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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 Foret. 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.

I'm excited to bring you this conversation with Mason Hutchison. My friend, jim mcdonald, has a saying about Mason. It goes like this. "Everyone loves Mason," and it's true. Mason is a kindhearted herbalist. He's also super fun to hang out with. He's also one of my favorite herbal buddies, so you could say I'm biased. But after this episode, I bet you'll agree.

One thing that's really special about Mason is how community-centered he is. As you go through this episode, you'll undoubtedly notice that he's constantly mentioning other people, whether it's herbalists that he's learned from, herbal product makers, farmers, you name it. You can also see that intertwined through all the work that he does in the herbal world.

For those of you who don't know Mason, he's the founder of HerbRally, a podcast and website that promotes herbalism, education and events. He's the co-organizer of one of the longest running herbal events in the US, the Breitenbush Herbal Conference. He is also on the board of directors for the Eugene Tea Festival.

Mason was the events and marketing strategist for Mountain Rose Herbs for over a decade. His day to day work involved organizing community events, such as the free herbalism project, as well as attending herbal conferences throughout the country. He has completed herbalism apprenticeships at the Columbines School of Botanical Studies and the Arctos School of Herbal and Botanical Studies. Mason is a husband, proud father, avid chess, basketball and ping pong player, spring water gatherer, and an enthusiast in the art of frugal nutrition.

Well, welcome Mason. I'm so glad to have you on the podcast.

Mason Hutchison:

Thanks for having me.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah. So, oh, I'm just excited to have a conversation with you, and I wish we were doing it in person as we have so many times before. We're pre-herbal conference or pre-free herbalism project, but it's nice to be able to do it this long distance as well. And I think, let's start out. I would love for you to tell us how young Mason found the world of plants and herbalism.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah. So, it's interesting. I'm always curious; did people have these idyllic, nature-based backgrounds growing up? And I'm finding out more and more that a lot of people, they don't know it's their path immediately all the time, and that's the way it was for me. I would say I had a pretty standard American upbringing, I suppose, but I would say I found herbalism around the age of 18.

And I kind of found it through a couple ways. I would say primarily through nutrition. I started becoming very obsessive about the whole nutrition world and that was via weightlifting. I was really into going to the gym and lifting weights and stuff like that. So, that really spawned an intense passion for nutrition. I thought I was going to be a dietician.

Most of my life, I've had really intense depression, and I found out what you put in your body actually affects your mood. And so, that was a catalyst as well. And once I started shifting my diet away from, say, your standard American diet, my mood started elevating. So, between lifting weights, that whole world, to helping just feel better in general, nutrition pushed me along, which then led to traditional Chinese medicine and tonic herbs and that kind of thing.

And yeah, I was probably around 18, 19 when all this started going down for me. I was obsessed with, say, goji berries, He Shou Wu, Rehmannia, all this stuff. And I would buy it from Mountain Rose Herbs, at the natural grocery store, and that's the original interest in herbs was, I'd say, traditional Chinese medicine, probably Ayurveda as well.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

And how did you find that information? Were there particular books or just sources of information? You're 18, so this is what? 1984 or something.

Mason Hutchison:

That was the year I was born, actually, but yes. Just right after high school, I'd say, which was 2003. I found books. The internet, probably, I'm guessing, but definitely books, like I said. Ron Teeguarden's Traditional Chinese Medicine, I would just devour that. Yeah, Ron Teeguarden's book definitely was influential, and then I know one of your teachers, KP Khalsa. You studied with KP. Yeah.

So, I'd started looking up herbal classes in Eugene, and KP actually lives in Eugene. So, I did probably a six or eight week course with him at Lane Community College, and I was just loving it. And KP has the best sense of humor, so he would just have this super dry wit. And he really got me into the Ayurveda world.

And like I said before, I was buying herbs from Mountain Rose Herbs and I know that they moved from Pleasant Hill to Eugene, and I was going through a lot of life transitions at that point anyways. And I said, "You know what? I'm going to quit this whole dietician thing." Because I was a dietician aid at the time, at the hospital. And I said, "I'm going to get a job at Mountain Rose Herbs." And I decided to just fully invest my entire life in being into this whole herbalism world.

