be prepared?”

Amy Boldt:

Yeah!

Rosalee de la Forêt:

“Here’s an herbal class—I’ll do that!” at Tai Sophia, no less. I mean, Tai Sophia is not like-

Amy Boldt:

[Crosstalk] I know! Now I know that. At the time, I was like, “This seems like a good thing to do!” But yeah, so when the herbs call you, I think that in that way—in a roundabout way like yes, this is the way that I was pulled into it accidentally, but when I got there—I mean I was a newbie. I didn’t know anything, so it was very nourishing as a community. That’s a huge one that I really, really miss. The people there and all the different modalities that were there for school, and the herbs themselves and all of the herb walks we went on all the time, break up the day and everything, I was being healed from what was going on in my personal life in that experience unbeknownst to me. That’s what got me into herbalism, actually. I ended up

getting my Master's there and one thing led to another. I was still teaching high school up until about five or six years ago when I opened my clinical practice.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Wow, wow! I have some follow-up questions on that. One, you mentioned camping and looking out into the woods and all that kind of stuff. You know what struck me listening to that is I grew up very similar to you I think in—I'll still miss Lunchables at some point.

Amy Boldt:

Now, it's charcuterie. That's all.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Right, right. Now, we do girl dinners. We've elevated it. And then the camping. One thing that blew my mind is I grew up camping with my dad and it's just the thing we always did. Now, to go back to those same spots, I'm like, "Whoa! Look at all these plants!" that were there the entire time when I was growing up but I never saw them, kind of plant blindness. Now, I'm just like, "Oh, my gosh! I can't believe that mullein was just hanging out here the whole time and I didn't know!" I just didn't know. I wonder if you had a similar experience, like you might look out at those woods now and be like, "Oh, now I see."

Amy Boldt:

Oh! First of all, you can't even take me hiking anymore because we don't get anywhere. I am little by little, every single thing. So, what would really—that happened to me in a similar way not so much where we went camping, but a place that—a piece of property that my parents had when I was growing up and they still have. It's in—we always lived in the woods. It's in the woods on a river. Now, when I go there, it's really interesting to see all these different plants that I'm like, "Oh, my gosh! This was here the whole time?" I mean hindsight it's always 20/20, but it is really cool to realize how much was—and this abundance was around me the whole time and you just don't have the eyes during different times of your life to really see it.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, yeah. That's one of the amazing fun, magical things about herbalism is just the world coming to life around us.

Amy Boldt:

It really does. It really does.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Another question I have for you is that, so you were an English teacher. You had this full profession. You're going in one direction in your life and then suddenly, you have taken this entirely different path. I imagine it took like a leap of faith to open up your practice and everything that's going on. I'm wondering, because I hear so many people—they want that. They're like—they had one path, now they're ready for the next path in herbalism but it takes a lot to make that switch. There's so much faith and trust and practical finances. Do you have any advice for a person who is looking down that road?

Amy Boldt:

I wish that I did. For me, it was the pandemic that kind of forced the hand, both of stopping me from classroom teaching and also going into this full-time. I also found myself in a different financial situation than I was as a single parent where I remarried and it was able—for me to be able to start this other thing that—I had had my kids so young that I wasn't able to really ever explore anything that I really wanted to do in my own life, so this was the beginning of that.

I would say in terms of advice to people considering going down that clinical path that you really—in my experience which is pretty limited, I would say still, that you really need to have your hand in a lot of different pots and have a lot of other—maybe sources of income that you can rely on when you have those ebbs and flows because that is going to happen even with—from my understanding, very successful people are going to have those different seasons. If you can do something that you enjoy, it makes it better. For me, I do a lot of teaching still so

when I know I'm going to have some of those lulls in my clients, that's when I do more of my amping up my classes. Or in the summer like now, I have a little herb farm so I'll go out and I work on cultivating and harvesting, and things like that. Having other modalities or other things that you can add into the pile is very helpful.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It sounds like very wise advice that often feels like—because I ask this question of people when I see it as a part of their life. What I often hear is that there's no one right answer. It's like if you want it, do everything you can to make it happen whether—like you're saying, it's like lots of pots in there. Be open to the possibilities. We all have different—I didn't have kids. I lived off-grid without running water where the rent was really cheap. That was my privilege and benefit. We all have different gifts and different ways of being that's like, I feel like when the plants call you and you know that that's your path, you just got to be open to it and keep going and be responsible.

Amy Boldt:

Definitely.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Figure it out.

