

AC Hill:

Poke is such a moving herb. You can feel it as like a very stimulating herb.

Isaac Hill:

It's such a useful plant. It's like a generous plant. It's a wonderful food. It's a wonderful medicine. This plant, I want to kind of dispel some of the rumors and the fear, while also saying how to do it correctly so you don't end up poisoning yourself.

AC Hill:

Preparation is key when it comes to poke.

Isaac Hill:

Has this—has this dispelled some of the fear or-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Oh, yeah, totally.

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 AC and Isaac Hill of the Plant Cunnig Podcast. And I'm going to be honest, I was a little nervous about this episode. While I do use poke as medicine, I was feeling pretty hesitant about eating it, but these two are serious poke enthusiasts. They won me over completely. I'm definitely ready for my own poke salad. By the end of this episode, you're going to know which part of the plant to pick, at what stage, what to do with it so it becomes dinner instead of a problem. You're also going to hear why herbalists reach for pokeroot when the lymph is stuck and the gentler plants aren't moving it.

Alright, 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.

AC, Isaac, welcome to the show!

Isaac Hill:

Hi!

AC Hill:

Thank you so much!

Isaac Hill:

Thanks for having us.

AC Hill:

Great to be here!

Rosalee de la Forêt:

For my part, this has been a very long time coming. You had me on your show a while back, and it's been on my mind to have you on my show for a long time. I'm going to be very honest and tell you why it has taken a while: I've never interviewed two people before and I'm a little intimidated, so be kind with my awkwardness. I was chatting with our mutual friend, Mason Hutchison before. He was giving me tips like, "It's okay. You got this."

AC Hill:

You've totally got this.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

So, I'm so glad that I got over my own hurdles. I'm so glad to have you here. It's fun to have podcasters on the show too. I know you each bring your own special gifts and lens, and I'm excited to dive into the plant you've chosen. But before we get there, I would like to hear from each of you about your plant path, what has called you here. AC, I'll turn it over to you first.

AC Hill:

So, I was always into nature as a kid, but I wouldn't really have described myself as a plant person—definitely, animals, loved being outside, love being with animals, being at my auntie's farm. But it wasn't until my twenties that I really got into the plants, and I guess what brought me to it was seeing how effective some of the plants worked on my asthma, and just being like, okay, well, the lobelia really helped me instead of using my fast-acting inhaler, and the mucilaginous effect of the marshmallow really helped me when I was just dry and hacky. I was just trying all these different lung herbs that were super effective, and then I was like, "Okay, what else works?"

I started going to an herbal CSA that had—or it was a regular CSA but they had an herbal portion. It was my favorite part of the week was when I could go and pick the herbs from this farm and get my hands on them, and I made my own little tea blend. I was pretty much hooked after that. I moved to an herb farm, started farming at the Tweefontein Herb Farm in the Hudson Valley. We were going to the Union Square markets and Jackson Heights market in the city, twice a week. It was about two hours north in the Hudson Valley. As I was farming and getting to know the plants and making medicines, I realized how much I didn't know about the plants and about body systems and constituents. People would ask us questions at the farmstand all the time about their health. They'd be like, "Let me show you this rash." I realized that I needed to study up, and so I started studying with a local Ukrainian-American herbalist, Halyna Shepko.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Oh, cool.

AC Hill:

And then I—yeah. She was awesome. She—she had geese. I'm a crazy goose lady now. She—she had this beautiful homestead. It was a United Plant Savers Sanctuary. She taught us about how to use herbs in the kitchen and with our hands making medicine, and so that deepened my studies. Eventually, I did study with 7Song, who is one of my longtime herbalist

mentors, teachers, and someone I've looked up to for years before I could even study with him. That program really helped me to understand some of the more science sides of herbal medicine, the botany side, working with clients, traveling and wildcrafting, and making medicine. It was such a comprehensive program at the Northeast School of Botanical Medicine. I continued to study with him for another six months or so in the Ithaca Free Clinic, which is this wonderful clinic that combines doctors, nurses, massage therapists, Reiki practitioners, herbalists. Got to learn a lot more about that side of the—the consultation side of things.

And now, I continue to grow herbs and make herbal medicines, the same products that I was making at Tweefontein, actually – salves, tinctures, tea blends, balsam rub, lip balm, all sorts of common herbal remedies I still continue to make under my own brand, Traveling Herb Farmer, after a bout of traveling around with my mini school bus, The Butter Bus, with my whole apothecary in there, doing some wildcrafting on the way, stopping at herb farms along the way, vending at different events with my salves, doing first aid on the road a lot. I'd see someone in a parking lot limping and bleeding. I'd be like, "Come on over to my office," and get them on the bus and clean them up. The—the herb path, as we know, is just continuing learning about herbs. Now, I'm really into learning more about aromatherapy. We have a copper still and I've been distilling more and getting into that whole side of things in the herbal world. That's sort of my growing edge in the herb world now, and a little bit about my path.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It's a beautiful unfolding, AC. I was just talking to someone the other day. They were saying a lot of times when you go study something, it's like you go, you sign up for a class, you show up on day one, and then you take your 101 classes and your 201 classes. Obviously, that's like college. I'm just saying you kind of have this like—and everybody kind of does the same thing. Hearing you describe this as just like you were called to the plants, to the CSA, then hands on working on a farm, and then you're like, "I want to learn more and more," and that takes you to Halyna, and that takes you to 7Song, and then you're out traveling in your bus. That is

such—I think that’s what makes herbalism so special and so beautiful. It could be a difficulty for people who might need a more linear path in some ways, but in this way you just followed your inspiration and got to do such cool things, and got to grow in the way you wanted to grow with the plants too.

AC Hill:

Yeah, totally. I hope to just continue to grow with the plants and learn as much as possible as always as all herbalists do.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That is I think the sign of the people who get called to this in such a major way. It’s a never ending story. It’s just a joyful thing that you just keep following. There’s no endpoint.

AC Hill:

There’s no endpoint. It’s also such a blessing too because I don’t lack a sense of purpose. I don’t lack a sense of “What should I be doing with my life?” So many people and my friends do. They kind of dabble in different areas, but with the plants it’s like it so clearly pulled me in, so clearly called me. Once you’re on that plant path, it just opens up so many doors and so many other paths, and you start following a little mycology path. The first aid, and how to use herbs in daily, common ailments, and things like that. There are just so many different routes that the plant path you can take and I hope to explore many more of them.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Lovely.