Also, at the same time, around then, I started listening to John Gallagher and HerbMentor Radio. I just devoured all of those episodes, as well. It was really fun. I felt like I was getting to know all of the herbalists through these hour long episodes. I would learn the different herbalist ticks and specialties and all that. And that was super fun. So, yeah, I would say books, KP Khalsa, HerbMentor. And then, eventually, I ended up taking an apprenticeship at the Columbine School, and that was right around the time I started at Mountain Rose Herbs, as well.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

And that's with Howie is the head instructor there?

Mason Hutchison:

Yep. It was Howie Brownstein and Steven Yeager was co-owner at the time, as well.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Okay.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Do you remember how we met, Mason? I don't know that I do. It seems like we've just been friends forever. I don't know. Probably the conference. We probably met at a conference, but I just can't remember.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah. Would you think of International Herb Symposium perhaps?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, maybe. Yeah, maybe, but... Probably at least

Mason Hutchison:

That was the other thing. Yeah, I would say so. Once I got a job at Mountain Rose Herbs, my job there was doing the events. So, I was going to all these different herbalism events, and that definitely blew it wide open for me, as well.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah. Let's hear more about that because I bet people would like to hear about behind the scenes at Mountain Rose Herbs at the conferences.

Mason Hutchison:

Oh yeah. I mean, it was my favorite part of the job. So, for close to a decade, I was helping organize the sponsorships, as well as the tabling and boothing. We also had our own event, the Free Herbalism Project.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It's amazing. I just want to interject. Free Herbalism Project. Amazing. Sometimes online, sometimes in person.

Mason Hutchison:

Which you've taught. I think you might have been the first person to teach at two Free Herbalism Projects.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, I should add that to my bio, actually.

Mason Hutchison:

First and only, perhaps, but yes. Yeah, it was just incredible to get to, early on listening to the HerbMentor Radio and just feeling like I almost knew these herbalists, to then get to go and represent this company that I loved, and get to associate with all of these herbalists and meet them in real life. And, no, I just felt super blessed to get to do that for so long.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah. And no small task, sending all the stuff. And the Mountain Rose Herbs booth was always so great. I felt like that was where the cool kids hang out. So, actually, I was always there.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah, totally. Yeah, in the early days, I had, you might remember, really long hair and a long beard. I had toe shoes. I remember being at the Mother Earth News Fair, and this couple came up to me and they're like, "Hey, can we get a picture of you?" Almost as if I was some prop or something. I don't know. I think they were just blown away by how much of a hippie I was.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That is hilarious. They don't get out much, I'm guessing.

Mason Hutchison:

I was like, "Sure." But it was fun.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Well, when I think of you, I often think of hops because we have enjoyed some hoppy beverages together, once or twice over the years. And I also think of oats, *Avena sativa*. So, I'm excited that you chose that and excited to hear your thoughts on *Avena sativa* and its many gifts. Why did you choose it? Maybe I'll let you jump in about why oats?

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah. So, thanks for letting me do it, too, because I know you had another guest previously that did oats as well. We talk about herbal allies. This is easily probably the herb I've consumed the most, primarily in oatmeal and oatstraw form. But I don't know if I told you this or not, but when I knew I was going to be on your show, I was like, "I'm going to do some sort of *Avena sativa* challenge for myself."

So, for 30 days, I drank oatstraw infusion. This is every day. Oatstraw infusion, oat top extract. I ate oatmeal. I did Robin Rose Bennett's oats meditation, which is in her book, *The Gift Of Healing Herbs*. And then I tried to read or watch something on YouTube about *Avena sativa*. So, I was really trying to immerse myself beforehand.

And part of that was probably due to the fact that I was like, "Well, I consume a lot of oatstraw infusion, but I'm not sure how much I'm actually going to be able to offer as far as herbal teaching on this plant, but maybe I'll surprise myself." But I will say, for me, it's a plant ally because, when I drink the infusion, I immediately just feel grounded. I feel deeply nourished. And I'm sure it's from all of those minerals that it packs in it.

It's funny. So, other than oatstraw, I'll notice, maybe I have a sensitive constitution or something, but when I have a nettle infusion, it will legitimately give me insomnia if I have it too late in the day. I find it to be too stimulating, whereas oatstraw is much more grounding. And yeah, if I go without taking oatstraw for a long period of time, I really notice that my body starts to crave it.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Well, I just want to back up a sec with your oatstraw immersion. I love that so much. And I think if we just stopped there and we're just like, "Okay, that's what Mason has to share is that you recommend that people do an oatstraw immersion for a month or however long." There is just so much wisdom to glean from that. And it's not always wisdom that you write down or share. It's inner wisdom, of just knowing what that is for your body to have that herb for that long and that intensively. So, highly recommend that. We should do a challenge. People write in the comments, let us know how is your oatstraw challenge going?