Amy Boldt:

Camille Freeman is one of my mentors. I remember her saying at the beginning of this when I wanted to think about starting my practice and I reached out to her and things like that. I remember hearing in the earlier days of that that she said something along the lines of, it's the people who just don't quit, who stick around, who are still doing it successfully. Every time when I would get downtrodden or "This is just not going to work out, man," I would remember that and be like, "I don't want to be a quitter." Also, if I can just keep pushing, you know what I mean? I don't know. So, I always thought about that.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Wise words from Camille who has-

Amy Boldt:

[crosstalk]

Rosalee de la Forêt:

She's done so—yeah, she does and she's done so much mentoring and really helping move in a group of clinical herbalists to be successful, so yay, Camille! Thanks for answering my adlib question there. You did great going off script.

Amy Boldt:

Oh, of course!

Rosalee de la Forêt:

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

I am excited to talk about the plant you chose, marshmallow root, a plant I've been spending some time with because right now it's like, maybe eight feet tall in my garden. The bees just love marshmallow flowers so much so it's really fun to hang out with the marshmallow. Anyway, I would love to hear about why you chose marshmallow for your plant today.

Amy Boldt:

I wouldn't—I'll be honest. It's not like my spirit plant kind of a thing. It's not like, "Oh, my gosh, I'm obsessed!" but when thinking about how to incorporate into something that you can use on a regular basis for other things aside from my typical teas and tinctures and things like that, marshmallow root is just, to me, such—I don't know. The word that I was thinking just went away, but it's—so versatile. There are so many things that you can do with it. She is just such a balance for me, I feel like in a lot of my personality; energetically also to a degree. I think that marshmallow root is just really just easy to work with. It's nice sometimes just to have something that's pleasant and not complicated, but can be used in so many different ways, especially—from what I work with a lot in my practice is the nervous system and digestion.

I love marshmallow for just softening the edges and cooling some of our pitta. The thought that comes to me a lot with marshmallow is this "softening the edges." Everything nowadays is so harsh. There's so much intensity in our world and everything. It's just nice to have something to soften the edges a little bit. I could—I could say lots about it. I tend to rely on marshmallow root a lot. I love the fact that I can use her in a cold infusion, honestly, because I'm lazy.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I was thinking yeah, it's so hot right now. I get it.

Amy Boldt:

That's the truth though! A lot of my clients, they're—if I give them too many things to do, man, compliance is not going to happen! If I can simplify things and have them have a whole day's worth of their tea, and it's a nice root that I can actually throw in there with aerial parts and not have to mess with all these different steps, this is just wonderful! It softens that tea of the astringency of some of the other things that I want to use.

In terms of growing marshmallow, I'm really jealous that yours is eight feet tall! Mine is not.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It's in a raised bed, so there's that too.

Amy Boldt:

Okay.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

But it's probably six feet.

Amy Boldt:

We had a weird year this year. Mine is relatively short. I don't know. We've had a lot of wonky springs and stuff this year. This is my next harvest or growth after the last harvest, so I haven't—we got a little bit more to go, so I'm not—we're still babies. I think I started the seeds this spring, late winter.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Okay. Mine is like a six-year old plant that I should have harvested all of by now, but now I just grow for the aerial parts.

Amy Boldt:

But I do love them. I love all mallow. Anytime time I see a mallow I get kind of excited. I love, again, walking by, and it's actually next to my *Echinacea* and so with all the spikiness of that, and then she's like, "Yeah."

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Oh, my gosh, that is so funny. Mine grows right next to *Echinacea*.

Amy Boldt:

No way! Did you do that on purpose? I didn't do that. I just-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

No. It just kind of happened.

Amy Boldt:

It's so funny. The balance is really nice there though.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Actually, I have horseradish, marshmallow and *Echinacea*, which I'm now just thinking that's like a very interesting combination.

Amy Boldt:

That is!

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It was like a perennial herb bed. That's all it was.

Amy Boldt:

Oh, yeah. You're never going to get rid of the horseradish. I can't give it away. This plant keeps coming back. I wish I had that problem with all of my plants.

I just—I really love the moistening part of it too because I was a kid that liked Gak in the '90s. I was like a tactile, gooey kind of person. I think I like that gooey—I like getting mine nice and gooey in a little shot glass. I just—I enjoy that, that people don't always enjoy—I do.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I definitely try not to think about it, but I do love marshmallow as a tactile plant. That's—I love walking by and the leaves are so soft and velvety. I love that aspect of it. But yeah, drinking the slime is interesting.