Hey, there. Just a quick note: if you’d like to hear from me in a more personal way, I’d love to have you in my free text community. I send a couple of texts every week, things like behind-the-scenes updates, herbal thoughts that I’m chewing on, and little sparks of joy I don’t always share anywhere else. To join, just text the word ROOT to 1-509-383-8398, and if you ever want to break up, no hard feelings. Just text STOP to the same number and you’ll be

opted-out immediately. My goal is to make it so juicy and so fun that you look forward to getting my texts each week. Okay, now back to the show.

I want to turn it over to you, Isaac. How has your plant path been leading you here?

Isaac Hill:

So, I was homeschooled as a kid. I did go to high school, but I was homeschooled for the K through 9. I was allowed to be out in the woods as much as I wanted to be. I was also allowed to pick some of my own curriculum. As an eight-year old, I was interested in the wild edible plants in—that’s what—in ponds and in ecology. One of the curriculums I decided to do was learning all the edible wild plants in my woods. I learned—I learned about pokeroot and poke salad. Then at age 8-9, I started eating it. It was actually one of the first wild food that I started consuming amongst black cherries, blackberries, and dandelion—all the other normal things. Poke is actually pretty normal too as a wild food. That was the—from that age I was a plant person. I also—I remember buying half-priced pear trees at Big Lots. I was like, “I want to plant some pear trees. I want to plant—” so I was always interested in gardening and sort of that permaculture end of gardening, the perennials, perennial polycultures before I knew what that meant. Through high school I was maybe more interested in girls and stuff and music.

After I got back from college, I really kind of—I was like, “What am I doing with my life?” My mom had just moved into an acre—a little bit less than an acre further out. She was like, “I want you to plant some stuff here.” I found out about permaculture and I got really interested in permaculture, and started experimenting there and trying to grow all the different plants that I could. I would go busking on the street. I’m also a musician. I would play music and then the money I made I would put into plants.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I love that.

Isaac Hill:

Also, of course, during that, I'm like—as I'm learning what the plants are and how they fit together, what are the crops from plants. A lot of it is food, but a lot of it is medicine, a lot of—what are the medicinal qualities of these plants. Then that's when I actually started working with poke as a medicinal plant, then understanding plants—making tinctures and so on. I wouldn't call myself an herbalist. I don't see—I don't see clients as an herbalist, but I've been practicing herbalism in that way for—for a long time. Making medicine, growing herbal medicine, growing plants. That's kind of been—I've just been following along with that.

We got this place in 2019, went from a little bit less than acre to as—I had some other gardens I worked on with community—community gardens and so on, but now I have 7 ½ acres here. For the last seven years, we've been really plants and lots of stuff. We've got a wonderful botanical garden/permaculture herb farm going on. Also, during that time period, I started studying—you know, I've always been interested in spirituality. In gardening with permaculture, I've always been interested in this magical garden idea too. There's also been this path—a spiritual path for me, and then learning astrology, esotericism and all this kind of stuff too, and seeing how those really intertwine, getting interested in Culpeper and astrological herbalism. That also has been a big part of my—my path. I recently put out *The Zodiac Garden Guide* which is like my zodiac garden guide. Got on—yeah, that's it! Astrological gardening. That's a whole other side of things. So, I'm less of an herbalist and more of a plant person, gardener, and astrologer. I see clients as an astrologer, so she's—that's kind of how—how my path has been.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Thanks for sharing that. I definitely—like if you write a book called *The Zodiac Garden* that's all about growing herbs, you're definitely an herbalist, Isaac, 100%. That's the wonderful thing about herbalism too: there's just no one definition.

AC Hill:

I keep telling him.

Isaac Hill:

I call myself a folk herbalist. I haven't formally studied in a program, but I've been—I've interviewed—we've had 200—almost 250 Plant Cuning Podcast episodes now. I've been interviewing herbalists and learning a lot through that too, but yeah, so I'm a folk herbalist.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I like that. I like that. I just realized I've just made a huge mistake, missed opportunity. I should have had my husband here for this interview because he is really into astrology.

Isaac Hill:

Oh, cool.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

And wild foods. That's kind of his thing. He's into wild foods and sustainable living and astrology. What's interesting about him is he is super—he has a PhD in cognitive psychology. He's really into science, academia and that, but he's really into astrology too. It's an interesting thing with him of his lens—anyway, it would be cool to hear a conversation with you all. That's a missed opportunity. That's next time.

Isaac Hill:

Next time.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That might have added a whole other layer of complexity. I was already nervous about having two people.

AC Hill:

Probably.

Isaac Hill:

We could probably talk for 15 hours about it.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Right, right.

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.

I often, at this point, say, "So, why did you choose the plant you chose for today?" I've already heard a thread now that poke has shown up in your life a lot, Isaac, but feel free to expand on that of like, why poke for today.

Isaac Hill:

I guess one of the first things is that it has been one of my longest long-term plant allies since I was a child. It's—it's such a useful plant. It's a generous plant. You can—it's a wonderful food. It's a wonderful medicine. It's a wonderful dye plant, but it's also poisonous. There's a mysterious nature to it because of the poison, and there's a hesitancy for a lot of people to talk about it because it's seen as a dangerous plant. That's one of the reasons I wanted to talk about it. I hadn't seen anybody talk about it on this—on this—on Herbs with Rosalee before, so I thought, "Hey, we should do that."

It's not only really good, all those things: medicine, food. It's also really common. It's—in the

East half of the US, you can find it from Alabama, in Florida, all the way up to New York in the northeast. We have it growing out here. We're in Zone 4b, zone 5A. Down in the South, it's like a staple green. It's really abundant. It's easy to find. It's easy to ID. It's actually very easy to process as long as you do it well and do it correctly, and consume it. I'd like to—this plant, I want to kind of dispel some of the rumors and the fear, while also saying how to do it correctly so you don't end up poisoning yourself because it *is* poisonous and people have died from poke, but not that many. It's a very—I couldn't really find anybody who has actually—who has, but you'll see it in the literature there have been cases before but, again, it's not very common. That's kind of the reason. It's one of my favorite plants. It's—I think it's a plant that likes people. It is generous. It's abundant and it's not talked about as much as it should be.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I have to say I'm one of those people who's a little—it doesn't grow near me at all that I see anyway. I just live in a super arid climate I think because I see it on the west side where things are more moist. It's one that I'm like—I just haven't—besides working with pokerooroot in—as a medicine like topical medicine, massage, and that kind of stuff. I haven't really worked with it, so when I saw poke come in as your herb of choice, I was like (makes inhaling sound) and then I saw the poke salad and I was like (makes inhaling sound). I'm going to be in rapt attention. You're speaking to me when you're like, “Okay, let's dispel some myths and make people feel safe.” I'm going to be your target audience for this.

