

Briana Wiles:

I showed up. There's so much power in showing up and I think that's such a big piece of herbs in general, and plants in general. It's like you're not going to learn if you don't show up to meet them or show up to use them. We have a lot of really lovely pines here, but piñon is just like— she's special. It's something that can be used internally, externally. Aromatically, it's delightful. It can be something that can be diverse and things you would never even think, like pine with coffee. Why would you do that? But it's amazing.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

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 Briana Wiles to explore piñon – a tree known for its rich aromatic resin and its ability to support the lungs, fight infections, and as we learn from Briana, bring a surprising sense of grounding. And towards the end, we explore an idea that might shift how you think about relaxing nervine herbs all together. This is a conversation that moves between the practical and experiential, between what piñon does in the body and how it can shift how you feel.

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.

Briana, welcome to the show.

Briana Wiles:

Hi. Thanks for having me.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

So, you and I go way back—like way back. I don't even remember when I first met you. Definitely, it was—it might have been a Kiva fest some way, somewhere.

Briana Wiles:

I was trying to pin it down where I was. My first Kiva fest was 2011, and so-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Mine too. Mine too.

Briana Wiles:

Yeah, I was like, “Was Rosalee there?” because I knew nobody. I came there and I still, to this day, don’t even know how I found the website. I had Googled something and it came up, and I was like, “I need to go to that.” I showed it to Briant. We had just been married a year. I was trying to figure out how to get into herbs, and somehow that showed up. In the same realm I remember jim’s website showing up. I don’t know if somehow—and I didn’t know jim yet either, but it was after the event. After meeting jim, I was like, “That Michigan—you were a part of that search somehow.” So, that’s how I met everybody—was going to up to Kiva fest in 2011.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I don’t remember meeting you, but I remember you always being a part of my life, so it’s just like it was meant to be. [crosstalk] When I started this podcast in 2021, you were one of the first people I asked to be on the show, and you turned me down, remember?

Briana Wiles:

Look, here we are, 2026.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Five years later, yeah.

Briana Wiles:

I just—sometimes I take a little warming up. You know, I just need-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

This is a five-year warm up. I asked you. I don’t think you said no. I think you dodged, and then we were hanging out-

Briana Wiles:

I feel like a lot happened during the last six years.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Sure. Okay. You can play that card, but yeah—and then we hung out at a 40th birthday party, our good friend, Rebecca. I gave you a lot of crap for not being on my podcast then, but that didn't work.

Briana Wiles:

No. I still didn't show up for a few more years. It still took another five, so-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

And then we were hanging out at Great Lakes, and is that where I finally got the yes?

Briana Wiles:

Yes, it was this last September that you finally got me down in front of an audience and told me that I hadn't been—actually, it was only because I was jealous of Alex getting to be on the...

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Herbalists After Hours.

Briana Wiles:

The Herbalists After Hours with Mason. It was jealousy that got me and I said, "Wait. Why am I—why am I not getting invited here?" and then it was like, "Well, you've already been invited and you don't show up."

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah! I'm glad—okay, I'm getting to see what manipulative ways work. In any case, I just—it's all to say it's been a long time coming. Because I love you and we've been friends for so long, it feels kind of strange sometimes when my friends haven't been on the show yet.

Briana Wiles:

I know right. We're like—it's like the recluse coming out [crosstalk]

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Thank you. Thank you, truly.

Briana Wiles:

Thank you! Thanks for asking again. I feel like I just needed a couple nudges.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, so here we are. I'm so excited today to chat about piñon. I'm so excited that you're in your beautiful store. I love the way you put together stores. We're going to talk about your store, but first, let's go rewind. You've already kind of talked about it a little bit, 2011 you were like, "Hey, I want to get into herbs." What called you into the plant path? I want to hear all about it.

Briana Wiles:

So, I was always a curious little creature. My mom always leaned a little more natural in her ways of healing. I come from an Italian Irish family, and so grandma and grandpa were like first generation here in America, and so they had a lot of tools, little tricks up their sleeves, like the garlic and the olive oil for earaches. Elderberry was a thing or dandelion greens in the spring, collecting fruits in the woods, like apples and pears in the wild, fruits that my grandpa—he was a land developer, and so he had a lot of properties. We'd go out on these properties that they would then develop into neighborhoods. He'd show us the feral trees. We'd always have a scatter of fruits on his dashboard, and so like grapes then raspberries. He showed us those little things. I don't know. I was always curious.

Through high school that grew, and I got into bodywork and massage therapy, and started getting those modalities done to me at a young age because I was a competitive volleyball player and sore and needed help. I just got curious. I was like, "Wait. What is this hoodoo-voodoo world of touching bodies and healing people, and suggesting plant medicines to rub

on them? What's arnica? Where did that come from? I know chamomile tea." I just started connecting dots I think, and it just became this world where I think I've heard the word "ethnobotany" my freshman year of college. I was like, "That. I want to know what ethnobotany is and I want to study it all," and that set me off in my college. I went to five different schools throughout Michigan and Colorado, but always curated kind of what I wanted to know because of the biology or the plant world and never graduated, but I collected a basketful of knowledge.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Oh, I love that! I love that. What is better than that, really?