Amy Boldt:

It doesn't bother me. It's like chia seeds, right? Like that whole [crosstalk]

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Exactly. But I do—there's something about marshmallow root that it is—to me, it speaks to the profound practicality of herbalism because it's like this slimy, goopy mess that we use on hot, irritated tissues. It's like, that's not rocket science. It's just common sense, but it's brilliant and it's amazing. There's no pharmaceutical over-the-counter drug that does that. You could buy maybe that aloe gel that I swear has nothing to do with aloe that comes out of the bottle.

Amy Boldt:

It's blue.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, exactly. Maybe that's the closest equivalent, but it's not quite the same—also based on the plant, but I just love the practicality of that.

Amy Boldt:

Yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It reminds me of a jim mcdonald quote. He says “Demulcents—who else has demulcents? Nobody.” It's just a wonderful thing about herbalism.

Amy Boldt:

Yeah, even—so I don't—I haven't used the leaves as much as I have the roots, but I've—I always mean to. Just for whatever reason, it hasn't happened as often. I always wonder if I could just weave the leaves together and make a blanket. How nice that would be to just like—it is just, yeah. I love that softness.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

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.

You mentioned that the root is so versatile and there are so many ways to work with it. Is there a way that pops into your mind that might be particularly surprising or unusual? I'm sure anything you say is going to be surprising or unusual to someone, so no pressure.

Amy Boldt:

That's probably true. I just—I think that it's so—it's nice that you can use it in just like the powder. I've had people, when they get really tired of a tea or something like that, I'll have them just take a powder and put it in oatmeal or a smoothie. That was particularly for GERD and esophageal issues, so having that just coat the throat there is really nice but I wouldn't say I would—I would want—I don't like doing that with a lot of powders. I don't like having that just loose, open powder in things. I can taste it a lot more profoundly than—than I notice that happens with marshmallow. I used to use—slippery elm was the thing. For a lot of stuff that I wanted to use it, I like using slippery elm but now that it's at-risk and we don't want to be tapping into resources that are going away. I'm always going for the marshmallow. I'm finding myself using it more in places that I wouldn't have maybe thought of, but I'm using it in lieu of the slippery elm. Although the powder—I like the flavor of slippery elm a little bit better .

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That's true. I feel like you're confessing right now and I'm like, "Yeah, me too."

Amy Boldt:

But I still love marshmallow. It's still my girl. I just think it's great that it can grow in so many places. If you're going to have in your garden even a small space in very different areas, it grows pretty happily in a lot of different places which is nice. I like having folks—because when I'm working with them as—as my client, I like to encourage them to grow these plants too so that they can take that with them. I don't want to be the keeper of the knowledge. That's not my role here. It also gives them an opportunity to sit with the plant and to observe it grow and have that relationship that they form with it. I like having ones that are easy for us to do that way.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Absolutely. You mentioned you like the powder—I'm sure other ways too, for GERD, in particular, because it's soothing, coating. What else? What other things make you think of marshmallow?

Amy Boldt:

I've been wanting to try it in some kind of a topical way. I don't make topicals. It's kind of like how I don't bake. I just don't want to. But other people do it better than I do so I might as well just give my business to them. I have been curious as to how—because I've seen it in things and I'm always wondering—how nice would that feel on the skin, making it really interesting to me. Actually, I don't really know how to do that but I wanted to learn how to do that.

Again, that whole tissue-soothing, vulnerary kind of experience and that velvetiness, I think that—to me, when I'm teaching about marshmallow root, I love just explaining to people that it's like top to bottom of the GI – the whole thing. Because usually, somebody has been having at some point in their life an issue with one part there that they can understand that heat and that tightness and—yeah, it's nice to be able to give them something that will be

able to handle lots of different issues from top to bottom in different ways. I love that it is such an incredibly powerful herb in that sense even though it's pretty—considered pretty gentle.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

You mentioned the vulnerary aspects. It's not just soothing and coating, but also healing tissues together so it's a nice—a really powerful combination, especially when dealing with GI heat and irritation.

Amy Boldt:

My issue though is people will for GERD or reflux in particular, people will find that, “Ooh, this has worked really well,” and then we're not actually getting to the root of the problem. They just kind of want to keep using that. That's nice but I'd like to go a little deeper, figure out why we're having this. Sometimes these effective herbs can be a little bit of a crutch, I think, sometimes for healing.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah. Is that like—that's a good thing to mention of just that—like you said maybe it's a first intervention for success and symptom relief, but maybe that it's not the only thing that happens.