AC Hill:

Perfect.

Isaac Hill:

Well, I mean it's important to note straight off the bat, which I've already said: it is poisonous. Definitely, you don't want to just eat it raw. You want to process the leaves if you eat them or the stem, and when you're working with the root as a medicine. It is often used externally, but it has a very long history of being used internally too, but that also has to be processed

correctly. Usually, it's used as a drop dose for a small period of time. You want to talk a little bit about the medicine?

AC Hill:

Yeah. I also am glad to hear about your experience. I was curious what your thoughts on poke were coming in. Thank you for sharing that you're—you're not as familiar with the plant and a little trepidatious because I definitely was told my entire life that that is the poisonous plant that you don't touch, you don't go near, you don't eat the berries. As was a kid—mom, dad, grandparents—it's one of those things that you train the little ones pretty early on.

As herbalists, we are—and even as chefs, we're pretty familiar with plants that we have to prepare in a certain way before eating. Like a potato, you got to cook it before you eat it. Or elderberries, we're not nomming them raw, so we're cooking it down into elderberry syrup or we're making into a tincture. Yeah, there's definitely some preparation. Preparation is key when it comes to poke.

There are different parts of the plants that—the plant that we use for medicine and for food. The leaf is used for food. Isaac is going to explain how to prepare that into a delicious green. The berry is sometimes consumed as medicine by folks who are working with it to—for rheumatoid arthritis and other inflammation, they will swallow a whole berry without chewing the seed. One berry a day. I've never worked with it that way. I feel like that's kind of intense, but a lot of people do. Isaac's like, "Don't worry about it." Then you can use the root for medicine as well. Like you mentioned, topical use of the root in oil or liniment or tincture can be applied topically, or a compress from the decoction of the dried root. Tincture can be taken internally as well in small doses, so it is a pretty potent plant.

It's not one of these that is a nutritive tonic like reishi or something that you're going to "Yeah, anyone can have it, it's great." It's something that you would take in low to drop doses of the tincture preparation with the dried root. When we tinctured it, we did it fresh root, but in some of the books that we have been researching like Jade Botanicals—or *Jade Remedies*,

sorry, and *The Energetics of Western Herbs* by Peter Holmes. People are talking about using just the dried root for a tincture. I think it's a little bit safer when you dry it.

We're also going to recommend dried root tincture about a 1 to 5 ratio, 45%. For anyone who doesn't work with ratios very often—or percentage—that just refers to the amount of root versus the amount of liquid. Like when you're making a rice—a pot of rice, for example. You use one cup of rice to two cups of water. The ratio looks like that. It's like one cup of pokerooroot to five cups of water, except you would be using alcohol. If it's 45%, you can use vodka or you can dilute your organic cane alcohol or Everclear that's 95% down to 45 by adding about half water.

Isaac Hill:

Or poke decoction.

AC Hill:

Yes! Or—so yes, that's another thing we've been doing, is making—instead of using water to dilute the Everclear or the organic cane alcohol is what I use for my tinctures, I've been making a decoction of roots or like a double extract, basically, or a tea if it's something like tulsi or something like that. I've been combining the tea and the tincture based on Mary Blue from Farmacy Herbs recommendation. Years ago at BotanicWise she was like, “I've just been making these hot tinctures. I just started combining. Sometimes I'll make a tincture at 95% and it's too strong to just give straight to someone, so I dilute it to 50% before I bottle it. But instead of diluting with water I've been diluting with tea.” That's another really great way of getting more aromatics and minerals and things that you don't get necessarily get in an alcohol extract.

Isaac Hill:

I think it's really helpful to think of poke as similar to the night—a nightshade because it actually has a lot of similarity to nightshade. It's not—I don't think—it's not part of the nightshade family, but it has fleshier leaves like potatoes and tomatoes and peppers do. It

has some poisonous qualities. Potato—the green parts of potatoes are poisonous and we eat those all the time. It has a fleshy, juicy root similar to-

AC Hill:

Huge root too.

Isaac Hill:

Big root.

AC Hill:

Yeah.

Isaac Hill:

It's similar in some ways to mandrake root or to ashwagandha root. It's similar with the—using fresh or dried root for the tincture. People will use fresh root of ashwagandha sometimes. You're going to remove some of the more negative compounds by drying it first. It can be better to dry those—those kind of roots first. I think of it similar to a nightshade.

It also has that moon and Mars—more that Mars quality to it. It's working on the waters of the body, but it's stimulating. It's anti-viral, antifungal. It increases T cells, so it's got like that—that Mars action too, so yeah, it's a wonderful plant.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I love all your analogies and all your descriptions. The ratio with the rice—that was brilliant. Just a lot of dispelling. It makes such a good point of the potatoes, the greens. We don't eat the greens but we prize the roots, obviously. I would love to hear more about why someone would turn towards poke. You mentioned some things, Isaac. What are we looking for? Why would we—because we talked about it's not reishi medicine. It's not like tonic. It's not nourishing for everybody, so we're going to reach for it for specific indications, I'm guessing.

Isaac Hill:

How I have been working with it for—I don't know—15+ years or so is I use it for my lymphs. When I feel—when I feel something coming on and my lymph nodes are swollen, the first thing I go to is poke, and that helps—helps get that moving. It's also—it's one of the herbs that I'll do if I'm feeling like a sickness coming on with lymph nodes or if there's something in the throat or something like that. I'm feeling like when you first feel that beginning of a sickness, I'll take poke and that will, most of the time, unless I'm too exhausted or something else, you know what I mean, a lot of the time it will knock it out if I get it at the right time. Those are the main reason—main ways that I use it. Again, it's just for a brief period of time just to get the immune system at the top. You don't want to have your immune system stimulated all time, anyway. When you need it, it's a really good immune system stimulant.

AC Hill:

For that tincture amount when you feel something coming on, we'd start with a lower dose, like ten drops or so a few times, three to five times throughout the day. But Isaac has a relationship with the plant and he has worked his way up to half a dropper full or so at a time, right?