Briana Wiles:

I mean, I call it like a "smorgasbord." It was like I showed up to a Kiva fest. I think it was called "Traditions" back then, maybe. I don't remember the first name.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Traditions in Western Herbalism.

Briana Wiles:

Yeah, and so I showed up there, ended up bunking with Lisa Rose. She was my bunkmate. We didn't know each other. There was two other girls in the cabin that were also from Michigan that had jim as a teacher—Camille and Gina. They brought me in. They were like, "Wait, you're a Michigan girl, but you live in Colorado?" I was like, "Yeah," and then we talked about where I was from. Camille was from right up the road, Gina was from not far away, and Lisa was from the other side of the state. They were like, "Do you know jim?" I was like, "No, who is jim?" They're like, "Oh, you got to come meet jim," and so they dragged me to the main lodge and they're like, "This is jim, and he lives in White Lake." I was like, "What? You live 30 minutes away from where I grew up?" He was like, "Where did you grow up?" I'm like, "In Rochester Hills." He's like, "Yeah!" I'm like, "What?" and then we just start chattering and it's jim, so you're like—you feel like you've known him forever. I feel like that—I just—I showed up.

There's so much power in showing up and I think that's such a big piece of herbs in general, and plants in general. It's like you're not going to learn if you don't show up to meet them or show up to use them or—so, I showed up and-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, it makes me wonder, Briana. It's like—obviously, the plants were calling you and you were on this path, and all this stuff is happening, but I—it feels like the 2011 Kiva fest was a huge turning point. You showed up to that. You got—you found your Michigan crew. Oddly enough, I think we were at Ghost Ranch, right? We were at Ghost Ranch, New Mexico.

Briana Wiles:

We were. We were at Ghost Ranch.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

But—so I'm saying I have no doubt that you were already on the path, but it kind of feels like showing up to that conference is an accelerator perhaps.

Briana Wiles:

It was huge because I thought you had to go—I came from the Catholic school world. I'm a Catholic school girl, so I thought you had to go to college. I didn't know how you would learn herbs. I thought Bastyr was the only thing and that's where I had my gears towards, and then I—and I had applied. I was going there. That was the plan—I was going to move to Seattle and go to Bastyr. I was finishing up all my pre-reqs that I needed and I had them defer me for a year so I could finish a couple things, and I was in. And then we went to visit, and I was like, "Oh. I don't know if that feels like where I want to be right now." I'm really sick of academia and I'm really burnt out on it already. I've already been doing it for a few years and Seattle—it was too much for me. I was like, "I don't want to be in this city." I've been in the mountains for a few years at that point. I came from the city so I was pretty grounded in not being there, and then because I went to that conference—I mean I remember—I don't know who it was. It was someone there. I had told her I want to go to Bastyr. She's like, "Why would you do that?" I was like-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Sorry.

Briana Wiles:

She goes, “Do you see who you’re sitting around?” It was at lunch or something, right? I’m just sitting at random tables because I know no one. I was like, “No, I don’t know who I’m sitting around. I know nobody here. I don’t know who Margi Flint—I don’t know anyone is. I don’t know anybody. Kiva means nothing to me. You might—no one meant anything to me. I didn’t know—I didn’t even know there was a group of humans that did this,” and then I somehow end up at that and so it was just okay. She was like, “No, you’re here. You just need to pick who you want to study with.” I was like, “What?” and then I picked jim. And so I traveled from Colorado to Michigan for his nine-month course that he does. He still does it—his linder course—greatest course ever. It set me on my trajectory. This is his plug right here. I went home for the weekends once a month and stayed with my mom and drove 25 minutes with my sister. We took jim’s class, and then from there, I ended up going to Nicaragua with Paul Bergner and Tania and 7Song and Lisa that fall.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I remember that. I remember that because I really wanted to go on that trip, and I remember all your stories about it.

Briana Wiles:

I just wanted—I was like, these are my people! I’m here!

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That is my dream: to go to Michigan once a month for jim. It feels-

Briana Wiles:

I know.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It's my dream, so-

Briana Wiles:

I have a place you can stay. You can come see both of us. We're 30 minutes away from each other.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Okay. Well, that's settled then. Thank you. What a fun story and then, yeah, then somehow we were all friends. That's just how that worked out.

Briana Wiles:

And somehow we all just kind of kept vibing. That really was such a pivotal conference to be a part of and keep going to, and my schedule just got blown out with opening stores, and teaching, and kids. It really set me on my path getting into that with those—such a spread of humans. You really got such a smorgasbord of who was bringing what to the table and still is.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Let's talk about your store—your first store briefly. You opened it in Gunnison, is that right? Gunnison, Colorado?

Briana Wiles:

We opened the first one, actually, in Crested Butte, Colorado.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Crested Butte, actually, yeah.

Briana Wiles:

And that was in 2016, and then two years later, we were doing so well with getting stuff dialed and whatnot. We needed more space for manufacturing, and so we opened a second location

in Gunnison, which is 30 miles south. We had that location until—just last year we closed it down so that we could grow even more and move out to Michigan here where we got ten acres of land. We have a little “herbal homestead” I call it, over there, where we do a lot of manufacturing on the land there, and then we opened the second store here in Romeo, Michigan. The first baby was Crested Butte.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

So, let’s talk Crested Butte then. Why in the world would it—how did this happen? Opening a store is no small feat. It is such a big deal. [crosstalk]

Briana Wiles:

No. I got reminded of that just recently.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Just recently! So, tell me about that. You go to school with jim. You’re going to all these conferences. You’re learning, learning, learning, and then you find out a passion of yours is medicine making?