Amy Boldt:

Yes, definitely. At least, I think for people when they find—and they are new to herbalism and they use something and they find that it's effective, I think that opening the door or the gateway to trusting this thing and seeing, “Wow, this is actually legitimately working,” it gives them the buy in to then be able to explore other herbs for other underlying causes and things like that, which is nice when you can find something gentle and tasty, in my opinion. That can be the—the gateway to other herbs too.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

You've mentioned using as possible as a powder in a smoothie or something else like that. You mentioned the cold infusion. I feel that's somewhat been a controversy lately in the herbal world – hot infusion, cold infusion. Are you willing to weigh in on this?

Amy Boldt:

I personally enjoy it myself better as a cold infusion—a nice long infusion, but in terms of constituents, I don't know what is more effective. I guess—you know what I would probably say is it depends on the situation because if somebody is having a sore throat or—I don't know. I can see how heat sometimes and having a warmer infusion could be more soothing for some people, but also, you can just heat it back up. I don't really—I don't know. I do find that the herb flavors will change based on hot or cold. I love nettles as a cold infusion, flavorwise, way more than as a hot one. I would probably say my preference is a cold one, but it's one of those things. Just like beekeepers, it's like this too, same thing with herbalists. You can ask a roomful of them and you'll get different answers. It's the same thing with beekeepers. I try not to be definitive about most things.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Can you walk us through how you make your cold infusion for someone who's never done that before because it's a little bit different than-

Amy Boldt:

I have—most of the time mine is going to be in a blend with other herbs too, but even—let's say I wasn't, I will just—I don't use the powder. I use the cut and sifted root when I'm doing my cold infusions. I'd put—I don't know—a tablespoon or two depending on how we're doing and what's in that tea blend into—the way I have it is we put it into a mason jar or glass container, but mason jar, and I have them cover it with just room temperature water. I don't even go with the warm. I know some people are like you have to do it warm. I don't. I don't find that it has been for me that much different. If they want it, warm it up, that's fine, but I just have them take room temperature water and pour it on and fill the jar, like a quart, maybe, jar. I have them just cap it or put a cover over it and you want to shake it or stir it up in

case they're not all agitated. Leave it on the counter overnight and then the next morning, I just have them strain it and pop it in something to drink and drink it throughout the day. That's how I do mine.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Nice. That's amazing just how much of that—that demulcent liquid, slimy goo just comes out perfectly in that way.

Amy Boldt:

Yeah, although I haven't really had a lot of really gooey ones lately. I don't know why that is.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

You know, so that's interesting that you bring that up because—so in my school we have a—in my Herbal Energetics Course, we do a tasting, so I have lots of people tasting marshmallow. That one has been really surprising to me how many people have such a huge variation where people are like, “Oh, my gosh, it's so thick!” and then other people are like, “This is like water.” There's huge variation and all I can tell is just the difference in quality and it could be a freshness thing because people are getting things from all over and so there could be a freshness thing. Also, we kind of touched on this maybe a little bit but we could be very clear that ideally, you're harvesting the roots when they're a couple years old.

Amy Boldt:

Oh, yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I mentioned I have a six-year old plant. Those roots are most—unless they have new roots that are coming off and I harvest those specifically—if I harvest roots that are very old, they're going to be woody and they aren't going to have that same quality. It's not only how freshly harvested was the plant, but maybe how old are the roots when they were harvested. I don't know. I'm making up stories because when it first started happening, I was just like, “I don't

know.” It’s consistent now that I literally have so many people tasting at the same time and it’s a huge variation.

Amy Boldt:

That is really interesting. I should—I could never let my—well, mine never last that long when I grow it and I’m using it. I would like to tell—I haven’t done this for some reason: a comparison between what I grew and what I’ve bought because I just—I can’t possibly—and harvesting roots is a pain. I don’t like bringing that energy into my thing when I pull them out. So yeah, that is really interesting you had that experience. I’d be curious. Somebody needs to find this out.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, yeah. It would be interesting too to go to growers and small herb farms, and know that you’ve got the primo stuff and then test that against something else.

Amy Boldt:

Yeah, definitely. Would that mean that the quality is different if it doesn’t have as much mucilage? I guess it would to a degree.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Definitely. I’m sure it’s a spectrum. When some people say it’s not slimy at all and it’s like water, obviously, there’s something majorly missing from that one. Does it have to be like gel? No, but we’ve got a big spectrum in there of what we want.

Amy Boldt:

And that’s just cut and sifted?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah.

Amy Boldt:

Or was it powdered?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

People were using cut and sifted.