Isaac Hill:

The thing is with poke is it's very—it's like different people have different reactions to it, so you want to start with a really low dose and see how you react to it. I can feel it working in me pretty quickly. I can feel where my threshold is, so everyone has to figure that out for themselves. Some people will report nausea or diarrhea—those kind of things from it. Or also, lightheadedness and heart flutters when you're going too much. That's kind of like the—there's a feeling I get that's like a poke feeling when I take it. That's the feeling I want, and then it just moves things out. That's how I use it. It also is used for a lot of other things. You want to talk some about those?

AC Hill:

Yeah, I would say that the main medicinal actions of poke are the lymphatic actions. It's really great for moving fluid congestion and regulating general fluid, like edema and other lymphatic issues like swollen tonsils and swollen lymph nodes. Sometimes we just need a little push to move things through. Poke is such a moving herb. You can feel it as like a very stimulating herb. It can be used as an emetic and actually cause nausea and vomiting. I think the eclectic herbalists would sometimes try it out and would use it in higher doses for as a way—as a purgative to help move things. It's also good for fluid congestion in the lungs, so it's an expectorant. I've had really good luck with it.

I actually remember the first time I ever took a pokeroor tincture. I was in my little mini bus, Butter Bus, at my friend's farm. I had a really bad cough and cold, and somebody gave me some pokeroor tincture, and I was scared of it like you. I was like, "Oh, this is scary!" I just tried a few drops and I could feel this warmth. I tried a few more and it really did kick that cough and cold very quickly with not very much of the tincture. It was immediately incorporated into my medicinal herb cabinet after that.

That expectorant, that lung fluid congestion, that dampness like coughs, as well as just as an immune-stimulating herb. It actually has some constituents that increase the lymphocytes in the body, T cells and B cells. It also has some constituents that are antiviral, so they actually will target viruses. These are both in vitro studies. There's not been a ton of clinical trials with poke, which is I think why a lot of herbalists have maybe steered away from bringing it into the fold as much or working with it. In vitro, there are tons of studies on pokeweed mitogen, the PWM, which helps—is the one that actually will increase those lymphocytes, and on the poke antiviral protein or PAP. There are—those are the main medicinal actions of it.

Isaac Hill:

If you want to see in terms of astrology, astrological herbalism, it's a clear Mars in Cancer or Mars in Pisces herb. Mars in the water signs because-

AC Hill:

Moving the waters.

Isaac Hill:

It's like working on the waters of the body, the interstitial fluid, the lymph, the blood. You could call it the—it was called by the eclectics an alterative.

AC Hill:

Yeah.

Isaac Hill:

So, it's a blood purifier, but it's meeting all these liquids in the body. Pisces and Cancer are both the liquids of the body, and Mars is stimulating. It's like stimulating the fluids of the body. And also, it has been used for swelling in the breasts. That's also a Cancer part of the body. The crab rules the breasts and the stomach.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

You mean you're talking about zodiac when you say "cancer of the body?" Just because that can be confusing a little bit.

Isaac Hill:

Yeah, the zodiac signs of the crab and the fish.

AC Hill:

Yeah, Cancer, Pisces.

Isaac Hill:

The breasts and stomach, and then the feet and the fluids, the ocean. Pisces is the feet, as well as the—the fluids. The Mars in the crab is also—it's stimulating to the breasts in removing those swellings. That's in terms of astrology, that's what you consider it to be.

AC Hill:

One other thing that poke is known for too is skin eruptions and skin ailments as a depurative. That's something that helps to remove waste and toxins from the body, as like the lymphatic system is one of the ways that we remove toxins from the body. A lot of times, toxins get caught up in the skin because the skin is also a way that we remove toxins, in addition to our kidney and liver processing things. I think of poke for eczema and psoriasis, and things like eruptions of the skin. It can be useful topically, as well as internally for a short period of time. When we're talking about taking the tincture of poke or maybe taking a cup to three cups a day of the decoction of the root—dried root, it could be for two weeks at a time. When we're clearing a specific skin eruption or we're moving through a stagnant lymph situation or a cold or flu or a bad cough, and so those are the main medicinal actions. There are some contraindications too. Should I go there next?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Sure. I was—maybe I'll just jump in real quick.

AC Hill:

Sure, yeah!

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That was interesting to hear about the—the Pisces and Cancer and breasts because that's how I mainly used it in practice, was externally as an oil. often combined with other things. For stagnation in the breast where there was mastitis with an infection going on, or swollen glands in the axilla something going on. It was just so amazing for that. It really does move things. We have other lymphatics. We have our cleavers and our chickweed, which are these wonderful spring tonic lymphatics, but poke is needed sometimes. We need our pokes and our red roots, something a little punchier that can really get things going.

AC Hill:

Definitely. Thank you for bringing up red root too. I feel like it's a similar lymphatic action as red root. For folks that are familiar with red root, you can also maybe you think about poke.

Isaac Hill:

In a similar way. I'll also mention-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Really fun hearing these different ways of looking at a plant. I love that. In my own teaching I feel like, "What did the eclectics say? What does research say? What does my friend say?" and look at all of it. This is a really fun way to be like, "Oh! How do we look at that astrologically as well?" So, thanks for bringing all the fun.

Isaac Hill:

It's got this Mars and moon energy influence. It is like that Mars and Cancer. Mars is in the Moon sign. Moon rules Cancer. And then also you could see that moon in Scorpio, which is the moon in the Mars sign because the Scorpio is another water sign, but it's ruling more of the detoxification aspect of things. Moon is also—will generally rule plants with fleshy leaves. It has fleshy leaves. Actually, let me get this little—little—let's get this.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I love we have show and tell now.

Isaac Hill:

Yeah, show and tell. It's got these leaves. They're simple leaves. They're alternate and they're fleshy. If I put this out of water, it will wilt really quickly. That's kind of a moon action. It has this big, white, fleshy taproot. That's another moon thing. Moon also rules nourishing, nutritive leaves too, so it's a good food plant. It's very fleshy. Should we get into the eating part or no?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Let's do—AC was going to head into contraindications before I interrupted her.

AC Hill:

No worries. Just a few contraindications with poke is lactating, pregnant folks, babies, elders. You want to be—be careful with elders. Lymphocytic leukemia—I'm not sure if I'm saying that right, but that was also something that came up in the research. Anyone who's got a very sensitive digestive tract should really use caution with it because if it is an emetic and it has some of these irritating compounds that affects the digestive system, we don't want someone who's like wasting, very—sorry, already has digestive issues and digestive sensitivities; maybe Crohn's and leaky gut, and things like that, maybe use it with caution or just topically so that we're not irritating any of those really sensitive mucosa membranes of the gut. Those are the four main ones.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Thanks for that. Now, for the part that I'm actually really nervous about: eating. The recipe you shared with us is Poke Salad, so how do we do this and how do we do it safely?