Briana Wiles:

Yes, it was like you know when you have that spare bedroom in the house and you start adding things to it, and then it just becomes its own living little beast? Well, that was the apothecary. And so, I just kept buying herbs and making things and tinkering around with what I was learning, and using them on people and myself and my husband and the animals, and whoever would let me give them a jar or a tincture or anything. As you’re doing that, lo and behold, you create pantries, and all of a sudden you have a closet filled with bottles. You have more cupboards filled—it gets out of control really quick. I didn’t know that was how that was going to go.

So, then it was like, well, now I have all these things I should just keep making things and make more of them. And then I was like, “The farmers market seems like a pretty cool idea to

see if we can't sell it there because what else am I going to do with all this stuff that now turned into a whole room of our house?" I started the first farmers market in 2011. It was like—or no, 2012 while I was taking jim's class. I was like, "Let's launch it," and so I started selling things in Gunnison and Crested Butte. We did that from 2011 until through the summer of 2016, I think, after that first year that we opened the store because it was kind of like, "Wow! If we can do this in four hours, and this many people are that interested in herbal medicine and we're making that kind of income with just selling these random, little products I'm coming up with from things that I just decided to create because people wanted them or because the plants were there. I wanted to see what the plants could do and vice versa almost. It was a business plan before you knew it. Then we found a "for rent" sign and said we should try to do this everyday.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

You create such beautiful spaces too. I've never gotten to visit one in person, but I watch on social media a lot and you just create these gorgeous spaces. I'm definitely going to see the one in Michigan, I'm sure. If not next year, soon.

Briana Wiles:

Yes, you are. That's a fun part of it. I like—I like the design and making things whimsical and pretty.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, you do a great job. Even when I see you at the conferences now, your booth is so fantastic. Your products are so fantastic. Last year, I fell in love with several things that I got at Great Lakes, notably the kava chill—what is it called?

Briana Wiles:

Elixir? It's a kava elixir.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Elixir, absolutely lovely. It was really, really good.

Briana Wiles:

It's good.

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.

Well, you have roots in Michigan. You have roots in Colorado too, and the plant you've chosen for us is piñon, so I'm feeling the—I'm feeling the Rocky Mountain vibe from that.

Briana Wiles:

I know. I felt like since we were going to have this interview in Michigan, I needed to pull in a touch of Colorado or something. We have a lot of really lovely pines here but piñon is just—she's special. Even today, I had someone come in the store. She was looking for something to bring her sparkle back in a way, and that's what I say piñon does. She was like, "I just need myself back." I was like, "Oh. I really like a combo of tulsi, piñon and lemon balm for that—and milky oats. That's our Elevate Elixir." It's so nice. It just brings you back into self. It brings you that smile and that little sparkly feeling that piñon gives you. I love—I love piñon. I think it's delightful in all ways.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That's so lovely. I grew up in Southwest Utah in St. George. We would get the nuts pretty easily. We'd get them shelled. You buy them shelled. That was such a favorite thing as a kid to

shell them in your mouth and eat the piñon pine nuts. It's a plant that I've long loved. I'm just excited to dive in wherever you would like to dive into.

Briana Wiles:

I picked piñon. Like I said, I picked it to—to show all of its qualities. It's something that can be used internally, externally. Aromatically, it's delightful. You can use it culinarywise as a flavoring. Piñon simple syrup is one of my favorite things on the planet. Adding piñon simple syrup to a cappuccino is like—it's so good. So, it can be something that can be diverse and things you would never even think, like pine with coffee. Why would you do that? But it's amazing, and then-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

But now I have to.

Briana Wiles:

What?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Now, I have to. I don't even know how I'm going to concentrate on the rest of this.

Briana Wiles:

It's so good. And then we distill it, like you can see—I think our still is right behind us. She's kind of wintered up there. We make hydrosols with it. We use the essential oil of it.

What I'm going to show you or talk to you guys about since it's such a hyped thing right now is piñon tallow. Tallow is really, I feel like having its golden age here in the last few years, so we might as well match it with piñon. We make a piñon tallow, that we call our "piñon tallow body oil." Little different than the recipe I gave to you guys. We add a little shea oil to it and I think there's some coconut oil and some jojoba and some other stuff. It's more of a glossy body oil than a thick tallow, but you could do that from this recipe that I gave—give you here—whereas, it's just getting fresh needles. You could do that with piñon if you live in the

area, but you could also do that with any conifer. If you are in Michigan, you could use white pine. You could use any of the firs. You could use Doug fir.

Conifers are delightful and they're super skin-healing. They have this resin that comes out of the branches and the needles or you could just pick the resinous chunks. I like to find the chunks on the forest floor as opposed to picking them straight off the tree, and then you can use that within your oils or your tallows.

