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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.

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I absolutely love calendula. It's a plant that I adore in my garden and in many of my herbal skin formulas. I was thrilled when Alex chose calendula as her plant for the show and I loved hearing new ways about working with this favorite plant. For example, she shares a full spectrum extract method that she learned from Chanchal Cabrera. For those of you who don't already know her already, Alex Rea was born in the southern tier of New York among rich farmlands and birch forests. She is a trained community/clinical herbalist and a full spectrum doula who is passionate about accessible herbal care and supporting all pregnancy outcomes.

Alex was raised around her Southern great grandmother who was a birthing assistant for her mother who worked as a midwife and herbalist with the Chestnut Ridge People. This may explain her admiration for the plant and reproductive world since childhood.

Alex is a queer cis woman. She is the founder of the Community Care Camper, a free mobile herb clinic serving underserved populations in and around Ann Arbor, Michigan. She is the co-owner of the Black Locust Gardens herb farm and plant nursery, a coordinator for the Great Lakes Herb Faire, and herbal educator, mom, animist, pagan, writer and is currently working on opening up a mutual aid herb shop. She works on a sliding fee scale, weaving together a harm reduction and client-centered lens. She works mostly with AFAB people around postpartum, pregnancy loss, gut and hormonal health. You can visit Alex at blacklocustgardens.com.

Welcome to the show, Alex!

Alex Crofoot:

Thank you so much for having me. I'm really excited to be here.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I appreciate you being here so much. No one else knows but us is that it's been a journey to get here together, and so I really appreciate it what you've been having – ice storms and power outages and Wi-Fi issues and everything. But we did it! We're here. It's working.

Alex Crofoot:

This is going on to the world.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I appreciate your perseverance in making it happen, so thank you. I would love to start with hearing more about you and your herbal path and what your journey has been like that has brought you here today.

Alex Crofoot:

Well, I think it's a combination of a few things. I was really lucky because I grew up with my great grandparents. They actually didn't pass away until I was 16. They owned some property and we're (0:03:44.3) in New York where I grew up. My grandmother was amazing woman. She was a farmer, an avid gardener, canner, quilter. Her mother, Victoria, my great, great grandmother, was a midwife and an herbalist for the Chestnut Ridge People, which was a small population of people in West Virginia that were really ostracized from community. They were denied access to education and denied access to healthcare. As far as I know, Victoria helped them deliver babies and helped with healthcare for them in that region of West Virginia. They were all from the south and actually played in a band, blue grass band, for Eleanor Roosevelt one day in the '30s, and they were just amazing.

I remember hearing stories about Victoria because my grandmother, (LaDonna) her name was, would go to these births with her, and so it was just kind of in daily conversation growing up. And plants were too, you know. I didn't really think about it much until much later on in life. I kind of started connecting the dots because sometimes I look around and I'm like, "How did the plants take over my life?" In all the best ways possible, right? And also—so the area that I grew up was really rural. It was one little, tiny town and then outside of that is pretty much Amish, and there's Allegheny National Forest, and then there's a bunch of state forests around as well.

I had a semi-traumatic childhood and I found just a lot of solace in those areas and those forests. It just always was with me. It's something that happened really young for me.

Everyone's journey and path is very different. I actually wrote my senior high school paper on the history of herbal medicine.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Wow!

Alex Crofoot:

It's funny. My mom is visiting from New York right now. We're talking about this and she's like, "You're just always asking questions about plants from a really, really young age." Also, where I grew up, there was a pagan community called "Brushwood Folklore Center." I started going

there pretty young around 13, 14. The place is really beautiful. There was all these altars for different elements of fire, earth, water, a lot of workshops and conversations around plants. I think that shaped me a lot too as who I am today. So, I think that's—that's the chunk of it.

Before—this might date me, but when I wrote that paper when I was a senior in high school, there was no Instagram and there was no herbal—you couldn't just go online and find out what herb school to go to. I knew I wanted to go to herb school when I was a senior, but I didn't know of any that existed. I think one time I got a printed thing from Chestnut Ridge school. A lot of my family—my grandparents grew up outside of Asheville, North Carolina, so ever since I was really young, I was going there every year. I love this area and found out there was an herb school there. I didn't end up going and then years later, around 2013, I ended up going to Ithaca, New York and studied with 7Song at the Northeast School of Botanical Medicine, which I highly recommend.