AC Hill:

Yeah, poke salad.

Isaac Hill:

First, I'd like to say that poke has been eaten by thousands, if not millions of people—lots of people throughout the history of the world. It was at one point—it might still be sold in cans in the South. You could buy it at the store like spinach because it's such an integral part of people's diets. There is a song written about eating pokeweed that's called "Polk Salad Annie." "Gator got your granny. Everybody said it was a shame because your mama was working on the chain gang."

AC Hill:

Polk salad Annie.

Isaac Hall:

Elvis actually covered that song. It's like—there's actually a pretty-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I had no idea!

Isaac Hill:

There's a pretty strong cultural element of poke in American culture, especially in the South, though it's eaten in this entire range. It's—it definitely has this history of use and I have been eating it my whole life, but you want to prepare it correctly.

There are a few ways to prepare it, but the main thing is you boil it in two changes of water, remove the water, and then fry it up. Let's—let's bring this out here, the stem. Generally, what people eat is this top part. How I like to think about it is in terms of the meristem. This is a concept I got from Samuel Thayer, who is one of the best wild foods educators around. He's written some amazing books, field guides. The meristem is the part that's actively growing. I will eat the part that is still flexible. That part that's still flexible, that up, that's what I'll eat. If it's too hard, I'm not eating that part, but I'll eat the stem and the leaves. Some people—there's a guy named Feral Foraging, who has put some videos out more recently about just eating the stem, and that's also a wonderful thing to do. You take the stem that's still flexible, you peel it, you boil that in just one change of water, and it's very good. Some people just eat the young leaves. I like that stem to young leaves, boiling it in two changes of water, and then frying it up. Now, there are some things that you want to make sure. You want to harvest it while it's still young. The main thing is when it's flexible like that, that's the part you're eating. You don't want it when it has a red stem. You'll see at the bottom here, there's a little bit of red. That one's red. Here, this is a red. This is—this is the stage that you don't want to eat it at

that, and you see it's already forming the berries, then it's got this red stem. It's hard. It's not—that's—you can't-

AC Hill:

You can't bend it.

Isaac Hill:

You can't bend it.

AC Hill:

It just breaks.

Isaac Hill:

This is the mature poke. This is a young poke. This is what you're eating. Generally, I will, if it's flowering—there's—you can see a little bit of flower there. I'll just take that off when I'm eating it, but this will be good. And then you just harvest that, boil it in the water, pour out the water, rinse it, fill it up again, boil it again, pour it out, and then fry it up in fat. That's very crucial part – frying it up in nice fat butter, lard-

AC Hill:

Cooking oil.

Isaac Hill:

A little salt, it makes it—but it's so good.

AC Hill:

It's so good.

Isaac Hill:

It's like—I crave it in the spring.

AC Hill:

I want it right now.

Isaac Hill:

The other thing though is there's—my body only wants a certain amount of it. I'll probably eat poke three—three or four times every year. I'm not eating it every day. Some people do eat it everyday, but for me, I want a certain amount of it. You'll feel this kind of acrid taste in the back of your throat if you eat too much of it, or if you haven't boiled the leaves enough, you'll feel this acidity. It doesn't taste good, but there's—and a little bit of it actually, I kind of do like, just a little bit.

AC Hill:

Like things are moving.

Isaac Hill:

Things are moving. That's another thing you can tell. If it's not, it's going to be too much. The thing is with that amount of poke, if you boil in two changes of water, even if there's some acidity there, you're not going to—it's not going to be enough to do anything bad. You might have some nausea, but generally, the fatal doses are from eating a root. You know what I mean? It's like you need it to eat the root or eat a bunch of seeds or something, as far as I'm aware of. Some of the leaves aren't—the poison that will cause would be maybe purgative.

AC Hill:

You might throw up four or five times and that's the end of it, but I've never—we've never thrown up from it, but just from reading-

Isaac Hill:

I've never even felt any intestinal discomfort from it.

AC Hill:

Reading about the eclectics using it as a purgative, they would say, “Okay, we’re trying to make this person throw up,” and they threw up four times, and it wasn’t any worse than any other emetic herbs.

Isaac Hill:

There was one of these studies that was saying people who have a toxic amount they purged, and then it increased their T cells by fourfold. It has an effect.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Sometimes the emetic is the medicine.

Isaac Hill:

Right. So, and the Feral Foraging guy, he says that he really likes the stem the best. If you peel the stem, it gets rid of a lot of those compounds. More of the compounds are in the leaf than in the fleshy stem. It’s a very good way to do it too. I like a little bit of that—that bite.

AC Hill:

The leaf, it’s just so good. It’s—the consistency and mouthfeel is just softer than any other green compared to kale or Swiss chard. It’s more on the spinach side of things, and the stems more giving asparagus.

Isaac Hill:

Yeah.

AC Hill:

But it’s—it’s really good at sopping up the butter or olive oil. It just—it tastes so good. Like Isaac says, you don’t need a huge amount of it. A lot of wild foods are like that – a little bit is satisfying. My body definitely craves it. It’s something I look forward to every spring as part of, like you were saying, chickweed and—what was the other one? Cleavers.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Cleavers and poke!

AC Hill:

Yeah, yeah.

Isaac Hill:

That's kind of like—it's interesting how nature brings these plants forth throughout the spring. Out here we get the ramps, and then—first, that's kind of like the stimulation, and then the cleavers, and the nettle, or ramps and nettle, then cleavers, and then the poke is a little bit later on for us. There have been stories that people will get a root and they'll put in their cellar and they'll force it, the shoots. People—I actually know a lot of people who wild cultivate it, or the permaculture herb farm where I got my permaculture design course, one of the fellows there, he would have these big poke plants—*big* poke plant. He would put manure all around it. He will harvest his poke in the spring and then put more—he would take care of it, cultivate it as a poke, just like he did with asparagus. That's kind of how I do it too. I have my poke plants in these little spots and I make sure I mulch them and give them some nice—nice stuff.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That's like a second harvest then? You're kind of hoping more nutrients, more harvest?

