



**Rosalee de la Forêt:**

Hello, everyone, it's Rosalee and Emily here.

**Emily Han:**

Hi, everyone.

**Rosalee de la Forêt:**

Welcome to our webinar on How to Choose Herbal Preparations. We're going to officially get started in just a minute or two. We're just waiting for folks to log on for a little bit. But while we wait, we invite you to settle into the presentation. You might want to grab a notebook, a pencil, or however you like to take notes, because we have a lot of information for you about herbal preparations, whether it's teas, tinctures, syrups, and so much more.

**Emily Han:**

It's a really highly visual presentation, so you'll really get the most out of it if you give us your full attention. If you're scrolling through social media or otherwise dividing your attention, you might miss a lot. So, we also want to let you know that this webinar is sponsored by Rooted Medicine Circle, which is our online medicine making course, and we'll share more about that soon. Anything else, Rosalee?

**Rosalee de la Forêt:**

I don't think so.

**Emily Han:**

Okay, let's get started. Welcome. We're so glad you're here. We're excited to share a topic that is both frequently overlooked and filled with lots of myths and misunderstandings. A lot of the information you find online is about what an herb is used for, but not how to best prepare it for you and your particular needs.

If you've ever wondered about when it's best to reach for an herbal tincture over a tea or vice versa, then you're in the right spot. Our intention is that by the end of this presentation, you'll be able to confidently choose the best herbal preparation for you, which then helps you successfully care for your well-being and the health of your loved ones and community.

Before diving into the pros and cons of various herbal medicines like teas and tinctures, let's back up and ask the larger question. What makes exceptional herbal medicine? Because whether we use a tea or a tincture or any other herbal preparation, we first want to know that it's of the highest quality.



The answer to this question depends on who you ask. If you ask someone focused on western science, they might respond that the amount or type of chemicals that you extract from the plants is what makes really good herbal medicine. For example, curcumin extracted from turmeric.

If you ask someone who mainly worked with plant spirit medicine, they might say that exceptional herbal medicine comes from engaging plants on an energetic level. Flower essences could be an example. Humans have worked with plant medicines for millennia, and those are just a couple of perspectives within a multitude of cultural and scientific traditions.

What we're excited to share in this training is that exceptional herbal medicine isn't simply about the herbs you use or the preparation you make. Exceptional herbal medicine integrates three important aspects: connection, empowerment, and healing.

#### **Rosalee de la Forêt:**

Unfortunately, in today's busy world, convenience is often favored above all else. That's why there are some very different forms of herbal medicine out there today. There's herbal medicine that looks like this, where herbs are a commodity, something that's just bought and sold without much connection to the plants, where those plants grow, what they look like through the seasons.

Or, even to the medicine makers themselves. And there's herbal medicine that looks like this, medicine that has been carefully created by you. But before we continue, let's introduce ourselves. I'm Rosalee de la Forêt.

#### **Emily Han:**

And I'm Emily Han. Together, we are the authors of the book, *Wild Remedies*. Rosalee is passionate about inspiring you to enjoy plants every single day, whether it's marveling at their beauty, or using their gifts as food and medicine. She is the best-selling author of the books, *Alchemy of Herbs* and *Wild Remedies*, and a registered herbalist with the American Herbalist Guild.

In addition to writing books, Rosalee has taught thousands of students about herbs through her podcast, YouTube channel and online courses. Rosalee lives in a log cabin in the northeastern Cascades of Washington State with her husband.

#### **Rosalee de la Forêt:**

From teaching nature workshops to creating botanical recipes, Emily helps people cultivate their connection to the earth. Emily's work focuses on intersections of nature, culture, food, and plant medicine, and she's particularly interested in relationships between plants and



insects, as well as kinship with the earth's tiny wonders, from lichens and slime molds to gall wasps and slugs.

Emily weaves her multiracial and multi-ethnic background into her work and is committed to social and environmental justice. She lives in Los Angeles and is the author of *Wild Remedies* and *Wild Drinks and Cocktails*. So, here's a look at what we're going to cover in this presentation.