Amy Boldt:

Interesting. I don't know. Yeah. Let's figure it out.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, alright, add it to the list.

Amy Boldt:

Projects.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

You've also shared a lovely recipe with us for marshmallow root electuary balls which are made with powdered marshmallow root. Will you walk us through that and tell us why you like to make this?

Amy Boldt:

Yeah. Again, this was one that I really used to make with slippery elm but then I decided that—tried it out with the marshmallow and I like it. If you put enough honey on anything, honestly, I think it's going to taste okay, but I liked it because it was just really simple. When someone is sick or the family is sick, you don't really want to have fuss with a lot of things so what I would do was I would make these ahead of time before cold and flu season, and especially as a teacher, my throat—I would just talk and talk and talk, so I liked having those on hand to—I guess suck on to help coat the throat.

When I'm doing it at home, I'm not really quite using the measurements all the time. It's more about just what I've got. It's just really simple. I would just take some honey. If you could get local raw honey, that's great. I—I usually encourage people to start with maybe just a smaller amount, like maybe—I don't know—a fourth of a cup or a half cup of honey maybe? And then powdering the marshmallow. That can get a little tricky if you're doing it yourself because you're going to get different variations of the grain. It's much better if you can get it to a finer powder, but having that fine powder would be ideal. I just take it a teaspoon at a time and I take the marshmallow powder and I put it in the honey and I mix it. I kind of keep going, eyeballing it until I get a very—a thicker munch—munch, munch, bunch. I don't know. You know what I mean. I'm just making up a word. It starts to get muddy and it gets more grainy.

I'll let it sit for five or ten minutes and see as it soaks up some of that liquid in the honey and it solidifies a little bit. It's going to thicken and depending on how much I put in, I'll add some more. You want to basically get to the consistency where it's almost like dough where you can roll it. You could add other things to this too. You could add cinnamon. You could add cocoa if you wanted. I—it depends on how you're feeling I guess. I make them until they're about a marble size and I just roll them. You want to make sure that they are not having too much give, but they're also going to harden in the fridge too when you leave them in the fridge because it's honey. I will roll them all up into cute little balls and I will stick them in a little container, I put them in my fridge and I will pop one or so depending on how I'm feeling or how people need it.

I think the only thing that I would caution with that is that depending on how much powder you'll use and if you're not—or you're eating a lot of it, and you're eating this like candy, if you have a wet phlegmatic cough, this might be more marshmallow than you maybe want to bring in because it is so wet. Maybe for those heavier coughs be a little bit more cautious with how many you end up eating if you do.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

[crosstalk]

Amy Boldt:

But otherwise, I find them really nice. Yeah, they're just really nice. They soothe and coat and again, all of those tissues if it's all inflamed and hot, especially for the dry, hacky kind of cough and throat issues, I find them to just be really simple and easy to keep in the fridge, which I like.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Thank you for sharing this recipe and the ways to work with it. For listeners, you can download your copy. It's been beautifully illustrated by our botanical illustrator, Tatiana. You can look for that in the show notes or go to herbswithrosaleepodcast.com, download it there. Thank you so much, Amy, for sharing that with us.

Amy Boldt:

Yeah, of course! I like simple things.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah! Hallelujah. Is there anywhere else you'd like to go with marshmallow root before we move on?

Amy Boldt:

I had some things earlier. I remember thinking about them. Oh, yeah. I did make marshmallows for the first time recently with marshmallow root, which is probably not that big a deal for people but I've always wanted to do it and I've just never done it myself. I'm sure there's probably different kinds of recipes you can find for that. The one I tried—it's never going to be what you think it's going to be as the marshmallow we're used to in s'mores, but I found it really, really very cooling—way more cooling than I have it in a tea. It was—I think it was enjoyable. It was like biting a smudge.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That's a really great testimony to marshmallow.

Amy Boldt:

I was like pitching it, like "This is medicine though, so this is a great way to do it." So, that was my first try. Usually, you want to try a few different variations to find your—the swing of things, but it was cool to do something that was used so long ago. It's really fun to teach people about the name and how when we think of marshmallow, we think of this. It's really fun to see their reactions too, putting it together, is kind of fun.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I forget now that marshmallow has another connotation in the general populace at times, then I'll see people. I'm doing a plant walk or something and I'll be like, "Oh, yeah. I need to catch people up." Marshmallow in my head is now [unclear]

With the marshmallows you made, what did you use—what did you use for the substance? Like gelatine or agar I think is used.