Mason Hutchison:

I totally agree. It's one of those things where you don't want to just blanket statement and be like, "Everybody should drink oatstraw." But I'm like, "Everyone should drink oatstraw." I did read, and I'm sure this is common knowledge, that there's something in it called, I think it's pronounced avenin, that's related to gluten. So, maybe if you're celiac, it might not be a good idea. But I think most people could handle it. And I think people would be surprised with how good they feel, especially not just after 1, 2, 3, 4 days. Just keep doing it every day, just general maintenance and that influx of minerals is so beneficial.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Can you share how you make the infusion? Because I think there's going to be some questions about that.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah. And this probably is blasphemy, but I don't measure at all. I just pour oats into a mason jar, and I just estimate it. Because you do it so many times. I know probably you're supposed to do one cup per quart of boiling water, but basically what I do is I just pour oatstraw into a mason jar.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Do you always call them mason jars or?

Mason Hutchison:

Our friend, jim mcdonald, asked me once if my middle name was jar. It is not.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I think I'm going to add that to your bio, Mason Jar Hutchison.

Mason Hutchison:

It's actually Robert. So my initials are Mason Robert Hutchison, MRH. So, I used that to get a job at Mountain Rose Herbs.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I did not know that.

Mason Hutchison:

But yeah, it's just probably about a cup of oatstraw in the mason jar, pour boiling water over it, and then stir it and then I just leave it overnight. And I actually use a sprout screen to strain it out. And there's probably better methods as far as squeezing as much stuff out as possible. But maybe I'm just lazy. I don't know.

And I don't know if you could speak to this or not, but I've heard some people say you have to cap the infusion, and I don't see why that would be the case. I think perhaps maybe if there's aromatics or something, but I'm just trying to get that mineral content. I don't even cap it. I just leave it open, and then I wake up in the morning, I strain it out and I sip on it throughout the day. And I think it's delicious.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). It is delicious, yeah. Yeah, I don't cap either. I will put a towel or something over it and it keeps the warmth in for longer and helps my double Virgo sensitivity. Just feel like it's more proper to cover it. I just cover it with a cloth. I don't know, these idiosyncratic things we do because you just do it for a while, and you find out what works for you. And so, we can take the standard recipe or the rules to do something, but over time, everyone's going to develop their own habits and ways of doing it. And that is 100% good.

Mason Hutchison:

That's exactly right. I mean, in the end, if you're not doing it based on it being too complicated, then you're not actually consuming the herb and you're not getting any benefit out of it. So, I think my way is good enough and I'm pretty religious about it. I do it almost every night. I'll switch up the herbs, of course, but oatstraw is definitely my go-to.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Can I bring up your robbery? Is that okay?

Mason Hutchison:

Of course.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah?

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah, that's part of it, too, actually.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah. So, this is just something I noted. So, for those of you who may not know, recently Mason was with his wife, Amanda, traveling in California. And I'll just tell your story. Should I just tell it? Well, I just want to make sure the point is made correctly. We're laughing, but it was actually very sad. They stopped for a half an hour, parked in the middle of the day in a crowded area, locked the truck up, left to go get a coffee, came back to a busted window and all of their camera equipment and computers all just gone, in broad daylight. So, I hear about it from Mason and he's like, "It's devastating. We lost footage." Footage of herbalists that they had been taking. Lost \$10,000 worth of equipment. Every single piece of clothing that Mason owns, gone. But Mason says, "But they didn't take the oatstraw, so at least there's that." That was just hilarious amidst the sadness.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah, and I was actually doing the oatstraw challenge throughout that time and it was funny, I actually made some, this isn't a true infusion, but I worked with what I had in the hotel room we stayed at. I made a really janky oatstraw infusion with some tap water, but I was like, "I got to keep it going."

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Oh, look at that commitment. So, totally crappy experience, but I love that there's the silver lining of, they didn't take the oatstraw. And then just, to not be a cliff hanger, the herbal community really came together and, although the footage can never be replaced, you're able to get monetary donations, so you're able to get back on the road and get camera equipment and laptop together. So, that was just really awesome. It's just so heartwarming to see. All these little donations add up from all over and it's great.