Isaac Hill:

Yeah, and bigger harvests too in the spring, and it will have like this big, big, thick growth, a lot of green, juicy growth, and that's what you want. This is—this is good. This is a first year seedling. Poke is a perennial. It will get bigger and bigger every year. This is one year. Eventually, they can be 8 feet tall, up to 10 feet tall sometimes. I've seen them huge, huge and gorgeous with these long, dangling racemes of purple berries [crosstalk]

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I love those berries. They're so pretty.

AC Hill:

Stunning plant. Big, fat root like the size of your leg.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

When you say that, I realize I've never seen pokeroot. I've always just bought it, and then made medicine with it, but I've never harvested it, which is rare that I haven't seen the actual plant medicine, but I really haven't.

AC Hill:

Yeah, it doesn't grow around you so it makes sense.

Isaac Hill:

It's very big and hard to dig. Very big and hard to dig if you get a big one.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Which, to be honest, probably means I wouldn't anyway. I often do that – look at the effort put in and think I could probably pay a farmer for that.

AC Hill:

Yeah, and if it's better dried anyway, might as well get it from your farmer friend.

Isaac Hill:

I also like, if I'm going to dig the root, I like taking a second or third year poke. The first year is a little bit smaller and that would be very easy, but it would be very small. If you have like a five-year plant, they're going to be so big. You have to have dig all around it.

AC Hill:

Which we—we did that seven years ago and I still have that same poke tincture, so now-

Isaac Hill:

We're about done with that.

AC Hill:

Now, it's time to make a new one this fall, but that's [crosstalk]

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That's a good investment.

AC Hill:

You do that once and it was not even a large jar. It was fairly-

Isaac Hill:

That's also the thing about the drop doses and the small doses. It's like you don't go through it nearly as fast.

AC Hill:

Yeah, and there's less uses for it compared to reishi or hawthorn that just goes to everybody.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Right.

Isaac Hill:

Has this—has this dispelled some of the fear or-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Oh, yeah. Totally! Thank you so much for sharing the recipe. It's very clear. It seems very doable. I just need actual poke plant now, that's all, but I would be absolutely willing to do

this, or to head to New York and have you do it for me. Either or, I'm open to it. It sounds great. Thanks for sharing that. For listeners, you can download your beautifully illustrated copy. Just check out the show notes, get the link for that. Thanks again for sharing this.

Isaac Hill:

The other thing that we haven't talked about so much is the berry.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah.

Isaac Hill:

We said that it has been used for rheumatoid. That is—that's also something. I don't have rheumatoid, but I've heard of people who will do that. They'll dry a bunch of berries, and they'll just have one berry swallowed a day for rheumatoid. That's just another thing to be aware of, but the berries are also a wonderful dye. They have this incredible purple color. It's like the most incredible color that-

AC Hill:

It's gorgeous.

Isaac Hill:

That you can see out there in the world. It's got just so many, so many wonderful gifts.

AC Hill:

You use it sometimes for a magical ink, right?

Isaac Hill:

Yeah. It does also have a history of use as a magical plant. Poke is a very potent plant. Again, with the Martial signification it is used more for purification, hex-breaking, getting rid of malefic influences, that kind of a thing—that kind of Martial influence. The berry ink has been

used for making magical petitions or for magical diaries or letters or talismans. It's a good—it's similar to blood in a certain way. It's a little bit more purple, but it's got that juice, so yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I could see that. They're so compelling and so juicy, and yeah. Thanks for sharing so much about poke. That was very illuminating. Is there anything else before we move on? No pressure. You've already shared so much. Just don't want to cut you off if there's anything else hanging in the rafters.

AC Hill:

The only other thing I would say is that we're mostly working with the *Phytolacca americana*, the plant that grows around us. There's also in Chinese medicine, the *Phytolacca acinosa*, the Asian poke, also known as Zhang Liu. They're very similar in actions and uses, but there's a few differences, so you can work with both.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Nice.

Isaac Hill:

I believe there's another—I believe there's another species in the Southwest as well.

AC Hill:

The *Phytolacca decandra*. I think it's synonymous with the *Phytolacca americana*.

Isaac Hill:

Okay.

AC Hill:

Maybe there—oh yeah, there is the other one. I just haven't met it yet, but I think there's one that the berry looks a little different.

Isaac Hill:

It's a genus that's around.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Thanks again for sharing about poke. The question that's on my mind right now is the two of you are married, did the plants bring you together? What is your story?

AC Hill:

It was—it was definitely an appealing factor to learn that Isaac was a plant guy. I met him as a musician more. We were both traveling. He was a traveling musician. I was a traveling herb witch.

Isaac Hill:

Herb farmer.

AC Hill:

Traveling herb farmer, yeah. We met a few times, once at a Rainbow Gathering in Vermont, and then again at a DIY house punk show with the Rail Yard Ghosts, one of our friend's bands, playing, and I kind of caught eyes with him. I was like, "Who is this cute guy with his weird instrument?" Then when I was in herb school with 7Song, his band came and played at our house, and then he started dropping Latin names of plants and I was like, "Ooh! He just keeps getting better."

Rosalee de la Forêt:

You know how to woo a lady, Isaac. Nothing like Latin binomials.

Isaac Hill:

"Oh, those are pawpaws! *Asimina triloba*."

AC Hill:

He cooks and he plays music and he's a gardener, so he's just checking off all the boxes.

Isaac Hill:

Then she—my band was putting out an album for a release show, and she drove seven hours to come see the band, and then that's when we kind of got together more officially. I took her to the forest garden, and then that I think I was like, "Yeah. I got all these herbs here. Want to collaborate?"

AC Hill:

So the plants definitely brought us—brought us closer. We have a few different things that are in common with each other, and the plants definitely were playing their role. I think our ancestors too were working their magic bringing us together.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I would love to hear about the start of the Plant Cuning Podcast too. How long ago did that start and how was that vision created?

Isaac Hill:

It was 2020. I don't know if you remember 2020, but there wasn't as much like socialization happening. At that time, I was like—I wasn't playing shows and-

AC Hill:

And I wasn't doing any markets. I was in between farmers markets because they weren't accepting new vendors where we just moved.

Isaac Hill:

I had been listening to—I'm like, I was really interested in some podcasts. I want to make a podcast! I want to talk to these people. It seemed to me like, hey, a podcast we can do that here. We can just do it and then we can—we have an excuse to talk to people that we want to

talk to. We ended up—I’m just emailing people. I emailed Stephen Harrod Buhner, and he was like, “Sure!” and I interviewed Stephen Harrod Buhner while he was alive. It’s one of our early episodes. People liked that. People that I had read their books, and I was like, “I would love to talk to them about this book.” That’s kind of how it started. I just emailed people and set shows up and recorded them. It was in a lot of ways a good excuse to get to know these heroes, the people who had influenced my thinking, and to learn.