Infusing tallow is really similar to infusing an oil. You'll heat up your tallow. You'll add in your fresh cuttings. Fresh is best. If you get dried pine, it's okay but it's just not going to have the aromatics. If you have no pine at all, you could substitute and use piñon essential oil and not do the infusion part with the tallow, and you'd still get a really beautiful product. But you do an oil infusion, so you'd heat your tallow. You chop up your fresh needles and branches, add in any resins that you'd want to, and you'd slowly, gently, on a really low temperature, like on a warm setting of a crock pot or something—I like to make a double boiler. I like to use a jar set into a crock pot with water so that you have a water bath there, so you have a gentle heat, because you could deep fry your needles and we don't want to do that. We're—we're not making fried piñon.

So low heat, gently heat that. You're going to have some water coming out of there because our piñon is fresh and we're going to have to have to work with that a little bit. We're going to heat it for four hours—is all you really need to get those aromatics to trap in there and to get those oils and resins to melt into that tallow. Then you'll strain out your needles and branches, and what will be left behind is our liquid tallow. You're going to want to heat that up again. The reason I heat it up again is because a little bit of moisture is going to be trapped in there from the branches and the twigs. All that moisture usually sinks to the bottom of that jar and you're going to see that look like little discoloration of darker color. Usually, it's a little darker. It looks like water droplets that starts to bead up on the bottom of the jar. And then I decant, so I pour that liquid tallow again into another clean jar. I always like, in this step, to use a nice mesh strain—not mesh strainer, but like a teabag filter/strainer—set up a nice, big

teabag and pour my tallow through there and leave behind any of that trapped liquid at the bottom of the jar. Usually, you got to heat up your tallow again for about 30 minutes to an hour to get that water to trap to the bottom.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Okay.

Briana Wiles:

And then you have this really pretty, nice-smelling infused tallow that you can use by itself as your tallow or you could add other oils in there to make it more liquidy or more glossy or however you want it.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

How do you—do you make your own tallow? Do you buy your tallow? People might be wondering about that.

Briana Wiles:

Tallow—you could buy your own. There's a couple of different companies that will—that sell it that way where you can buy-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Oh really?

Briana Wiles:

Yeah, like if you put in “organic pasture grazed beef tallow bulk” I feel like you can find that. You want to make sure—I like to get it without any sort of preservative in it if I'm doing it that way, if I'm not making it ourselves, so it's as pure as it can be. That's where you want to get picky with it because sometimes if you're ordering them from some bulk herbal companies or bulk places, there'll be a cut of a preservative in your tallow. That's up to you if you want it or not, but I prefer it without—to have it just unadulterated.



When we do our own tallow-making, the steps that go into it—you can either do it as a wet render, which means that you’re using water in there to purify it or you can do it as a dry render where you’re not using any water. What you’re doing is you’re heating up beef fat. Usually, it’s chunks of beef fat with sometimes kidneys stuck to it still because the best fat that we’re getting from the beef is the organ fat. That’s the fat that has the most substance in it that we want for our skin—all the minerals and acids and things like that. You slowly render it, where you slowly heat that fat up and it melts. You watch just the fat melt away from everything, and then you’ll—you can either—sometimes I’ll puree it a little bit in there to get the fat to really blend and to melt or just mix it really well, and then you do some straining. You’ll do a couple of renders of it usually. That’s dry. Sometimes with dry, people will use baking soda or salts in there to pull out some of the odors. Wet rendering, you put a little bit of water in there with your fats, and then you have to do a little bit more work to keep that water out of there. You’re less likely to get spoilage in your render if you don’t use the water. Some people prefer the water because you can take out some more of that beefy smell when you do it that way.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Interesting. I have never done it with water before.

Briana Wiles:

Yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

You kind of alluded to this a little bit, but I realize maybe we should take another step back and be like, “Why would one want to use tallow as opposed to using a plant-based oil?” for example.

Briana Wiles:



Tallow has really gained its hype because I think it's so similar to our sebum—to our oils, in general. It's mammal-for-mammal, as opposed to plant to mammal. It's a mimic of what we have going on. For a lot of people, you'll see that that extra fat barrier is beneficial for their skin. Some people, it's not. Some people really react to it in a bad way. Some people react to it in a good way. That's the thing with the fats. It's not for everybody. They're going to get really hyped up and everyone wants to get into it, and then for some people it's like, "Oh, my God, my whole face broke out. I'm a mess!" For other people, they're like, "I could never live without it." It's healing the skin and it's giving the moisture and that protective skin barrier back a little bit. If you're someone who already has too dry of skin and you're just throwing tallow on your face, those are the people that I see react poorly to it. Whereas, if you're someone who is already using things like hyaluronic acid and you're taking good care of your skin, you have a nice skin barrier where you're not stripping it all the time and harsh with it—you're not stripping away all your oils constantly and making a tough skin. Does that make sense?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, it makes sense.

Briana Wiles:

We don't wash our face with suds over here at Rooted Apothecary. We use oil cleansers because we've learned that suds strip and strip and strip, and then it almost makes the skin barrier firmer. You get flakier skin. It starts to toughen up, and so it becomes more problematic. When you can wash your face with an oil-based cleanser, you're not having all that build-up in your skin, it's just more supple. And then if you follow-up with a hyaluronic where you're actually moistening the skin and making it plumper, when you go to add on the tallow, it's almost providing a barrier to keep all that other hydration locked in and then it's not tripping your skin out.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That was a really great explanation. I'll add another thing that I like about it, is that most of our plant-based oils are—come from far away, and so there is a sustainability issue that I really like with the tallow. I can get tallow literally, down the road-

Briana Wiles:

That's a great point.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Versus-

Briana Wiles:

Yeah, that's what we were doing.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I love shea. I love coconut, but they come from far, far away.