Mason Hutchison:

And honestly, Rosalee, I can't thank you enough. You spearheaded the GoFundMe for us, which I'm getting goosebumps right now. It was incredible because you end up being in your own little bubble and then it's like, "Oh my goodness." Just so many people came forward and helped out. It was definitely the other silver lining besides the oatstraw, was to feel that tight-knit community.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, absolutely. Well, it was such a little part for me to play. It was really that everyone coming together and I'm just good in an emergency because I'm very practical minded. So, I'm just ready to do the practical thing. Well, what else about oats? So, we talked about the oatstraw infusion, when you make it like that, a whole bunch of oats. And we're not talking a tablespoon here. You're talking a fair amount of oatstraw, and then steeping it overnight. So, we're getting lots of yummy minerals in that. So, that's one way to do it. And then you've also mentioned milky oats extract, I think you mentioned, as well.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah, so I bought a few different bottles from different brands. Boho Boto here in Eugene, as well as Mountain Rose Herbs. And then I also stopped at Arcata, their herb shop, Moon Rise Herbs. Let me get that right. Yeah, Moon Rise Herbs. And yeah, I just bought a bunch of different, fresh milky oats extract. And like I said before, I've taken it here and there just for funsies, but I never really incorporated it into my daily life.

And after reading about it, I'm like, "Oh my goodness, this is definitely the herbal medicine that I need for feeling frazzled, stressed, down. I know it's super good for the nervous system." I will say, taking the oatstraw infusion, I feel it deep in me. I'm not sure I'm necessarily feeling that from the tincture of the milky oat tops, but I could feel good knowing that all these herbalists use it all the time for that. So, I'm sure I'm getting benefit out of that as well.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That's interesting. I think that is another thing that we can all do is try these different methods and then ultimately see what works best for us, not what somebody says will work best for us. And sometimes, it's much easier to find the dried oats than it is fresh oats, or even the milky oat extract. It's not hard to find, but it's easier to find the dried oats. Sometimes, I think people feel bad because they don't have the fresh stuff and I think it's important to use what you have that's easy for you to get. And like you're saying, it sounds like you have more affinity with the dried oats infusion.

Mason Hutchison:

I think so. I immediately feel grounded. And besides that, do you want to keep talking about the oats extract or the other stuff, too?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Oh, all of it.

Mason Hutchison:

Okay, cool. Definitely recommend checking out the oat meditation with Robin Rose Bennett. I just think it's fun to just do this meditation where you're essentially pretending to be this plant and I feel like it's just another way to get to know the herb to try to embody yourself as that particular plant.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I love that. I'm actually taking a nature writing class right now and that's a frequent nature writing prompt is you feel like you're the plant or you're the animal, and you write about it.

Mason Hutchison:

That is cool.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Actually, Robin Rose Bennett, I'm going to be interviewing her in a couple of weeks. So, spoiler on that one.

Mason Hutchison:

Very good. Yeah. She's amazing. So, she has that meditation in her book, *The Gift of Healing Herbs*, and then it's also on the Herbal YouTube channel, where she actually guides you through it as well. So yeah, that's what I use. I just listened to her soothing voice and I just stand there in a field.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I love it.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I almost feel like we should back up a little bit because I walked into this just thinking everybody knows oats, and of course everybody does know oats, like oatmeal. But some people might be new to the concept of this different kind of oats and how to use it as medicine. So, do you want to walk us through that and what are we even talking about? It seems like halfway through the show, we should define what we're talking about.

Mason Hutchison:

Like what is an oat?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah. Like what are we talking about when you're talking about oatstraw or milky oat extract and how is that different from oatmeal?

Mason Hutchison:

To the best of my knowledge, it's a grass. It's a grain. And the oat top is, I believe, the unripe seed, and then you squeeze it and you'll see that little milky substance come out. I know that's where a lot of the medicinal value comes from. The oatstraw is, I believe, every other part of that grass that's then been dried and cut and sifted. And then oatmeal, I believe, is the ripe seed that's been pressed. And, of course, there's all sorts of different types of oatmeal you can consume, which is your quick oats, your oat grows, all that kind of stuff. I don't know what I used for oatmeal. Probably just your standard, regular organic oats oatmeal. Did that do it justice?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That did do it justice. Yeah, so it's all the same plant. Yeah. And herbalists, we are often using oats like oatmeal, but more commonly talking about the oatstraw. And when they're in that fresh stage, which Mason was talking about, you squeeze it and the milk comes out, that's what you're using to make the milky oats extract with.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah. And so, bringing it back to the California trip where we were robbed and everything, we actually ended up going back down to Arcata, and on the way back, we visited Oshala Farm in Southern Oregon. And we were hanging around their farm and just walking over. And there was a giant plot of what looked like grass, essentially. And I was joking, "Oh, is that your grass field?" And it was embarrassing because it was their oat field. It just looked like a bunch of grass, but once I saw it, I was like, "Ah, now I get to hang out with the oats."