AC Hill:

The learning part was really it for me, just getting a chance to talk to all these different people who are experts in their fields and doing inspiring things in the world, as well as some of our friends too in uplifting and highlighting some of our friends that maybe the wider world doesn’t get to talk to on a regular basis. It’s interesting because I’m not great at improv or speaking on the fly. I have a little bit of dyslexia thing. Sometimes I mix up my words. I’m not a likely candidate for hosting a podcast, but I—I’ve learned a lot through the process. Isaac kind of gave me some confidence. I think having a partner to do it with makes it a lot more doable, so I probably wouldn’t have launched a podcast by myself without Isaac’s instigation and his dedication. I’m wondering if you’ve experienced this too. You do get—it gets easier over time. I used to come with all these notes and a million questions, and all this preparation, and now, I’m able to just have a few little bullet point things, and run with it as an organic conversation. Being able to learn and grow has been the main reasons that I’ve been doing and sticking with it. It’s also fun.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I felt like that with this episode, honestly. It felt like my personal pokeroor—poke plant class, so thank you. Please tell me more.

AC Hill:

That’s cool, because I bet with other plants you’re like “Yeah, I know all about tulsi.”

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Every single one. I recently had someone, Lindsey Feldpausch, come and talk about violet. I didn't approach it like I know everything about violet, but I was like, this is one of my very favorite plants, and she blew my mind! I feel like every single one is—I learn so much. And then I also get super excited about every single one too, which is both a blessing and a curse because then I have these podcasts. Sometimes I'll record three podcasts in a week, and that's three herbs that I have to get in my life right now. Every single time I'm like, "I need this herb."

AC Hill:

You're like, "I'm going to have to schedule my trip to New York for some poke salad."

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Pretty much. Thanks for entertaining those questions for me. I know you also have some other things going on. AC, tell me about what you're doing with your herbal offerings these days.

AC Hill:

Going off the podcast, first of all, is we do have the Plant Cuning Conference, and that's a great way of continuing the herbal learning too, and putting in that in-person side of the podcast because—I don't know about you, but sometimes we put these episodes out and we don't really know who's listening, and don't really know who it's landing with unless someone makes a comment or emails us or something, so we wanted to have an in-person element to what we were doing with this Plant Cuning Podcast work. We have the conference that's at our farm. We'll probably be doing it again next year.

Isaac Hill:

This last we had it July 24th to 26th this year. We had 7Song, Kate Gilday, Tammi Sweet, and some other amazing herbalists speaking, Amelia South. And it's also great to have that regional side too because with the podcast, there's this kind of a global thing where you're

interacting with people who are all over the world, which is awesome. It's really awesome, but it's also awesome to have connections with people who live around you too. That's another nice thing about having a conference. It's holding down more of that local regional space.

AC Hill:

Right.

Isaac Hill:

We'll see about next year when—we'll be releasing the dates for that soon if we do it.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Sounds like you're committed. I'm going to make a bet.

AC Hill:

We're still in the recovery phase [crosstalk]

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That's fair, that's fair.

AC Hill:

And then, yeah, after the conference this year, we went right into herb camp which was hosted by myself and Gabriel Mojay, who is my business partner with the Actaea Institute of Herbal Medicine & Aromatherapy. That was our hands-on, in-person component to our class which we also offer an online eight-month program, which is pretty much every Sunday, except for some holidays and times off. It's live, online, very lively as well. We do a lot of interactive activities. Everybody's got their camera on and sharing. We find ways to make it really fun because I'm a hands-on herbalist type teacher. I like to do demos. I like to do things with my hands, so it is a challenge to do that through the internet. It is a challenge to have an experience with your classmates through the internet. We go totally above and beyond with

making sure that it is an exciting and fun live experience. Not just like, “Here’s your video recordings. Hope you watch it one day.”

That type of class, I’ve taken a lot of them. They’re great to have as resources, but I lack some of the motivation. I really thrive in community, so with the Actaea Institute, we really focus on that side of things and we are taking students for the fall. For the Actaea, the second—it’s our second year of Gabriel and I teaching. He’s an aromatherapist, an herbalist in the TCM tradition, and I’ve studied more in so-called “Western herbal tradition,” 7Song and other teachers. As a farmer and herbalist, community herbalist, I do a lot of medicine making and growing. We talk about wildcrafting and medicine making. We also get into the clinical side. We have a bunch of clinical case studies.

Isaac Hill:

It’s comprehensive.

AC Hill:

It’s pretty comprehensive. That’s my new growing edge, is stepping more into that role as a teacher, which is really exciting because I’ve made probably 10,000 salves in my life. I just—I’ve made so much medicine and I don’t necessarily think—I don’t see myself as going into the product-maker-forever type thing where I expand to become like Woodland Essence or Deb Soule or Avena Botanicals where it’s like that’s my—the product-making is really the thing for me. It’s like I make the products because I love to work with the plant medicines and I like to have the products and have the tinctures, and know the quality of the herbs that I’m using. I can’t really ever give that up, but the teaching is what’s lighting me up. That’s been really exciting and expand that as I’ve been in my Jupiter era—as my astrologer has told me, I’ve stepped from a 17-year Saturn period into a two-year Jupiter period, and that’s when I started this herb school. It’s pretty cool.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That's wonderful. We'll have a link for that in the show notes so people can check it out easily. Thanks for sharing about that. Isaac, you've got a new book out, *The Zodiac Garden Guide*. I've

been going through this book and I love how approachable it is. Actually, it's super—you can pick up this book and get something out of it immediately. Even in your introduction, just the way you talk about gardening as a spiritual experience, pulling in different aspects of that. I really liked the innards of looking at what plants to plant for the zodiac. What gave you the idea to start this book or the inspiration, I guess, to actually do it because there's one thing to have the idea, there's another thing to do it?