After that, I moved to Michigan and I took jim mcdonald's herbal intensive, which I also highly recommend. Both amazing herb teachers. I did my doula training, and then I thought I was going to go into nursing school and be a nurse practitioner, but the plants were like, "Come this way." The nursing was like, "Come this way," and then I ended up sticking with the plants and here I am.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I've met other people who knew from a fairly young age that they were—the plants were calling them, but not a lot. One thing that just strikes me listening to your story is I think this is going to be a more common story because of herbalism gaining in popularity, because of people raising their children with herbs that it's just going to be, like you said, part of the conversation growing up and it's just going to seem like a natural pathway. Whereas, before there's been you had to make the path in order to go and really struggle to find out where to find your information, who to learn from and all of those sort of things. It's going to become more and more normalized, which I think is really cool.

Alex Crofoot:

Yeah, it's awesome. We need all the herbalists and all the plant people that we possibly can get. Absolutely. For sure.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I had a wondering. I'm just wondering, when Victoria was born. Do you know?

Alex Crofoot:

Oh, man. My mom would definitely know this. I'm not exactly sure. I mean, obviously, the 1800s—late 1800s, I'm assuming.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

How wonderful to have that connection to your ancestors and shared memory. I can go back and look at my ancestry, but there's not a lot of shared memory. It's just names on paper, so what a wonderful thing.

Alex Crofoot:

I feel really—I feel very lucky that I was raised around them. They lived so long too that I was able to take that in. I do feel like that’s really rare.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

How beautiful. Well, I know that you had a super easy time choosing your herb.

Alex Crofoot:

Oh, man. I think it was the dreariness of winter where I was like, “Hmm, calendula.” You know ice storms and everything and I just want something bright.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

What a lovely choice. I’m excited to hear more about calendula from you.

Alex Crofoot:

So, here in Michigan, we grow it as an annual. It’s a very easy plant to grow if people are interested. You can start it outside at your last frost date. I’m not sure where you are in the Pacific Northwest, if it’s a self-seeding annual for you. It’s not here in Michigan.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It’s not super vigorous here. I will get some self-seeding, but I can’t count on it.

Alex Crofoot:

Okay, yeah, same. Otherwise, if you don’t have a heated space to start them, you can just wait till your last frost date and just have a really nice prep bed. They’re happy to just be direct seeded and watered in. They’re so abundant and amazing. If you have a heated space or a space in your house to grow them under a light, you could start them earlier and then plant them out as they get bigger. That’s just a little bit about growing them.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

We have to talk about the seeds, I feel like, because calendulas are so cool.

Alex Crofoot:

They’re so cool.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

For those of you watching on YouTube, I’ll put a photo up. How would you describe what those seeds look like?

Alex Crofoot:

I mean, I want to make jewelry out of them. They’re so windy. Each of them are just so different, which is really cool. Gosh, yeah. It’s just something that everyone should witness. They’re huge. They also really makes it nice for growing and collecting seed yourself because they are so big that you can also just have some plants go to seed and just harvest them off the flowers and keep them for next year too.



With calendula, that's how we grow it. We usually grow it in the field with the hoop house. Like I said, they're really, really abundant to harvest. I would say that I use calendula for so many different reasons. I feel like it's one of those plants that people think is really common and it's really simple, but I feel it's really multidimensional plant. I use it for harvesting the flowers and the calyx of the green part of the plant as well, pop those off. Usually, they come into flower. We plant them out in June and harvest them usually in July, August--is really when they start popping. I harvest the fresh tops with the green part, so the calyx underneath it, and that's all that I harvest.

And I would say I use it in so many different ways. First, I dry the flowering tops. I can use that as a sitz bath for my postpartum folks. Maybe with some dried yarrow, marshmallow, red raspberry and some sea salt--that's great for postpartum healing, after childbirth, as well as people that might have hemorrhoids. I also use it extensively in any kind of gut healing formulas. Because it's a vulnerary herb, which we know is an herb that helps heal skin tissue. It can also help heal our mucosa membranes that consists of our gut. People that might have issues with IBS or leaky gut syndrome, then I'm going to put calendula in their tea blend for them to drink.