Briana Wiles:

Yeah! It's not—like you said, most of the oils—it's rare, even thinking, even safflower or sunflower—that we're getting them within the United States region anymore. I mean, a lot of times some of the good companies, you can make sure you're ordering US. They have those options for ordering within country or out. You're usually paying more to order within our own country and it's wild. That kind of stuff's important to me and I think that's a really good point. We would get—when we first started doing our tallow products in Colorado, we were getting it from Parker Pastures which is our local, right-down-the-road beef company, and then we just—we needed help with the rendering. It was taking way too much time for us to render it ourselves, but-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Hey, friends. It's Rosalee. If you've been nourished by this podcast, if it has helped you feel more connected to the plants or more grounded in your own herbal path, then I'd love to

invite you to join the Herbs with Rosalee Podcast Circle. This special membership helps make the podcast possible. It supports everything we do behind the scenes, and it gives you a chance to go even deeper with the content that you love. Inside the circle, you'll get exclusive herbal resources, live classes each season with some of my favorite herbal teachers, and a private space to connect with fellow plant lovers. It's where the heart of our herbal community continues to grow. To learn more and join us, visit HerbalPodcastCircle.com. Your support means the world and it helps this podcast continue to bloom.

So, you have—first I'll just mention that you have shared a beautiful recipe of Piñon Tallow and you can download this in the show notes or head over to herbswithrosaleepodcast.com. We have a beautifully illustrated version for you. Briana, you've already walked us through it, but there's all the instructions there, measurements, etc. You can check that out—and you kind of hit that here, here, and here, let's just summarize why would you want to make piñon tallow? Just a quick summary. We talked about tallow being medicine for the skin—yeah, go ahead.

Briana Wiles:

It's healing. We make a piñon lip balm. That's one of my favorite lip balms I've ever used. It's something that is just so good and healing to the skin when it's—like if there's sunburn going on, if there's chapped lips going on, piñon is healing. That resin just—it gets skin to heal. We do a face cream that's got rose and piñon in it. Again, it helps to take out a heat, I feel like. It takes out redness a little bit and it helps to heal the chap, which is my favorite thing. It's antimicrobial. All pines have that antimicrobial segment to them where—they're a pine. They are high-aromatic plant, and so it's got that—that healing power in there.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I love that too. It's like this medicine from the Rocky Mountains where things are dry and easily chapped, intensity there [crosstalk]

Briana Wiles:

We're so close to the sun.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That's lovely. Do you think you work with piñon more internally or externally?

Briana Wiles:

I think externally I use it—we use it more. We have it in a hair—we use it on all parts of the body. We have a hair spritz that's based with piñon-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Wow!

Briana Wiles:

With rosemary. We use it in—like I said in our lip balm. We've got the face cream. We've got the body oil. We've got the tincture that's got the tulsi, milky oats, and lemon balm with the piñon, which is amazing for getting that sparkle to shine right through. What else do we put it in? We put it in our—our Wild About Brine—like our brine packs for salts. We're brining meats and stuff like that.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Whoa! Interesting.

Briana Wiles:

I make soap, we've got piñon soap. I'll chuck it into so many different things, and then the essential oil. We'll put it essential oil blends. Our Clarity blend is really heavy piñon. It's one of those essential oils I like, like rosemary, piñon, and eucalyptus for a cold or any conifer usually. If you need to do a steam inhalation with a pot of water and getting nice and steamy—right now, I feel the kids are all back on the cycle of getting coughs again. It's that change of season, right? You're not here if you're damp or dry. Everything is kind of figuring itself out, so those steams can be really good with those aromatics. Piñon is a nice one.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I can tell you just love piñon so much and you're such an incredible formulator. Some of those options blew my mind a little bit—the brine, especially. I love that you mentioned it as a steam. There's a popular saying in herbalism like, "Better to know how to use one herb in 20 different ways rather than 20 herbs in one way."

Briana Wiles:

It's one of my favorite sayings.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I can see that that's what you're doing with piñon—you love this plant, have worked deeply with it. You have all these different ways of adding it into your daily life. I'm loving it.

Briana Wiles:

It's good. Piñon honey—everyone needs to go make some. We used to make it. I stopped making honeys, but I really need to start making honeys again. Piñon honey is really close to the piñon tallow. I feel like we're going to just give you a second recipe that you need to try if you're trying the tallow. It's like the same thing. You'd cut up fresh pine of any sort, but we prefer piñon and you'd cover it with honey. Warm your honey first, so it's more liquidy to get in there, and then you heat that again, same way as the tallow, on a really low heat. It is so good. You can drizzle that on salmon or blend it into a salad dressing or put it anywhere you put honey—which honey is so versatile. On its own it's another little healing thing and so you could use it medicinally on a wound if you needed to.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That could also go into the coffee or the tea. I'm seeing that too.

Briana Wiles:

Totally.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah. Oh, my gosh. I wish I had piñon nearby. I don't, I know other people won't, but I do have fir.