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Did that help with the meditation? You get a sense of that.

Mason Hutchison:

Exactly. I mean, I know what it looks like when it's fully grown, but it just looked like the short grass.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Well, you have a recipe for us, which I found really fascinating because, of course, I've had oatmeal in my life, but it's always sweet, and you have a savory oatmeal for us. So, I want to hear more about this savory miso oatmeal.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah. So, to be quite honest, I do actually make oatmeal in a savory form on a regular basis. And for some reason, when I knew I had to make a recipe for Rosalee, I was like, "Oh, I kind of want to make it a little more special and funky."

But typically, what I do is, instead of using water to cook oatmeal, I'll use a broth of some sort, like bone broth or whatever. You could use any kind of broth and to flavor it, I always then put some sort of fried egg or something on it, with some sort of pickled vegetable as well. And the test is, Amanda likes it as well, and she's more of a normal person when it comes to eating. So, if she likes it, it's good.

So, I'm just trying to preach savory oatmeal because I think it's underutilized and not many people do it. But for the recipe that I did for the podcast, we did it with bone broth, miso, kimchi, Shiitake mushrooms with some tamari and honey and stuff like that. So, I was just trying to get fancy and show off.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It's very fancy. Kind of reminds me, actually, of a traditional Chinese medicine tonic soup. It's so deeply nourishing. I could see having that as you're recovering from an illness or just if you're feeling depleted. Because it would be really easy to digest and filled with all sorts of nutrients. Very comforting.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah. Yeah, it was interesting. I think I mentioned, during the oat challenge for the 30 days, I was trying to read or watch YouTube videos. You'd be shocked at how many doctors on YouTube say how bad oatmeal is for you. And I don't know if it's a carb thing or something. I've eaten it my whole life. I really vibe with it. So, I guess just listen to your body.

I don't know. I think it's full of vitamins, minerals and fiber, and all that good stuff. Plus, it's really cheap. So, I think that's accessible that way. Yeah, I love it. And I do like a sweet oatmeal, too, with nuts and raisins and honey and stuff like that, too. But I think give it with some broth a try.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Nice. Yeah, I also love oats and I don't buy into oatmeal, and I don't buy into them being bad at all. Like you said, they're so full of nutrients, as well as fiber, which I think fiber is just so underrated. More and more research is coming out showing that how much fiber we eat determines the health of our gut flora way more than taking probiotic pills does. So, it needs to be a lot of fiber and a lot of different kinds. But one thing I love about oats is oat bran. We go through a lot of oat bran. There's hardly anything we make. We'll make waffles or cakes or bread, always has oat bran in it because nutritious, lots of fiber. So, big fan.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah. Maybe I need to do a 30 day oat bran challenge, but I didn't consume any of that. Although I will say our friends, Heidi and Ethan, just made us some buns the other day. We had a sandwich with them, and they made it out of oat flour. So, it's very versatile, too.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Nice. Well, I'll send you some recipes. I've got the Astragalus Shiitake cookies. I put oat bran in there.

Mason Hutchison:

Oh, wow. That's awesome.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah. I put them in my oat cakes. Yeah. Goes in practically everything at our house.

Mason Hutchison:

That's awesome.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Would you have anything else you'd like to share about oats?

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah, I think just bringing it back to what you said, if you've never tried an oatstraw infusion, I would just recommend it. It's super easy to make and just try it for a week or so, and see how you feel. Unless you have concerns about celiac and that kind of stuff.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

And something about that, too. Definitely there's the celiac concern. As far as herbs go, when you're getting oatstraw and milky oats, those are most often grown on herbal farms who aren't also processing wheat, because sometimes there's that problem of contamination, because people who grow oats often grow wheat. And if they don't separate them very carefully, then they can be cross contaminated. So, with milky oats and oat straw, you always want to be careful, go slow, and see how you do. But there isn't as much concern about cross contamination when it's coming from an herb farm like that.