I also really love it as an oil. I use fresh flowers and this took me a while to figure out, so that all my oils wouldn't go rancid. I would basically put calendula flowers in a mason jar and I put a little bit of ethanol alcohol over top of it. Maybe like 2 teaspoons or 2 tablespoons, depending on the amount of flowers that I have. Shake that up and let that sit all day or overnight, so the alcohol soaks in and evaporates a bit and then I'd pour my oil of choice over top of that, and then you can get a really nice, strong calendula oil as well.

Calendula, like all plants, has hundreds and thousands of different chemical constituents. It's got resins, which pull out with alcohol more so than water or glycerin or an oil. It has saponins, flavonoids. It's got polysaccharides, which we find in our other immune modulating herbs like reishi or astragalus, for some examples. Calendula, in that sense, also really does well as an extract in water. In your teas, you get those polysaccharides. You probably, of course, get some of those resins as well. The alcohol is going to pull those resins out a little bit more.

Looping back to the polysaccharides, we can use it as a full spectrum tincture to be able to get that full spectrum tincture. We can make one tincture that has a high alcohol percentage, say like 95% alcohol if you can get that where you live, or you could get some vodka or whatever is available to you. You can get--make a lower alcohol percentage. Maybe 30% a little bit more water that pulls those polysaccharides out. You wait for those to macerate and be done. You mix those two to get a really nice full spectrum calendula tincture as well.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Oh, wow. I've never heard of doing that before with calendula. That's fantastic.

Alex Crofoot:

Yeah, it's a really fascinating plant and I think what I love about it too--and this is nice because of spring coming up--is its effect is in the lymph system and using it as a lymphagogue or a

lymphatic herb. I really also like to use that tincture for anyone that might be having immunosuppressive symptoms, that basically means someone that is having—they're sick really frequently and they're not feeling better as quickly as maybe they should, or they have chronic allergies. Maybe putting calendula in a formula for them. Or acute issues as well just to give someone an immune boost, maybe with some Echinacea or red root. Depending on what they're experiencing, I really like to use calendula in that sense as well.

I feel like it's gentle enough. Of course, changing the dosage up a little bit to use with kids as well for sicknesses or swollen lymph nodes. Maybe topically as an oil or even a couple of drops as tincture.

When I do herbal first aid, I really like to carry around premade calendula teabags. I like to use that just for compresses. If anyone has swollen lymphs underneath their armpits or in their neck, you could do herbal compress. Eye washes are really nice with calendula, irritated red eyes because of that vulnerary action again, calendula is really useful for, a face wash for acne, the antimicrobialness of calendula. There's so many different ways to use calendula and I'm probably forgetting some, but there's a lot.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I love the calendula in the teabag tip. That's something I do a lot with chamomile because you can just buy chamomile in teabags already, so it's nice. When I go traveling, I always take some with me for that—those things that might come up. That's really great tip for calendula.

Alex Crofoot:

If you're traveling and if you have a easily upset stomach, those astringent properties or those gut-healing properties in that calendula, just make it a tea and drink that, and maybe that can help a little bit as well with the travel gut.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I also appreciate that you are very specific that you harvest the entire flower head with the green at the bottom, because that is a pet peeve of mine. I don't know why it is, but when the calendula's happening, I'll see on Instagram or social media posts where people are removing the petals from the green part to make their tinctures or their teas. That's something that gets repeated. If I'm going to eat calendula, I just use the petals. That's the only time I just use the petals. If I'm going to put calendula in cookies, I don't put in the green parts, for example, but if you're making medicine—I always tell people when you harvest it, you can tell because you harvest those, your fingers get so sticky tacky with all of those resins. That's just the good stuff in there.

Alex Crofoot:

The good stuff, yeah. You definitely don't want to take the petals off the calyx, for sure. It can be tricky to dry to get a good quality dried calendula because of that stickiness. It does retain a lot of moisture in that calyx of that flower. Just really low heat, 95% over a really long period of time or short depending on where you're drying it and how. There's this sweet spot with it

where you don't want to pull it too soon because it can hold on to a lot of moisture in that specific area of the plant. You just got to be mindful of that.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I'm really happy to hear that because I live in a super arid climate unlike you, so I don't really use the dehydrator much because it's just super dry here. People ask me all the time how do I dehydrate it, and I'm like, "I don't know. We moved to the desert."