In part one, we'll begin looking at how we can practically grow our sense of connection and empowerment with herbal medicines. Then, we'll start to look at various herbal preparations, including the pros and cons of teas and decoctions. After part one, we're introducing our online course, Rooted Medicine Circle.

This course bridges the gap between nature connection and medicine-making and helps you become a confident home herbalist. In part two, we'll look at some other forms of herbal medicine, including syrups, infused honeys, and powders and capsules. You're going to find out when you might want to reach for one of these herbal preparations and some of our favorite herbs to use in making them.

And finally, in part three, we'll look at the advantages and disadvantages of some of the most popular herbal medicines, like tinctures or alcohol extracts, as well as vinegars. In this section, we'll also be debunking some common myths and misunderstandings about these herbal preparations, like can hot water really remove the alcohol in a tincture?

Or, are alcohol tinctures and vinegars essentially the same thing? We're going to cover that. All right, let's dive in and take a closer look at how herbal medicine can connect and empower. And to do that, I'd like to share a story about my own journey as an herbal medicine maker.

The very first herbal medicine I ever made was an Arnica salve to help with injuries like bruises and sprains. I'd just taken a class on how to make salves, and I was just super inspired to make it on my own. So, I went to a local supply store that sold bulk herbs and ingredients.

I bought dried Arnica flowers, oil, beeswax, tins to store it in, basically everything I needed. And I started making the salve right away. And I loved making it. In fact, I loved it so much, I made a lot of it. And I started giving it away to friends, like people give away zucchinis in August.

In other words, I wasn't really sure they wanted the salve, but I needed to offload it because I made so much of it. And looking back, I can see my beginner mistakes. I definitely made way too much. And my infused oil, knowing how I made it back then, just wasn't super strong.

And my techniques, they could have been better and all. But I'm so grateful that I got started because having fun and loving that experience is what started me on the path that's led me to where I am today. I've continued to make Arnica infused oils and salves for the past 20 years.



But now, my approach is very different from that first time. Now, it begins with the plants themselves. And it always begins in the spring. In late April and early May, I frequently visit the woods around my house where Arnica literally covers the forest floor.

And once they start to bloom, I mean, seeing them is like greeting old friends. They're only visible for a short time of year, so they bloom and then they die back pretty quickly. And I just especially treasure our brief time together. And while I'm spending time with Arnica, I listen to abundant bird songs, I get to watch the bees gather nectar and pollen.

And I get to say hello to other plants I meet along the way. And I keep my eyes out for deer, which I often see foraging along the forest floor. I've treasured getting to know Arnica over the years. I love being able to recognize their leaves just as they're emerging from the ground in the spring.

And I've learned about their resilience. This spring, after we had severe wildfires in my valley, I was really delighted to see that Arnica came back so strongly. And so, I'm not really sure if you can tell from this image, but if you look behind the burned trees there, there's these big swaths of yellow.

And those are all these big beautiful stands of Arnica flowers. So, from my observations, it was clear that Arnica really thrives after wildfires. But getting back to my Arnica medicine. So, when the flowers are at their best stage for harvest, I carefully gather a basketful, just enough to make a quart of oil, which I know is what I'll need for my friends and family for the next year.

And because I visit my harvesting areas throughout the year, I get to see how my harvesting impacts the area. I take steps to ensure that I'm tending this area, not simply taking from it. Once home, I prepare the Arnica to make into an oil. Over the years, I've made my fair share of mistakes with herbal medicines.

And now, I've got my techniques finely tuned. Once the oil is infused, I use local ingredients to make it into salves and ointments. For example, I use beeswax from my beekeeping friend, who coincidentally loves my Arnica salves and requests it every year.

And I, in turn, love passing my medicines on to people who really get how special they are, and people who actually use them. In this way, my Arnica preparations aren't just a commodity, something that's bought and sold and forgotten about. Instead, it's something I have a connection with, and often the people that I give it to have a connection with it, as well.

And when I use that Arnica salve, I get to remember that spring day when I harvested the blooms. I rejoice when the infused oil comes out well. And I'm empowered to know that this deeply healing plant will be a gift for me, for my loved ones whenever we have aches and pains and bumps and bruises.