Mason Hutchison:

True.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah. Yeah. And I'm excited to hear about people's oatstraw immersion. I think that'd be a fun thing to hear from folks. And it's so deliciously yummy. I love it cool. I love it in the summertime cold. That is delicious. It has a little bit of demulcency to it, and so it's just soothing, coating when it's super hot and dry here. Oh, it's so good. Yeah. Well, Mason, I would love to hear what projects that you have going on right now.

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah, so I started Herb Rally about seven years ago, and started out just as listing herbalism events. Then we expanded to herbal monographs. We're up to maybe 70-ish monographs. I believe you have one in there, as well, on hops.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

On hops.

Mason Hutchison:

And then it morphed into the podcast. What we're really excited for right now is our YouTube channel. All I needed to do was marry a videographer, and that really helped out. So, now, we're producing videos each week for our YouTube channel and we just started a membership site as well, kind of homage to John Gallagher in a way, because HerbMentor really was super influential in the early days. But yeah, I'd say the thing I'm most excited for right now is the YouTube channel, for sure.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Oh, cool. So, yeah, you've got Herb Rally, which is a must checkout for everybody. And then within that, it's herbrally.com. And within that, it's this umbrella of all these fun ways that you're sharing about herbs. And tell me about your freebies section, because I think folks will be interested in that.

Mason Hutchison:

Sure. Yeah. So, basically, if you go to herbrally.com, on the top little navigation bar, it says freebies right there. And you could sign up for the email newsletter and you'll get access to these herbal freebies. One of them is a calendula ebook by Rosalee de la Foret.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Oh, I did it. Yeah. Good.

Mason Hutchison:

There's also a 32-page nutrition book by Plant Healer. There's also an 86-page ebook co-branded for Herb Rally and Plant Healer. There's an hour-long adaptogens class, and a video class with Bevin Claire on five herbalism events you must attend around the world.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah. Well those are some awesome freebies, so definitely check that out. Get on the newsletter. I'm on the newsletter.

Mason Hutchison:

Awesome.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah. I highly recommend it. Well, Mason, the last question I have for you is the question I ask everybody in season four, and that is, what do you know now that you wished you had known when you had just started working with herbs?

Mason Hutchison:

Yeah. And I deliberately didn't listen to any other answers because I didn't want it affecting what my answer might be. So, it is going to be fun for me to go back and listen to. And I actually struggled with this question at first, and then I realized, "Oh, it's probably what I tell every beginning herbalist, which is basically herbalism and herbs are more than just cut and sifted dried plants."

I remember when I first started going out in the woods with the Columbines School, we'd bust out our little loupes and stare at flowers, tiny little flowers in the old growth Western Cascades for hours on end. And it eventually becomes almost like this inadvertent spiritual practice, and you end up developing relationships with these living beings. In every spring and summer, when you see them pop out, you'd be like, "Hey, I know you." And it ends up becoming this relationship thing with the plants, as opposed to just this sterile.

I love apothecaries, and I love going to herb shops and stuff like that, and checking all the herbs and that kind of thing. But I don't think anything really beats getting out into nature and developing relationships with these plants, one on one, in their natural environment. And that goes also, I'd say, I don't have much experience with gardening herbs, but also gardening herbs and tending to your own garden, and that kind of thing, if you can do that. But yeah, definitely getting out there and having a relationship with the plants.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Oh, I love that. I couldn't agree more. I fell in love with herbs through books, initially, and it was so exciting and fun and I wanted to learn more and more. But once I brought it outside and, like you said, having those relationship with the plants, it was a whole game changer. That just, for me, is really the raison d'être. How do you say that? Why we're here, ultimately, and what keeps me going every day. So, thank you for sharing that so beautifully.

Mason Hutchison:

Thanks.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Well, Mason, it's been an absolute pleasure to have you here. Thanks so much for joining us.

Mason Hutchison:

Thank you for having me.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

We'll be in touch soon, I'm sure.

Mason Hutchison:

Sounds good.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

All right. Bye-bye

Mason Hutchison:

Bye.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Thanks for watching. Don't forget to click the link in the video description to get free access to Mason's savory miso oatmeal recipe. Also available are the complete show notes, including the transcript. You can visit Mason directly at herbrally.com.

If you enjoyed this interview, then before you go, be sure to click the subscribe button, so you'll be the first to get my new videos, including interviews like this. I'd also love to hear your comments about this interview and this wonderful, lovely plant.

I deeply believe that this world needs more herbalists and plant-centered folks. I'm so glad you're here as part of this herbal community. Have a beautiful day.