Isaac Hill:

I guess part of it is that I've been thinking about it for a while. I remember studying permaculture and just really having this idea about magical gardens. How do you actually make a magical garden? What does that even mean? A garden where the sum—the sum is more than the parts, where there's this—it has—there's spiritual potency. The thing is that there are magical gardens all over the world. They're part of the culture but they're not as much lately like in the last couple of—last couple of hundred years. But there's still, there are still plenty of monastery gardens, all these kind of gardens. The zodiac gardens actually are a thing. They have been a thing, but they're, again, not so common. I wasn't able to find examples of them. There are a few examples, but not any that satisfied me. For me, it was a process of figuring out how to actually do it and make a zodiac garden, digging into the traditional correspondences, like digging into Culpeper, and that side of things, as well the Vedic text—trained Vedic astrologers as well. There are some really amazing techniques in Vedic astrology for astrological gardening. Digging into the source material and making my version of it, which the way I see it, it's not as much—it's like innovating within a tradition. This is a traditional concept, but we don't have any examples of it. I figure, hey, who else is going to do this? I might as well do it. I want to do it, so I did it. While I was doing it, while the notes were fresh, I was like, better write this into a book or it's not going to happen.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah.

Isaac Hill:

While that fire was there, while it's still fresh, I wrote this book out to help other people. If other people are interested in making their zodiac garden, they can do that. It's also—I also see it as a—you don't have to build a zodiac garden to get something out of the book. It's also-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah!

Isaac Hill:

A template for learning about how plants and humans and planets and signs interact. It's like a teaching tool.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I felt that going through it. I felt many layers of learning, and that's why it's just so approachable because there is—even if I never plant a zodiac garden, there's so much to take away and just insights into the plants themselves.

Isaac Hill:

Thank you. I'm glad that—that you found it because that was my goal too: to make it something that's approachable that anybody can pick up and get something out of. But then there are also some things in there that are for advanced astrologers, as well. There are techniques in there that I don't think—I haven't seen anybody talk about. Everybody can get something out of it whether you're more of an herbalist, more of an astrologer, more of a gardener. It's kind of the intersection of all those.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I'm definitely going to pass this on to my husband, so thanks too. I also want to point people towards the HerbRally podcast. You were recently on there, Isaac, with Mason, my good friend and also my business partner. You did a whole episode with that. I think there was more focus on this, so folks can go to check out that as well.

I have one last question before I let you all go, if you don't mind. That question is: what is one remedy that you would be really sad to be without?

Isaac Hill:

I'm going to have to say pokeroot.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I saw that coming. But the thing is it's—specifically, a remedy. Would you say—I'm going to make—I'm just going to make you really dial it down here. You have to choose. Is it pokeroot infused oil, pokeroot tincture, pokeroot decoction? I'm going to—I'm going to just be a stickler on this one.

Isaac Hill:

Pokeroot tincture.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Tincture, alright.

Isaac Hill:

I really—it has been one of my longest-standing, like if I feel like I'm getting sick, I take some of that so it's like—and that's a really helpful thing to have.

AC Hill:

On brand.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, on brand.

AC Hill:

For me, it's my skin salve. I know it's simple. A lot of people make different types of salves. I make a calendula and comfrey-infused skin salve with coconut oil and olive oil and beeswax. It's something I literally use everyday. I use it for moisturizing. I use it for mascara remover, for the tips of my curls to keep them less frizzy.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I like it.

AC Hill:

For first aid, like cuts and scrapes, and things like that. I have a bunch of—I have to keep making it because my bestie uses it everyday. My mom uses it everyday. Many clients-

Isaac Hill:

I use it a lot too.

AC Hill:

Yes. And the consistency is just right because a lot of times, herbal salves are like you got to dig in and use your fingernail and get in there. This is not like that, it's just very soft.

Isaac Hill:

Has a ratio of beeswax to oil-

AC Hill:

Have the ratio down. I would be remiss without—if that's out.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

This feels very on-brand for you too, AC, because you said, “I make—I made over 10,000 salves in my life.” I love it. Then you’ve nailed it so well that this is the remedy you would genuinely too sad to be without.

AC Hill:

And my burning name—my burning man name was “Savvy,” the one year I went to Burning Man because I’m like, “Hi, I’m AC and I brought some salve to share!” I’m like, “I’m Savvy.”

Isaac Hill:

I was going to say the salve, not the poke, so that’s good. [crosstalk]

Rosalee de la Forêt:

The two of you here, you got to balance it out.

Isaac Hill:

I feel like that’s one of her best—the medicine. She makes the salve—it’s special. It’s really good and that’s why, also with the farmers markets, people keep coming back. They want that salve. Everyone has their own recipe too, but I think hers is particularly excellent.

AC Hill:

Thanks.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Non-biased opinion from Isaac. This has been so lovely. Thanks for making it so easy on me. It was very easy to get both of you in the interview process. I just heard great things about poke, and hearing your stories was lovely too. It’s just been great to hang out with you.

AC Hill:

You too, you’re awesome! We appreciate you.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Thanks. Until next time which might be next spring because you're making me poke salad.

AC Hill:

Exactly! Come on down.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Thanks again.

AC Hill:

Thank you. Bye.

Isaac Hill:

Bye!

Rosalee de la Forêt:

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

This podcast is made possible in part by our awesome students. This week's Student Spotlight is on Sarah Facteau in New York. Sarah is a part of this year's Rooted Medicine Circle and The Healing Power of Teas. She brings a wonderfully curious and attentive spirit to her herbal journey, carefully observing the colors, the aromas, flavors, and subtle differences that emerge through medicine making. She also really enriches our community by sharing super thoughtful reflections, meaningful plant stories, and insights about interconnectedness that inspire others to see plants and themselves in new ways. To honor her contributions, Mountain Rose Herbs is sending Sarah a \$50 gift certificate to stock up on their incredible

selection of organically and sustainably sourced herbal supplies. Thank you so much to Mountain Rose Herbs for supporting our amazing students.

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

A few months back, a friend of mine came to me with a swollen lymph node just beneath her ear. It was hard and it hurt. She had already been to her doctor who told her it would resolve on its own and to use compresses in the meantime. Well, she had been doing that faithfully, but it was taking its sweet time and she asked me whether any herbs out there might help things along. I gave her a tincture blend. It had a small amount of poke in it. She took that internally and applied it externally too, and she kept up with those warm compresses her doctor had recommended, and within a day, the lump had gone down dramatically. So, nothing like the pleasure of seeing herbs work so fast, and that's exactly what AC and Isaac were describing. Poke is not a gentle, nourishing lymphatic. It's what you reach for when something is really stuck, and a very small amount of it did a great deal of work in this situation.

As always, thanks for joining me. I'll see you in the next episode.