As a result, I really have a kinship with the plants themselves as well as my herbal preparations. And all in all, my relationship to Arnica medicine is a very different experience compared to



walking into a drugstore and pulling something off the shelf. And I know not everyone lives on the edge of the forest like I do.

Connection to plants and medicine making can also happen if you live in an urban center. And I'm going to pass the mic over to Emily to share some of her experiences.

**Emily Han:**

I live in Los Angeles, which isn't the first place most people imagine when they think of nature. However, I've made it a priority to notice nature around me whether I'm walking to a bus stop, running errands or spending time in a local park. What I found is that when you pay attention, one of the largest urban areas in the world is absolutely filled with wonders, from elderberries growing along the river to mallows sprouting through sidewalk cracks.

As hawks and seagulls soar overhead, tiny snails and salamanders live under foot. Bees and skippers hover over flowers, helping to pollinate and ensure future generations of plants. I love the anticipation of waiting for miner's lettuce to sprout after a winter rain and how native toyons brighten the slopes with their red berries.

When I started my herbal medicine making journey, I lived in a small apartment on a busy road. With no garden of my own, I tended to a few plants and pots and spent a lot of time getting to know the plants growing in my neighborhood, vacant lots, and abandoned backyards.

Sometimes, I would harvest leaves, fruits, or seeds to make food or medicine. But most of the time, I simply sat with the plants, observing how they grew and learning about insects and other animals that lived amongst them. Even though I couldn't harvest very much, if any, from these plants and I purchased most of my herbs from farmers or herb shops, spending so much time with living plants and their ecosystems was an invaluable part of my growth as an herbalist. And that's what we mean when we say that herbal medicine connects, empowers and heals. For the herbal medicine maker, a bottle of tincture, jar of infused oil or a cup of tea holds not only chemical constituents, but also memories, connection, wonder, gratitude and a sense of empowerment.

This connection to our medicines is something unique within herbalism. And in our opinions, it's essential to herbal medicine. Getting back to our question, what makes exceptional herbal medicine? It starts with your relationships and connection to the plants.

Making medicine begins not with tools or even ingredients, but also with your mindset and intentions. Remember, herbal medicine isn't simply what's in the bottle, but encompasses the entire experience. Generations of beings helped to bring us the ingredients and knowledge for herbal medicines, from the seed savers and medicine people, to the insects who pollinated the plants and the microbes who enrich the soils.

Seeing our interconnectedness and knowing that we're participating in this lineage helps us to understand just how precious these medicines are. With our hearts filled with gratitude, we



infuse meaning and positive intentions into our medicine. This can be as simple as repeating words of gratitude or intention out loud or within yourself.

For example, I'm making this calendula oil to soothe and protect my skin. I'm making this echinacea tincture to keep my community healthy these winter months. Or, I'm making violet syrup to more deeply understand this native plant.

### **Rosalee de la Forêt:**

Before we look at specific herbal preparations, we have to acknowledge that the quality of your herbs is extremely important. A question we often get is something along the lines of I found this jar of herbs in the back of my cupboard and it's several years old, is it still good?

Or, I found this old tincture, can I still use it? More commonly, people are simply using herbs and spices that are too old and they don't even know it. Unless they've been intentionally preserved or fermented, we don't eat old or rotten vegetables. Vegetables that are past their prime have lost a lot of their nutrients and don't taste good.

The same goes for herbs. For example, if calendula looks like this when it's fresh, then, you can easily see the difference between freshly dried herbs and really old calendula. So, in this image, it's actually a photo I took and it's using calendula that I harvested and dried this summer versus calendula that was harvested by me in 2018, just happened to have an old jar of calendula around.

So, both of these started out as vibrant orange, and with lots of resins and that strong scent of calendula. Not only do these look significantly different now, but if you compared them by smell and touch, you would easily know which one is vibrant and which one is old.