Briana Wiles:

I know. Me too. I have people mail it to me, so let me know if you want me to mail it to you ever when I'm there.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I'm not going to lie, after this, I'm going to go on the shop and order everything you mentioned. Not joking. Anything else that you would like to share about pine? I know we've covered a lot, so I'm just offering an opportunity if there's any-

Briana Wiles:

I guess the one thing we kind of got there was pine for coughs—like a chest rub. Piñon's another place we use piñon in the shop is a chest rub. Even taking conifers or pine internally when you have a stuck cough, I really like adding those in whether that's a rub on—the tallow could get rubbed on the chest or the back. It helps to get that expectoration—is something that I like with the pines—helping to work out the crud.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I just have this vision or thought, Briana, just thinking you were talking about your grandfather when we started about how your grandparents brought the old ways here. They were into knowing that the land around them was providing wonderful things and you kind of grew up with that. Did your grandparents live long enough to see you in this stage? It's kind of an interesting thing, like you're second generation, right? Is that right?

Briana Wiles:

Yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

You're finding the piñons. You're finding so many plants you have a love for. You're just continuing on that family tradition.

Briana Wiles:

They died mid-80s when I was just getting into it. They both got to watch me get married, and then they got to watch me—I got married in 2010. I started getting into everything right around then, so they got to watch that segue. They did because I started doing—I became a massage therapist at 18, so I would come home and work on them. I was at my grandmother's bedside as she passed away. I was the only one that could get her to respond with little taps and stuff. I would—it was pretty wild watching people trans—watching the transition and being able to still communicate with them in little ways and helpful with the bodywork and the massage. No, they did. They got to experience those sides with me, and they both passed with dementia and Alzheimer's stuff coming in a little bit. I think that was really special as they did get to see that segue and that was something that was—I grew up with one of my aunties who came. She was born in Italy and she was a massage therapist. It's been in our lineage that that's—it's what we did. It was cool to tap back in.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I know. That's true for all of us. No matter—some of us have to look far, far back and use our imaginations to find that connection. That's a really beautiful thing that you have, kind of a living lineage through your family. It just shines through you. You can see, "Oh, this is what Briana was meant to be doing."

Briana Wiles:

No, I mean I have this crazy story that I still—it still trips me out. My nonna lived until she was 102 and I was two years old when she died. She was born in 1885. I was born in 1985. We're 100 years apart.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Wow!

Briana Wiles:

And I remember her funeral. And I remember walking up to her casket and looking inside and just having this thought in my head of all these bottles—old—I didn't know old antique bottles—and trying to figure out how I was going to get her back to life. This was like a foundational—that's one of my first memories. When shamany stuff comes out, you do journey work and stuff, they'd be like, "What's your first memory?" I'm like, "My great grandma's funeral, walking up to the casket, and thinking of these bottles." It's something that seared—I think it was something like very ancestral in our family lineage. Even in the Irish side, my great grandma Bert was also very into herbal medicine. After she died, my cousin gave me all her books. We didn't know that, really, so I got all these loads, crates of herb books that went back to the 1950s or—they were—we didn't know because she really didn't talk about it but they were all kind of doing it, and she was—the Irish, on the Irish side, they were in America longer than, obviously, the Italian side, but [crosstalk]

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Do you still have those books?

Briana Wiles:

Yeah, yeah. I have a lot of really cool, cool things that I've collected.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I will come over. Thanks for the invite.

Briana Wiles:

No, there's like—I've gotten some too that people have dropped off to us at the apothecary, old—like mountainy stuff—handwritten stuff that I'd love to share sometimes because there's some really cool stuff we've collected.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Cool. That's really lovely. Alright, well, I will accept the invitation that I kind of started-

Briana Wiles:

I know! We should get in on that. I don't even know what's in there. It's like—I mean, these journals are leather-bound and wrapped and handwritten.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Oh, wow. Cool! Alright. We'll definitely do that then.

Briana Wiles:

Next date.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Next date. Alright, well, you've just opened a store in Michigan. How's it going?

Briana Wiles:

It's going good. We opened here at the end of November. It's in Romeo, Michigan, which is about—well, it's funny here—it's 32 miles from Detroit. It's about an hour from Detroit if you were to say it that way. We're like on the northern edge of Metro Detroit area. We're in the orchard farm country over here, so it's beautiful. We have all these orchards around us. It's a cute, little historic town. It's been good. It's nice to have a new location to kind of play with and to have different people coming in and spread it that way, and have a little multistate action going on.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, and like I said, you create beautiful spaces with your beautiful formulations.

Briana Wiles:

Thank you. Thank you.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

You said you opened 2016 in Crested, so your ten-year anniversary.

Briana Wiles:

I know. We have our ten-year anniversary coming up in November, so that's super exciting. We have the warmest winter of history go on in Colorado this year, and so here we are. I think it's like 70° there.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Wow.

Briana Wiles:

And it's—yeah, yeah. So crazy warm.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Wow. So, yeah, you've got the shops going. I think you mentioned you might be getting back into teaching after taking a little sabbatical.

Briana Wiles:

Yeah, I took a little sabbatical this last year which felt so nice. I got to get into gardening, and so I started growing flowers and herbs—and wow. It's my new obsession, and so maybe I'll find time for teaching in between my new obsession. We got—I got into teaching some more kid stuff last year with the home school groups around here, and so adding that. It was a lot to open another store. Like I said earlier, I forgot how much it took to open a new store. I thought it would be a little easier because I had done it two times, but then a whole move across the country and doing it was just a little bit more.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

And the plant camps, those are for kids? Is that what that is?