Alex Crofoot:

My air is the dehydrator.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It's the dehydrator. However, I will say that I have to be very tricky. It's tricky though because I will store it now in paper bags because one time I harvested, I had a whole bunch of beautiful, primo calendula. I put it in a gallon glass jar that was sealed tight and I swear it was dry. It was dry dry. I swear, but obviously it was not because it just got covered in mold, which was very, very sad just to have lost that. Now, I'm very careful with it but I'm glad you mentioned that it's a bit tricky there.

Alex Crofoot:

It's a bit tricky and that's happened to us on our farm—on the herb farm. We've harvested 20lbs and then we pull it too soon from the dryers and then it goes bad. We're like, "Oh, God!" It's only happened one time and it happens quickly. You can figure it out pretty fast, which is a good thing. It's a bummer.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, it is. We mentioned that one time you would want to remove those petals from the calyx is to eat it, and you chose a very delicious recipe to share with everyone – a recipe by Colleen Codekas who has been on the show. She came and talked about purple dead nettle, fabulous creator of recipes. I'd love for you to introduce this delicious recipe that we're going to share.

Alex Crofoot:

I think one year, I was just trying to figure out how to be creative with calendula petals. You can put them on top of your salads. You can freeze them in ice cubes. I wonder what they would taste like in just a baked good? Because they have a slightly bitter flavor, but it's also slightly floral. I was looking up recipes and I came across this one. I fell in love and now I really like to bake with it. I think I mentioned to you too that I've done pancakes with them--the petals.

This is calendula in citrus shortbread cookie. I know that you're going to share the recipe, but it's basically making shortbread dough and choosing what kind of citrus you want. You can do lemon or orange. I've done grapefruit, and then mixing in your calendula petals into the dough and then baking your cookies. It's really simple. It tastes really good, slightly citrusy and a little bit floral, which is really nice. You can top the cookies too with your calendula petals. Just really beautiful and a really nice way to eat calendula.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I love it. It feels celebratory and gorgeous and fun.

Alex Crofoot:

It would be a great summer solstice cookie.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Lovely!

Alex Crofoot:

It's great. They're delicious.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I feel like you'll share that. You gave us so much information about calendula in this very short amount of time –first aid, postpartum, hemorrhoids, acne, lymph, guts. That was a lot! Is there anything else that you want to share about calendula?

Alex Crofoot:

I mean, just have fun. Experiment with it. You can also start with just that oil that I was saying. Make a nice fresh oil with the calendula flowers and the calyx, the green part. You can put that into salves and you could start there, or you could put that in suppositories for vaginal atrophy or dryness or hemorrhoids, diaper rashes, any kind of all-balm-kind-of-salve for cuts and scrapes and first aid. It's such a great introductory plant that also builds upon itself as well.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That's a great way to express the gifts of calendula. I go through at least a quart of oil a year.

Alex Crofoot:

Yeah, I'm just slathering it.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I use that oil as a face and breast massage oil. I use it almost every night before I go to bed. Sometimes I'll do a combination of tulsi and calendula. It's my favorite right now. But then my friends, I start getting a lot of requests in the fall of like, "Oh, what are you doing for the holidays this year? Because that calendula body butter was really nice," or "The calendula cream was really nice... This one that I get request a lot for those, so..."

Alex Crofoot:

It works! That reminds me that there is one more thing. With postpartum folks, any kind of clogged duct or mastitis—mastitis is tricky, right? Because that's where we want to know red flags with fevers or infection involved. With the clogged ducts, which is really common, is really painful, or newly breast or chest-feeding folks, using the calendula oil maybe with some violet oil or red clover, some other kind of lymphatic herb is so nice and just really healing to the breast. I would say pretty breast chest feeding friendly as well.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Thank you for that. Yay, calendula!

Alex Crofoot:

I know! It's a good one.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I'd like to hear more about your farm, Alex. We haven't really touched on that yet.

Alex Crofoot:

Black Locust Gardens – we're located outside of Ann Arbor, Michigan, in a pretty small agricultural area called, Dexter, Michigan. We cultivate herbs on about seven acres. All seven acres are in cultivation with herbs, I should say. Certified organic, and then we also do a plant nursery as well. We mostly sell online and it's bulk dried herbs. We used to ship fresh herbs and we've pulled away from that because shipping during the pandemic was really chaotic with USPS. The herbs were just not getting there in good quality, so we pulled away from shipping fresh, but we do local fresh pick up and we also do dried herbs as well--bulk dried herbs.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

What are some of your biggest bulk herb offerings with the dried herbs?