But if you didn't know calendula as a fresh plant, you didn't know how it looked, how it felt, those resins, how it smelled, that it would be really hard to know if what you buy at the store is fresh and vibrant, or if it's old and faded. Here's another way to put it: Which chamomile is going to make the better cup of tea, the old faded herbs on the left, or the vibrant, recently harvested plants on the right? Now, you might not grow or harvest all of your own herbs, and that's okay; we don't either. However, even when buying herbs, we want to ensure that the plants were tended, harvested and processed in loving and regenerative ways.

If you buy herbs, you want to evaluate the practices of the individual or company selling them. What relationship do they have to the land, the plants and their suppliers? Plants that are respectfully tended in biodiverse growing spaces, where soil is cultivated with care, where the plants are checked on regularly and workers are treated with dignity, will undoubtedly be of exceptional quality.

Even if you buy the herbs you make medicine with, it can be a wonderful experience to grow a few herbs in a pot, or to visit those plants at a local garden or greenspace. In this way, you can still learn from the plants and deepen your relationship with them.



Lastly, exceptional herbal medicine requires skills and know how. It's common for the home medicine maker to find bad information online, and then, unfortunately, use that misinformation to make weak or poor herbal medicines. We'll be highlighting some of these common mistakes throughout the presentation and showing you how to avoid them.

All right. Well, that concludes our look at the essentials of making fantastic or exceptional herbal medicines. Now, let's take a closer look at individual preparations. We'll begin with water-based extractions, like teas and decoctions. The act of combining water and herbs is one of our most foundational herbal remedies.

It's also one of our most versatile preparations. A cup of tea can be a delicious beverage shared with friends, or a simple tea can also soothe a sore throat, calm our nerves or boost our immune system. Making and sipping a tea can be part of the healing process.

Savoring a cup of herbal tea is a very different feeling from just popping back a few herbal capsules or even using some squirts of an herbal tincture. When drinking tea, herbs often get all the attention, but drinking life giving, sustaining water is also an important part of tea's healing abilities.

Wherever water flows on this earth, whether it's the rain falling from the sky, rivers running through the earth or water coursing through our own bodies, water connects all life. It also transports valuable chemicals, minerals, and a wide range of nutrients. In this section, we're going to look at three different water-based preparations. So, let's define them first.

### **Emily Han:**

Tea can refer to any type of water-based preparation, whether it's herbal or caffeinated. However, it often refers to a small amount of herbs steeped for a short amount of time. Examples of tea are green, black or white teas that come from the *Camellia sinensis* plant, or a simple chamomile tea.

A strong infusion, sometimes called a nourishing herbal infusion, is made when a large amount of plant material, often an ounce, is steeped for several hours to overnight. This extended steeping time helps to extract vitamins and minerals, which aren't readily extracted with shorter steeping times.

Many times, this preparation is used for nutrient-dense herbs. Some people think of it as their multivitamin. Nettle was commonly used as a strong infusion. To make this, you would use one ounce or 30 grams of dried nettle leaf and steep it in one quart of just-boiled water for four to eight hours.

In a decoction, herbs are simmered for 20 minutes to overnight. This extended high heat helps to break down strong herbal materials like roots, barks and seeds. Teas, strong infusions, and decoctions all use water to extract the beneficial qualities of the plants.





The difference between them is how long you steep or simmer them, as well as how much herb you use. Each preparation offers different advantages, so it's important to know when to use one method over another. Let's look at the pros or advantages of teas, infusions, or decoctions.

One of the biggest pros is the water itself. Water is the universal solvent. It extracts a lot of constituents, such as vitamins, minerals and flavonoids. If you live in an area where drinking water is clean, then water is also inexpensive and accessible. Water-based extractions are convenient for high dosage herbs.

If the dosage of an herb is a large handful, as is the case with Astragalus root like you see here, then making that into an herbal decoction it's a lot easier than swallowing ounces of alcohol tinctures or mounds of capsules. Teas are the most affordable herbal preparations.

This is especially true when you harvest your own herbs, but it's also true when buying herbs in bulk. Teas are delicious, comforting and can offer us a direct connection to the plants. When drinking tea, you can see and smell the herbs as you make the tea.

There's a reason we started with teas. They're the most foundational herbal remedy for all the advantages reasons just mentioned. But there are some hurdles or drawbacks to teas and decoctions. Some people find that making tea takes too much time, or it isn't as convenient as other herbal preparations like tinctures or capsules.