Briana Wiles:

So, we've been calling the kids stuff "The Forest Hours," and so that's been like little couple-hour things for kids that will start back up. I think we had everything from little babies to 13-year olds, that we would have them over at the homestead and they'd come. We have ten acres out there that they can come roam. I would dial in little activities for them, and then Plant Camp is more the adult ones where you come for the weekend and do classes. We have a workshop space in the back of the store here that we're going to set up to do classes out of the store here. There'll be classes that happen in Romeo, and then classes that happen where the homestead is in Metamora. They're about 30 minutes apart from each other, and so I'm going to do a little variance that way. So, if you want to get way hands-on and out in the field, you'll come to the homestead. If you want to do it more class like after hours, it'll be here at the shop. I'm going to get a little rhythm that way going on.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

So glad you're working with the kids because you have the energy for it. You are so-

Briana Wiles:

I love the kids. Kids are like my favorite. I just had two little buddies come in last week. They're like, "Are you going to be doing classes again?" and they're like, "Please?" I was like, "Yeah, yeah," and then Pearl, my youngest, she's like, "When are the kids coming over again?" It's—it's spring here. This is my first spring, by the way, after living in Gunnison for 15—Colorado for 20 years. I'm used to spring coming in June, and so this is the first time I've actually had spring, so Happy Spring Equinox. This is my first time living in the thaw and actually witnessing it.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

What a fun thing. There's something to be said for herbalists. It's always hard to leave behind one ecosystem, but to be in a new ecosystem and just experience things with a new freshness, that's pretty fun.

Briana Wiles:

It's very exciting. Colorado is so cool. Colorado I like that you can chase the seasons where it starts low and ends high, so you can get-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That's where I live too.

Briana Wiles:

Yeah, I love that. That—there's nothing that beats that 'cause you can procrastinate and still be on time, and here that's kind of not the case, so it's a little bit of a different game.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Am I going to see you at Great Lakes this year too?

Briana Wiles:

Yeah, I was literally just thinking about that this morning. I don't know if I'm going to teach or if I just want to vend. I love just hanging out. I loved vending last year and just being around everybody. It was nostalgic.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That's the best part. Big shout out, Great Lakes Herb Faire is what we're talking about.

Briana Wiles:

It's so good.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Like you said, you said yes to the Kiva fest in 2011. You showed up, I did too. It can be transformative to get with people who love plants and just the friendships you make-

Briana Wiles:

And you can just talk. Yeah, you just get to babble out with people who actually understand what you're talking about.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, that's so true. So, Briana, you have the shops. You have all these fun classes. What is the best way for people to find you, connect with you, and just learn more about your offerings?

Briana Wiles:

The best way you keep up-to-date is definitely the newsletter, so getting to the website which is rooted-apothecary.com, enter in your email, submitting that, stay up-to-date with emails. We send out a few a month. We do really great sales and so you want to keep up-to-date on that. We do two a year that are 40% off sales. There's one that's usually the first weekend of April if this is out before then, or there's one in November—end of October-November usually. Those are really great times to stock up and try everything. It's like something that we did during COVID and we never got away from it. We were like, "God, we got to get back to the community. Let everybody shop wholesale!" and then now, it just became a ritual that we open up wholesale shopping twice a year for about three to five days. We let everybody just peel out, and it's a really cool thing. And then you can find us on social media-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I'll also say your newsletters are very fun.

Briana Wiles:

The what?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Your newsletters are very fun. I get them, I read them. They're very fun.

Briana Wiles:

They're fun. You get information. You're not just getting dumped on. You're getting to learn about things. The last one there was a quiz in there for the spring. You learned about chickweed and nettle and plantain and a bunch of plants, and—and then you learn about the products and why you would want the products. They're really educational—is what we try to do and keep them fun. And then social media—we're on Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, but you'll see us most have most heavily on Instagram or TikTok, so it's the best way.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Fantastic.

Briana Wiles:

Yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Well, before you go, Briana, I have one last question for you. That question is, what do you think herbs are especially good at teaching humans right now?

Briana Wiles:

Resilience comes to my mind right off the bat. I feel like that's probably the overplayed world—word that we say for herbs, but I feel like that is what they do. They really are a place that I feel we reach to when we're like—for some people out of options, right? Like that's the first time they even realize that herbs exist is when they've tapped out of the mainstream options and they reach for something different. I think there's a huge resilience to that, and then I also think just in—even if you are someone who uses herbs a lot and you remind yourself of it because you forget and fall off the wagon or something, I think there's resilience in that because they're always there. It's always—it's always something that can fall back, but there's always something I feel like out of the herb world that's going to be there for you that's going to work, even if it's just a little bit. So that, and I think they just—they're stronger than we are. We—we worry about them so much, but yet we watch them busting through



concrete and busting through different places where it's like, "No, they're going to be fine." I mean, except for the endangered things. We got to really protect those. I think that's something that is what's needed right now—is depending on them a little bit more, especially for our nervous systems. There's so much to be said about how freaking awesome milky oats is and how gentle it is at the same time, but how it will transform your brain in a half of a second when you really feel like you're caving down, or the pull of skullcap when you're feeling you could just be like (makes sound), and then you just take that little moment with it. I feel like that's when you get the reminder of how resilient herbs are for themselves and for you to keep you together.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That's so beautiful. As you were talking about it, it's funny I just kept thinking of—I think the same herbs you were thinking of because I definitely was thinking about dandelions, even where you talked about them breaking through the—well, that's what I envision: breaking through the-

Briana Wiles:

I was talking about dandelion. We were-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

You know what's funny? I did not plan this, look what I have next to me.