Amy Boldt:

I think I used a gelatine. I just—it was the kind of thing that I already had on hand in my house, so yeah, it was a gelatine. It was okay.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That's how I make them too. I add a little hibiscus to it as well because there's something about having pink marshmallows that just changes everything.

Amy Boldt:

Yes. Oh, that's a really good idea. That's super cooling then. A good summer treat.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Super fun, yeah. So many fun—like you said, there are so many fun ways to work with marshmallow. So many fun ways to work with it as medicine as well, so thanks. We've covered powders, marshmallows, teas, and electuary balls, so thank you.

Amy Boldt:

I just always think there's no—there's not a lot of reason that I wouldn't want to put it in something, I guess is what I'm getting at because unless—you do want to be a little careful with medication—with absorption a little bit, I would be-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Will you speak more to that for someone who hasn't heard of that before?

Amy Boldt:

So, the absorption when it comes to marshmallow is one of those—I don't remember all of the pathways and everything right now off the top of my head—but it is one that you want to be a little bit cautious with when you're taking medications. I would either take the medication an hour before you have—and this really is dose-dependent. I mean we're talking more of a very strong infusion or a large amount of powder. If you were to take medication after a bunch of marshmallow, I would wait two hours before doing that just to be safe, to make sure that the medication is going to be absorbed accurately. I don't actually remember if that was because of the diuretic property or if it's having to do with other things. I can't remember.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I'm pretty sure it's hypothetical. We think that that's what happens, so we're going to be safe and recommend that. I think. Someone please comment if you know differently. This is the kind of thing that I would really love to have a study on it. Obviously, not like lifesaving medication study. It will be like can we really tell how much marshmallow might be inhibiting absorption. I bet it's not that much. In clinical practice, I'm still going to be like, "Don't take it

with your medications,” because it’s irresponsible to go against the general consensus on that when we don’t actually know. [crosstalk]

Amy Boldt:

It makes me feel good that you said that because there’s a lot of things I remember like, “Be careful of this and this and this,” but I don’t actually remember why all the time. So, yeah, but I’m glad that we don’t have an answer really.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

We have—let’s be safe, that’s our answer. The more severe the medication, the more we would want to [crosstalk]

Amy Boldt:

But I’ve never—I haven’t heard of anybody that has had an issue with that personally or other herbalist that I know that could speak to it, so I’m not that concerned about it but it is good to mention just in case.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Absolutely. Thank you for sharing all these tidbits about marshmallow, all these lovely ways to work with marshmallow. I appreciate that. And I’d love to hear about what you have going on in your herbal world. What are your herbal offerings? What have you got for us?

Amy Boldt:

I just finished completing my Legacy Teacher certification with Margi Flint. That was really exciting. I actually have my last little piece of it—although the whole work part is done—to teach the whole weekend of reading the body by myself, which is a lot—because I’m used to teaching but two days is a lot. I haven’t done two days, so I’m really looking forward to having people on our farm to teach it down here in my apothecary. It’s going to be really nice to be able to carry on that lineage of William LeSassier has been really, really big for me in the past couple of years. I’ve been really leaning into the herbal elder—I’ll say it: I’m nerding out about

a lot of the herbal elder stuff the past few years, so it's really exciting to be able to continue to carry that torch from having not been able to have studied with him myself, but getting that through Margi and a lot of other herbalists that she compiles and brings into this whole—this whole study is really just mind-blowing to me. I'm really excited to be able to go teach that now. Once I'm finished, I'll be hopefully doing the—the circuit or teaching at different places and my own space as well, so being able to teach. Reading the body is fascinating to me.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Amy, I was thinking this is so fascinating. There—I know there are people listening who absolutely know who William LeSassier is. I figure everybody knows who Margi is, but there's going to be some people who don't. Are you willing to take it from the top like, who is William LeSassier? What does it mean to be a legacy teacher for Margi?

Amy Boldt:

I'm going to butcher this. This is going to be embarrassing, but-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Just basic is great. Basic is great.

Amy Boldt:

William LeSassier, to me, is like the pinnacle. He is, to me, like the head of where all of Western herbalism is now. I feel like everyone who is studying with somebody else, that person studied with William LeSassier at some point. He is not only just the Western herbs, but he used a lot of Eastern and TCM—just so many different elements that have now trickled down to what we do now as herbalists, especially the triune—the way that we formulate herbs. Specifically, most herbalists that I know, the way that we choose herbs in our formulations is based on his triangular formulation method. That's probably the most people would be able to identify with now, I think, but if you study with David Winston, Margi Flint-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I'm studying with David now.