Teas aren't preserved in any way, so they need to be made fresh daily. Drinking a lot of liquid isn't always ideal, for example, before bedtime or just before a long drive. It can be messy; spilling a bottle of capsules is a very different experience than spilling your cup of tea. Dosage can be a challenge.

Many people prepare teas in a way that's too weak with either not enough plants or they're not steeped or simmered long enough. Hint: If you want a strong medicinal brew of nettle, then you want it to look like the photo on the right.

And then, of course, there's the taste. Medicinal teas can taste bitter or otherwise harsh. Knowing how to make a great-tasting tea that's also medicinal is an art form. Teas are best for nutritive herbs, high dosage herbs and mild-tasting herbs. One of the things I love about making herbal teas is they are such a simple yet powerful way to connect with ourselves, the plants and the wider world.

Making a cup of tea, I use my senses as I scoop the colorful herbs out of their jars and listen for the water to boil. Feeling the warmth of the cup in my hands, breathe in the aroma of the steam and taste the unique flavor of the plants. I think about how these plants are infused with nourishment from the sun, moon, soil, rain and air.

And their relationships with other people and animals who attended the plants, by planting seeds and pollinating flowers. Each sip of the tea brings me into closer relationship with the natural world. The sense of connection with nature is a special aspect of home medicine





making, and it's more deeply healing than grabbing some mass-produced wellness shot off the shelf at the store. In fact, we believe this is so important that we've created a new course all about it.

### **Rosalee de la Forêt:**

Rooted Medicine Circle is a guided online course that bridges the gap between making potent herbal medicine at home and nature connection. In other words, we want to help you create an herbal experience that looks like this, and less like this. Because we know that herbal medicine making that is rooted in a sense of place and connection becomes all the more transformative for personal healing, community health and the health of the planet.

That's because health doesn't result solely from the pills that you take, but also your relationship with the world. Of course, recognizing how our health is connected to nature isn't new, but it is becoming increasingly relevant. Beginning in 2020, several interesting things came out of the pandemic.

One was that people stopped going to the doctor for minor ailments and interest in herbal remedies skyrocketed. As a result, herbal apothecaries quickly ran out of herbs and or they were so inundated with orders, they became backlogged for months. Another interesting theme to come out of the pandemic has been how many people turn to nature for solace during these challenging times.

A recent poll reported by People found that over 50% of Americans appreciate nature now more than they did before the pandemic. In these times, people are noticing nature around them, from birdsong to plants outside their doorsteps. Many folks have caught the gardening bug, even if it's just a simple cup of green onions in the windowsill.

For many, turning to beauty, wonder, and resilience of nature is a grounding experience that is helping them get through these difficult times. With the ongoing experience of the pandemic, we know that the skills and practices of Rooted Medicine Circle are vitally important.

The [Rooted Medicine Circle](#) online course is a 10-month experience that guides you through your own seasons, wherever you live. Throughout the year, we make lots of herbal remedies and we do it together. We didn't want to release another do-it-yourself or do-it-all-alone online course.

So, instead, part of this course includes live, online medicine making circles, where you come with the ingredients and we make the medicines together. That way, you can get your questions answered in real time. There are many different herbal preparations, each of which has their own advantages and we are going to be making a lot of these together.

Things like syrups, decoctions, salves and balms, creams. We'll be looking at lots of foods and drinks, making tinctures together, oxymels. We'll be doing a lot of herbal medicine making



together. In addition to the medicine making tutorials, Rooted Medicine Circle also includes extensive herbal articles for over 40 common plants.

And these herbal articles are filled with everything you need to know to get started with those plants. And they also include beautiful illustrations and photos. Within the course are also over 65 recipes to help you make teas, tinctures, oils, and more.

These recipes can be downloaded and printed or used on any device. Botany and ethical foraging tutorials are included, as well as a 12-part series called, Wildcrafter's Toolkit. There are also many easy natural skills activities to help you deepen your connection to the natural world around you.