Briana Wiles:

What is it? The Elevate? Is that the chaga?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It's Kava Elixir.

Briana Wiles:

Oh, the kava! My screen's so tiny.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It's funny. I didn't—I did not even plan that but I also—I have milky oat tops here too. These are the things that get to be around the office. What else do you need? Kava and milky oats.

Briana Wiles:

It's the nervous system. I mean we're all—we all don't know what to think or believe or do or how to help. I think we're in this worldly place of like, "ah." And we got to take care of ourselves. We can try to take care of the whole thing and then burn out or we can learn that we really got to tend to ourselves and the fire in ourselves first, and how to nurture that fire so the fire can stay there—and that's nervines. We're not trying to put out the fire. We all want to keep our fire, but we got to support it. To me, that's like, you got to keep the nervous system strong and healthy so that the fires can still burn because—don't put out the fires. Keep being fiery. Feed it in the right way that it's a healthy fire instead of-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

From one choleric to another, I appreciate this talk a lot.

Briana Wiles:

Yeah! Because I think it's not about shutting down. I don't think that's what a nervine is. I think that's what some people think the nervines are, and then you can talk about blue vervain being like, "Don't burn out on each end of the candlestick." It's like, no, keep burning. Just learn how to burn healthy and choose hardwood instead of the wood that burns really fast.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That's a lot of wisdom to drop here at the end. I really appreciate it too. I have often joked about my relationship with blue vervain because, yeah, I don't want to dampen fires. I do want to keep burning, but I just would keep burning and burning, you know?

Briana Wiles:

You want to keep burning. Yeah, so you got to be—we got to be fed well. It's—it's like those things—those trophorestoratives like milky oats where it's actually restoring the nervous

system. Not just like, letting the fire get fed. It's actually rebuilding it. It's that nourishing milkiness. You can see it where you're like, "Ooh," you're lubing it back up, and then you can burn a little more because we're lubing it back up. It's like an engine.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I love this enabling talk. This is awesome. Thank you.

Briana Wiles:

I'm an enabler. Sanguine-choleric enabler over here.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I love it, Briana.

Briana Wiles:

Who is also on burnout, so it's like—someone who lives in and out of burnout, you got to—you got to know how to feed burnout and exist in it and then get your fire back.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, but you're so right about the nervines. There—they are out here to support us, not to dampen us. I think that's a really great differentiation. I really appreciate that from you. Also, I just really appreciate that after five years you finally said "yes" to me, so thank you.

Briana Wiles:

I know. Thank you for keeping on asking. I just needed a couple nudges to really get in here.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I really appreciate it. It's beautiful and it happened. I'm so happy to hear about piñon and all these delightfully different ways as well. That's been absolutely lovely. Thank you so much.

Briana Wiles:

Thanks for having me. I'm glad you didn't stop asking.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Absolute pleasure.

Briana Wiles:

This was fun. I'm glad we got to chat.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Thank you.

Briana Wiles:

You're welcome.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Thanks so much for listening. You can download your illustrated recipe card from today's episode. Just head 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.

This podcast is made possible in part by our awesome students. This week's Student Spotlight is on Krista Sverdlov in California.

Krista is currently enrolled in the Herbal Energetics Course and had previously joined us for Cooling Inflammation, where she began deepening her relationship with herbs during an especially meaningful season of motherhood. As a full-time caregiver, she's been finding beautiful ways to weave herbalism into her daily rhythms at home.

She worked with nettles during her pregnancy and more recently explored motherwort and marshmallow—growing, preparing, and experiencing them in ways that reflect both curiosity and care. Her reflections are thoughtful and heartfelt, often highlighting how herbs can support not just the body, but the entire experience of daily life.

To honor her contributions, Mountain Rose Herbs is sending Krista a \$50 gift certificate to stock up on their incredible selection of organically and sustainably sourced herbal supplies. Thank you so much, Mountain Rose Herbs, for supporting our amazing students!

And if you'd like to deepen your skills as an herbalist, you can check out my foundational courses at HerbsWithRosalee.com.

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

Piñon pine has a long-standing relationship with one particular bird: the piñon jay. These birds rely on piñon nuts for food, and each year, they gather and bury thousands of them in the soil. They don't recover all those hidden seeds and that's how new piñon trees grow. It's a beautiful example of reciprocity: one species feeding another, and in return, ensuring its future. Like so many plant relationships, it's also a bit fragile. As piñon habitats shift with drought and climate changes, both the trees and the birds are affected. Working with piñon isn't just about resin or the medicine. It's also a small way of stepping into that larger relationship and understanding the greater ecosystem.

Thanks so much for joining me in this episode. I'll see you in the next one.