Alex Crofoot:

It's all the nervines. We have lots of tulsi and lemon balm and nettle. Oats that are harvested during the milky stage is a really popular one as well. We do have some calendula. I would say those are probably the most popular ones that we have.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Oh, lovely, and seven acres, that's not huge but that's not small. That's a lot of land to be cultivating herbs.

Alex Crofoot:

It is. It's cultivated on seven acres, but it's actually a 30-acre parcel. We're managing 30, so we're doing crop rotation throughout all of those acres.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Wow! How wonderful. What kind of herbal projects do you have going on these days?

Alex Crofoot:

Oh, man. You know it's funny talking about earlier nursing school being like, "Come this way," and the plants, "Come this way." It kind of happened again just recently. Okay, I'm going to apply for a nursing program and then I was like, "No, I'm going to open an herb shop." So, that's the newest thing that I'm really, really excited about, is opening up this herb shop called "Bloodroot Herb Shop." The space is—we're hoping—we're envisioning it more than just an herb shop. We're really hoping for it to be a community space. We want it to really feel nurturing and a place where people can come and buy plants from the plant nursery. They can

buy freshly dried herbs that are from US-grown herb farmers. We're going to do bi-weekly free classes, sliding scale classes, as well as sliding scale consultations, some outreach for the houseless populations in the area as well, and really just trying to have more mutual aid in our community, so maybe coming together and making a bunch of medicine for folks that might need it for maybe—depending on a protest that might be happening or people that are protesting oil pipelines or something along those lines, trying to really have people come together and make medicine for these folks.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Wow. What a beautiful offering for your community.

Alex Crofoot:

I'm really excited about it.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

What is the timeline? Are you in the dreaming stage now? Envisioning the space stage?

Alex Crofoot:

We are in the loan-got-approved-looking-for-a-space stage.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Wow! That's very exciting!

Alex Crofoot:

It happened pretty fast. I was thinking about it and I just kept—it kept nudging me. I've been wanting to open an herb shop for a really long time and it just felt like the right time with just everyone I feel coming out of the pandemic, talking about community and how we all want more. People don't really know. There used to be this space, like this third space where people could go and they could talk to their neighbors or they could gather and have events. I think having a baby, for me, during the pandemic, was really, really isolating. There wasn't anywhere to go. I also really want this space to be really open to new parents or any parents that can come and chat and be in company with folks. Now, we're looking for that space and we're hoping to open it by this spring.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Wow! That is very exciting! Do you think that'll be in Dexter? Or Ann Arbor? Or...

Alex Crofoot:

It's going to be in Ypsilanti, Michigan. It's like in between Ann Arbor and Detroit.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Can you do that without showing the mitten? Because jim mcdonald always—I thought that was a Michigan requirement that you had to show the mitten.

Alex Crofoot:

I'm not from Michigan. I'm from Upstate New York-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Right, so that's...

Alex Crofoot:

I don't know what your...

Rosalee de la Forêt:

You're going to pass. You're going to pass all that.

Alex Crofoot:

I wouldn't be—I don't know—somewhere down here? It's still in the southeast Michigan. It's 30 minutes from Detroit.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Okay, wonderful.

Alex Crofoot:

Yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Before I let you go, Alex, I would love to ask you the question that I'm asking everybody for Season 8, which is, "What is your most important mistake?" With herbs. I always forget that part. We could have a lot of mistakes. We're looking for some herbal-

Alex Crofoot:

You got another two hours?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Herbal learning mistakes.

Alex Crofoot:

You got some time? Boy, this one is really simple. I thought about this and we could go into some deep—I made a lot of mistakes, but this one, which I think I still chuckle to myself about, is what every herb teacher ever told me, which was "Label your jars." Because you will think that you will remember what's in that jar. You will make something and you're like, "I'm not going to forget what's in here," but come a few months later or a year later, you can't remember what's in that jar at all. You're like, "I'm just going to have to toss this because I have no idea what I even put in here." I would say that it's funny I still sometimes do that where I am convinced that I'm going to remember what's in the jar and I don't. A very simple mistake, but one that we should all keep in mind.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I love that you shared this mistake because this is so crucial and I have fallen to this even in recent time. What made a huge difference for me is, one, having to throw out a lot of stuff that just was absolutely silly and heartbreaking because I don't know what that is. Sometimes it's I