We've also included extensive notes and handouts for record keeping, journaling, et cetera. And all of this can be found on our beautiful site, which can be easily accessed by any device. Taking an in-person, 10-month herb course often costs thousands of dollars, and can also involve a lot of travel.

We're excited to have this hybrid course, which allows for us to be together live, but it can be done from the convenience of your own home. And because materials are organized online, the course is a lot more affordable than in-person classes.

Weekend herbal workshops or conferences often cost around \$300 just to attend for a couple days. And that, of course, doesn't include any additional lodging or extra food. This 10-month experience is only \$160 per month, or you can save \$300 and basically get two months for free when you pay in full.

To give you a taste of the depth of information you'll find in this course, we're sharing a sample of our first medicine making tutorial on teas and decoctions. We also have an extensive reference chart, so you know how to best make teas with over 100 plants.

These two resources are going to dramatically increase your tea building skills. To download your tea tutorial and chart and to get more details about Rooted Medicine Circle, click the button on your screen or go to [rootedmedicinecircle.com](http://rootedmedicinecircle.com).

On that page, scroll down to the green button that says Download Sample Lesson. Rooted Medicine Circle starts soon and we're excited to jump into these materials, because this is a guided course and not a strictly do-it-yourself course. We need to close enrollment soon so that we can focus on getting started together.

So, be sure to check it out soon. Okay. Let's get back to our herbal preparations and we'll go back to live video a bit later to answer some questions we've been getting about Rooted Medicine Circle. Okay. Let's look at some sweet medicines. A syrup is a water extraction similar to a tea or decoction that is then preserved with a sweetener, like honey or sugar.



Infused herbal honey is made up of two ingredients, honey plus herbs. This can be a yummy treat or you can use it as medicine to treat a specific issue. For example, garlic and onion honey can be used to relieve chest congestion, or sage honey can soothe a sore throat.

There are lots of advantages to syrups and infused honey, the most obvious being that they can taste delicious. They also soothe sore throats better than a simple water or tea and they're often kid-approved due to their yummy taste. But their biggest advantage can also be a drawback; whether you are using sugar, honey or another sweetener for your syrups, they have a high sucrose and glucose content.

For many people, in small amounts, that's not a problem. But for others, such as people with high blood sugar regulation issues like insulin resistance or type two diabetes, syrups are not going to be a good choice. Another disadvantage is the dosage amount.

Because of all that sugar or honey, syrups are given by the spoonful. If you're working with a low dosage herb or simply wanting the topical relief that syrups can bring to a sore throat, that's not a problem. But if you need a high dosage of the herb to get the results that you're looking for, it's going to be better to choose a tea or even sometimes a tincture, rather than drink a cup of an herbal syrup.

There are many ways to make herbal syrups and they can be used for anything from making cocktails or mocktails to a variety of medicinal uses. A mistake that we often see with syrup is that people are making yummy syrups that they want to use as medicine, but are really better suited to using as a fun beverage or mixing into a drink.

In other words, they are not making syrups at a medicinal strength. Reach for syrups and honeys for soothing a sore throat, for coughs, for coaxing kids and adults to take herbal medicines and as a sweet treat in foods and beverages. Here's some herbs that are well suited for syrups.

For example, elderberry syrup is very famous. I love linden flower syrup. I'll often make a ginger syrup that can be used to relieve congestion or as part of drinks. Onion syrup is also very famous. Violet syrup is beautiful to make. So, lots of ideas there for using herbs for syrups and for infusing into honey as well.

### **Emily Han:**

In some ways, powders and capsules are the most basic herbal preparations. The only ingredients required to make these are the herbs themselves. Instead of relying on another substance like water or alcohol to extract the plants, this method depends solely on your digestion.

In other words, when you consume herbal powder, you're using the whole herb. You aren't using another substance to extract the herbs, as is the case with water in tea or alcohol in tinctures. Instead, your powerful digestion is utilizing and breaking down the entire herb.



One advantage of powders is they can be really easy to use. You can simply add them to foods or smoothies that you're already enjoying. In the tea section, we saw how taste can be a big challenge. With capsules, you can take herbs with relatively no taste involved.