Amy Boldt:

Are you?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, he says that William LeSassier is one of the only true geniuses that he has ever met in his life.

Amy Boldt:

That's pretty huge.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah. And we spent—I mean, we're still working at it, we've spent months working on the triune formula, understanding the whole—all the triangles and all the [crosstalk]. It's pretty fascinating.

Amy Boldt:

I don't know how to—that I don't know how—I would love to—I've heard a lot about people doing that with David Winston and understanding that in the more complex aspect, so yeah, that would be really cool. I'm happy for you.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

And so, Margi studied with William.

Amy Boldt:

Yes.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

So, take it from there. I was interrupting [crosstalk]

Amy Boldt:

Margi is an herbal elder. She's in Massachusetts. She has been doing herbalism for—oh, my gosh, 50 years, something like that? She—a lot of people know Margi for her reading the body and doing facial diagnosis, looking at different lines on the face, colors, textures on the body, hands, tongue reading. Each of those indicate a different organ or an affinity and imbalances. It's a double-edged sword because once you start learning and knowing what you're looking at, everybody you look at you're seeing their shadows, you're seeing their lines and you're like, "That person—that person has a problem" [unclear] Or at least thinking that way, but it's not quite that simple. It is really fascinating and so—she's a clinician but she is retiring, so she says. I don't think anybody ever—we're never retiring. When you love what you do, it's hard to stop. I mean-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, yeah.

Amy Boldt:

She's still doing her legacy teachers, I believe. I'm not sure how much longer she's going to be training other herbalists in this path.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

So, what was that like for you to be on that path? I'm interested—the practicalities, like how long do you study with her? What does it take to be able to go off for two days and teach on your own?

Amy Boldt:

My experience was I think pretty much like a two-year time, but it doesn't have to be that long. It's just I'm not close. I'm in Maryland so it took me a long drive to get up to Marblehead, Massachusetts. I had never had the experience of studying at the knee of an elder or anyone, to be honest with you. Mine was much more of the classroom experience with academia, so I

felt that I needed that and I was missing that piece of balancing my herbal practice and understanding and relationship, so it was—she—I felt very called to her on my own, having learned about her and seeing a few of her little workshops at herb conferences. I just happened to reach out to her at a time when she was—I didn't even know about this legacy teacher thing. I just—it was like, as she would say, synchronicity. Being able to be in that relationship and learning so intently and one-on-one, staying in her home and spending hours and hours and hours with her is just—was an incredible experience. It's—I don't know how she's doing that because it's so much work to have these classes for these weekends. She's a rock star.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, she is, yeah. Oh, my gosh. I love going to Margi's home. I feel like she's such a wonderful hostess. It's just like you're in this comfort and she's so much fun too.

Amy Boldt:

Yeah! I'm sad that it's done. It's cool but it's—I'm also kind of sad. I'm sure that she—I hope she's going to allow me to come back. I don't think I did too much damage. She's great and she's—we laugh about stuff a lot. She has a good sense of humor, which I like. But I think it's really important for people to have that experience – to study with somebody that you jive with or their teaching aligns with you or you're curious about. I think that's an incredible experience, and again, something that's been passed on for hundreds and hundreds of years that we've been doing this, and being able to continue that I think is really—is really awesome.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah. Thank you for speaking about—more about that and congrats-

Amy Boldt:

Thank you.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

On finishing that and thank you for continuing that legacy as well.

Amy Boldt:

Yeah, I'm excited for it. I love passing down knowledge. I think in herbalism, this is just—it makes me so excited to see other people learn this stuff. It's like forgotten knowledge. It's so important that we know this right now.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That's so true. I love that you've been nerding out on the herbal elders.

Amy Boldt:

As I get into my forties, I'm like I have to—like a vision like, “Where am I going to be?” I better start taking [unclear]

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That is something about herbalism that I've always deeply appreciated is that we do respect lineage and respect the fact that it takes decades to really go deep, deep, deep, deep. It takes time. It's not something you learn overnight.

Amy Boldt:

Yeah, it's an art. It's an art. It's really cool.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Thank you so much for sharing about that. Thanks for sharing about marshmallow, but before you go, I have one last question that I would love to put forth—that is, how has working with herbs changed the way you view the world?