don't know what it is and I also don't know how long has it been sitting on this back shelf. I have no memory of it whatsoever, so it's not good. What happened for me that helped a lot was that I used to—I'm double Virgo, love everything to be beautiful. I have this extensive labeling system that required going online and creating this specific label for the thing, and then printing it out on the special paper. I don't do that anymore, not even a little bit. I use Kraft paper and—not Kraft paper, Kraft tape. I don't even want the extra paper tape situation, so I just use Kraft tape. It's always there. I have several around the house and key areas and so it's always there. That helped me a lot. I have to let go of wanting this beautiful, perfect thing and just do what's easy. That's another thing I'll do. I'll be like, "Oh," when I will say I will remember this. Okay, that's not happening. But then, two, I'll say, "I'll label this later. I know it's important. I will label it later," and then life happens.

Alex Crofoot:

Yeah! I do it all the time. To this day, it happens at least a couple of times a year and I'm just like, "Why can't I remember?" It's just like this pattern that just happens and life happens.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I want to take a vow now. No more.

Alex Crofoot:

Yeah, let's pinky promise. I'm going to check in with you.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I think that's fair.

Alex Crofoot:

Over the summer, I'd be like, "Rosalee, are you labeling your jars?"

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It helps too with my students. We make a big deal of it with our students and so if we don't do it in class, then I often get corrected too, so that helps. It's good to be held accountable.

Alex Crofoot:

Herb teachers probably teach that in their herb schools because they're probably still doing it too.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

And we know how painful it is.

Alex Crofoot:

We have to stop this cycle.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That is a very important mistake. Thank you so much for sharing that. I hope we have helped a lot of people today.

Alex Crofoot:

Otherwise, you're just going to throw it out and it's going to be sad.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Alex, thank you so much again for making an effort for being here, and for sharing your wisdom with calendula, and hearing a bit about your farm too, and of course, your most important mistake. All of it has been fabulous. Thank you so much.

Alex Crofoot:

Thank you so much. I feel really honored to be here and hear me speak, and let me speak. I appreciate it.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Thanks, Alex.

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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. Nicole Paull is the Project Manager who oversees the whole operation from guest outreach, to writing show notes, to actually uploading each episode and so many other things I don't even know. She really holds this whole thing together.

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. I know that you do too. Kristy edits the recipe cards and then Jenny creates them as well as the thumbnail images for YouTube. Michele is the tech wizard behind the scenes and Karin is our Student Services Coordinator and Customer Support. 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, your reviews, your ratings. I read every review that comes in because they're like a little herbal love letter that brightens my day, like this one:

In a blogosphere full of sparkly but dubious herbal remedies and associated claims, Rosalee goes the other way. She provides a useful framework for using herbs that's based on a combination of historical uses, evidence-based research and attention to the individual. This

framework is what helps individuals to select and appropriately use herbs at home in a way that's attainable.

Do you love this podcast? If you leave a review for me on Apple podcast, I may be reading your herbal love letter on the show next.

Okay, you've lasted to the very end of the show which means you get a gold star and these herbal tidbits:

First up, there are so many gifts of calendula and many ways to work with this sunshine plant. If you'd like to hear even more, you can listen to previously released podcast episodes like the one with Kami McBride, as well as the solo calendula episode with me.

Another herbal tidbit is that calendula is sometimes confused with marigolds. These are two different plants with similar, but also different gifts. The confusion comes around they kind of look similar, but sometimes the familiar names crisscross or sometimes calendula is called "pot marigold." It's worth knowing which is which before you choose seeds or harvest. The botanical name for calendula is *Calendula officinalis*, and the genus name for marigolds are *Tagetes*.

One of my favorite things about calendula in the garden is all the beings that are attracted to those bright flowers. They are sweat bees, which are this electric neon green color--so cool. There's bumblebees, honeybees, hover flies and butterflies. So many beings love those calendula flowers.

And my last herbal tidbit for calendula is that calendula can be yellow or orange, or there are even some hybrids with lots of different colors in their petal. I personally love to grow the orange flower specifically since they make such a beautiful infused oil. And if you aren't able to grow your own, it's well worth getting them from Black Locust Gardens. You'll be amazed at the quality, which will then make a beautiful and potent herbal medicine.