This can be a good option for especially bitter herbs. Capsules are convenient to take and they're easy to take with you. Accidentally spilling your capsules isn't like spilling a cup of tea. One of the biggest disadvantages of capsules that you buy at the store is that it's tough to know if you're getting high quality herbs inside those capsules.

Powders can lose their potency quickly. Buying capsules can also be really expensive. Let's look at a specific herb, ashwagandha. The recommended dose for ashwagandha is around 15 grams, which means taking 30 capsules a day, which isn't fun.

Out of curiosity, we looked up some prices on ashwagandha capsules, it comes out to around \$10 a day. \$300 for a month's worth of herbs is no joke. On the other hand, buying ashwagandha powder is a lot less expensive and can cost less than \$1 a day for the same amount of herb.

And yes, we know that most bottles of ashwagandha capsules as well as many other herbal capsule products recommend taking one to two capsules a day. But this amount is set by the manufacturer and doesn't actually reflect how herbalists recommend working with this herb.

As I mentioned, taking herbal powders relies on the strength of your digestion. This is perfectly fine for most people. But if someone has really weak digestion, this could be a problem. As we began sharing in this presentation, the best herbal medicines are ones that connect, empower and heal. With capsules, it's hard to connect to the plants themselves. You don't see the plant.

You don't taste the plant. If you buy the capsules rather than make them yourself, you don't even interact with the plant until it's in your digestive system. Capsules are best for low dosage herbs, herbs that don't extract well with water or alcohol, bitter or bad tasting herbs, and for people who are unwilling or unable to try something else. Some ideal herbs for capsules include turmeric, artichoke leaf, Oregon grape root and valerian.

**Rosalee de la Forêt:**

Okay, back to video. Hi, Emily.

**Emily Han:**

Hello.

**Rosalee de la Forêt:**

All right. Well, we're going to take a few minutes to answer some common questions about our online course, Rooted Medicine Circle. And then, we'll get to the final part of the presentation



on herbal preparations. So, Emily, the first question I have for you is: Who is Rooted Medicine Circle ideally for?

**Emily Han:**

So, Rooted Medicine Circle would be for you if you want guided help in making powerful and effective herbal medicine, so that you can feel confident in the herbal preparations that you make. People sign up for Rooted Medicine Circle from all walks of life.

We have complete beginners, we have intermediate herbalists, and people who've been playing around with herbs for 30 years. So, what really ties all the students together is a yearning for a deeper connection to the natural world around you, and a recognition that healing involves more than just swallowing an herbal capsule.

And this course would really be for you if you're excited and committed to being part of an inclusive community. Our community respects and values all abilities, ages, body sizes, all ethnicities, gender identities and expressions, races, religions and sexual orientations. So, I have a question for you. Rosalee, do you need to forage, wildcraft, or grow your own plants in Rooted Medicine Circle?

**Rosalee de la Forêt:**

Well, definitely part of Rooted Medicine Circle is about connecting to the plants around you. But you can source the herbs that you work with however you'd like, whether that's through local farms or local stores, online apothecaries, or, of course, if you'd like, you can wildcraft or forage or grow your own herbs, as well.

Along with that, a question that we often get is: Who is this course for in terms of where do people live? Is it going to be okay if someone lives in a city or urban environment? Is it going to be okay for people in the Southern Hemisphere? So, who gets the best benefits out of this?

**Emily Han:**

So, we really designed this course to help you connect to the natural world around you wherever you live. So, that's whether you live in the Northern or the Southern Hemisphere, or whether you live in an urban environment, the suburbs, or a rural location.

Wherever you live, you could be rest assured that you can really work with the plants that grow around you, as well as plants that you could get at the grocery store or from herbal apothecaries. So, there's another thing I want to mention is that people often wonder how much time that they will invest in this course.

We live in a busy world and it can feel overwhelming, even just the idea of becoming a home herbalist. There's a huge amount of herbal information to sift through; it could be really easy to fall into a haphazard approach to learning that's like all across the board.