Amy Boldt:

So, working with herbs has changed the way that I view the world because I believe that all—all of the answers are here already, but—okay, kind of involved with that same vein. I’ve always heard about people in herbalism when I started talking about how the plants communicate with them and it sounded very woo-woo. It was pretty woo-woo, but it was cool woo-woo, but it was like, man, that’s out there. And then you get to the point where that starts happening and you’re like, “Wow! That is incredible!” It has changed the way I view the world mostly in the fact that I realize I have no idea about anything. There’s so much that I don’t know and I couldn’t possibly say that I have the answer for. So, being open-minded to the degree that any kind of crazy thing that I hear now, I’m like, “Well, maybe.” In five years, I’m probably going to change my tune, but once I understood and now have been learning this nuanced kind of dance between my relationship to the earth and my relationship to plants, once you kind of tiptoe to that line, it really does change your view of the whole world because the entire world around us is alive, and it’s these plants who are just—I mean Mother Nature is constantly giving to us and giving to us and giving to us like this mother that just keeps giving without thanks. It’s like that—that has changed my way I look at everything because I can’t even take down a freaking tree now for anything. I can’t even pull out—I can’t even—when I’m growing my vegetables and I’m seeding them and I’m having to pull out to thin them—I can’t even thin out my seedlings.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I’m a terrible thinner too. I hear you.

Amy Boldt:

I’m like, “We’ll just put you somewhere else, honey. You’re just going to be—you’re just going to be in a random space, but you’re going to be alive!” So, that’s—it has changed things in a lot of how I look at the world. It does change everything.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It is that—calling back to how you got started as interested in prepping, as this hobby of prepping. I got started in kind of a similar vein as well. Similarly, I feel like my world just got

opened up. It's like we get called on this path in so many different ways, and then with the people who stick with it—like you said, like Camille said—people who stick with it, you don't have to be in here long before you start saying, “Oh, wow. Plants do that?” and then it's like, “Plants do that. Plants do that,” and it just keeps going deeper and deeper.

Amy Boldt:

The coolest thing I think about herbalism is it's so multifaceted, like you don't have to do this or that or that. It doesn't have to look like anything. Everyone is an herbalist if you enjoy working with the plants in whatever capacity or growing—you know what I mean? That's what I think is really nice is that we can all be herbalists in different degrees as long as we all share the same vision and the same love. I think that's really cool because I just—I hate boxes, man.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Just to quote jim mcdonald, yet again—his definition of herbalist is pretty cool, which is “somebody who works with plants.”

Amy Boldt:

I mean, right?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

There you go.

Amy Boldt:

Yeah, it's great! It's a beautiful—I'm so thankful so much that I listened to that call. I always think anybody who even has the slightest inkling of, “This is interesting” or has—I really encourage people to take that and listen to where they're—I mean that is the call. You don't have to answer it right now. You may answer it later, but that's a thing.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah.

Amy Boldt:

That's cool.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That's a lovely way to end it because I think this world needs more herbalists, so listen to the calling, folks. Thank you so much, Amy. This has been fabulous. It's been so much fun just hanging out with you. I could grab a cup of tea with you anytime and hang out. [crosstalk]

Amy Boldt:

Anytime. Let's do it.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Thank you so much.

Amy Boldt:

Thank you!

Rosalee de la Forêt:

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

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

Marshmallow root is commonly made into a cold infusion because this forms this really lovely demulcent gooey brew. The soothing quality of marshmallow comes from its mucilage which are these long chains of sugar molecules that swell into a soft gel. It's the cool water that really draws those chains out most readily, so it's really cool. No heat required. That's why you can just leave a jar out on the counter with tepid water overnight, and then it comes out so silky.

Here's what's really cool though: we tend to picture that mucilage simply coating irritated tissue like a soft blanket and it does do that. Yet, when researchers looked closely at marshmallow root in the lab, they found something more: the plant's polysaccharides were actually taken up into the epithelial cells that line our tissues. While there, they stimulated the cells' own vitality, kind of nudging the body's inherent capacity to knit itself back together. So, marshmallow isn't just softening edges from the outside, it's also encouraging the tissue to mend from within. This is basically seeing the vulnerary action, the wound-healing action, in real life, and that's pretty cool.

This has long been known about. It's actually written into the plant's name. *Althaea* comes from the old Greek words for medicine and for healing. The ancient Greeks knew this root well enough to name it after the very thing it does. So, the next time you sip this glass of cool marshmallow root infusion, you might picture not just the coating that's happening but the small conversation beginning between the plant and your own tissues, which in my mind is some of the coolest things about herbalism. Also, if you're interested in hearing more about marshmallow, especially from a topical perspective, check out my podcast episode with herbalist Lucy Jones, where she shares how she has seen topical marshmallow address serious infections, even ones like gangrene.

Thanks for joining me. I'll see you next time.