**Rosalee de la Forêt:**

That is so true, Emily. And really, part of our goal is to help you focus on moving forward step by step so that your medicine making experiences are really empowering and not overwhelming. And we do this in a couple of ways. We really simplify the process by giving you clear instructions and information.

And we intentionally make it simple for you to navigate through all the course materials. In other words, we just give you a really clear map to follow. And we're also here to give you the help you need. So, if you have ever had the experience where you had an herbal question that just stumped you and you couldn't move forward because you really needed the answer to that question before you could move forward, well, we love answering your questions. That's a lot of what we do at Rooted Medicine Circle. And luckily, it's also like bigger than us, right? You get to be in a community of people all over the world, which means that you get to hear from different experiences and different folks.

And you also get a share too, which is another special part of the experience. All right. I have a different question for you, Emily. There's so many different parts to Rooted Medicine Circle, and I'm wondering if there's something that you're especially excited about?

**Emily Han:**

Well, unlike many online courses, this isn't a do-it-all-by-yourself course. I think something I'm really excited about is that in Rooted Medicine Circle, we invite you into the community, into a medicine making circle. We can make remedies together. We can interact with others in our group. Everyone gets hands-on experience.

And it's like Rosalee said, the opportunity to ask questions and share what you're learning as we all grow together. We also record all the medicine making sessions. So, a lot of our students have said that the recorded classes were just as valuable as the live classes. You can go back and watch them again and again. So, whether you come live and/or watch the recordings, it's a really great community to be part of.

**Rosalee de la Forêt:**

Yeah, definitely.

**Emily Han:**

So, I'm curious. What are you looking forward to, Rosalee?

**Rosalee de la Forêt:**

Well, definitely the thing that sticks out as one of my very favorite parts of Rooted Medicine Circle is getting to know the students, watching their aha's as they make medicine, and also the



deeper transformations that they have throughout the year. And so, I especially love the monthly Q&A sessions and the community meetups and just these places where we get to meet each other in real time.

**Emily Han:**

Well, before we get back to our presentation, I thought we could share some of the bonuses for the course. One of our bonuses is a private Facebook group. So, this will connect you to a group of people who are all making herbal medicines and love nature. Another bonus is the Wildcrafter's Toolkit; that's a 12-part course on foraging with Rosalee and me.

If you're interested in harvesting plants around you, whether that's foraging or gardening, the course really helps you learn essential skills like ethical wildcrafting skills, plant identification, how to harvest different plant parts from leaves to flowers, roots, seeds, bark, and then also how to dry and store and process the plants.

So, the third bonus we have for you is membership in United Plant Savers. This is an organization that's dedicated to preservation of medicinal plants. You also get a 10% discount off Mountain Rose Herbs for bulk herbs and medicine-making supplies. And finally, as a bonus, we are giving you a digital copy of our best-selling book, Wild Remedies.

**Rosalee de la Forêt:**

Sweet. All right. Well, as a reminder, you can get more details about Rooted Medicine Circle at [RootedMedicineCircle.com](http://RootedMedicineCircle.com). And don't forget to get your sample from the course, the ultimate guide to making teas. And when you're at [RootedMedicineCircle.com](http://RootedMedicineCircle.com), you can look for the green download button for your download and this handout includes an extensive reference chart, so you know how best to make teas with over 100 plants. And if you have any questions, need tech support, you can email [support@rootedmedicinecircle.com](mailto:support@rootedmedicinecircle.com). All right. Let's get back to our herbal preparations with tinctures.

All right, let's dive into part three and begin with tinctures or alcohol extracts. So, why two names? Well, we commonly referred to these as tinctures, but that's technically a medical term. And supplement companies aren't allowed to use that term, "tinctures," on their packaging.

So, people often get confused with that because they'll buy tinctures at the store, and they'll see that they are labeled with a different name like alcohol extracts. So, it's good to know that they're commonly referred to as both of those things.

And alcohol extract is a great definition of a tincture. In part one, we looked at water-based extractions, where we used water to extract the qualities of the plants. With tinctures, we're using alcohol instead of water to create herbal medicines. One of the biggest advantages of tinctures is that they act fast.





They're easy to take and they're easy for your body to digest. So, if you have an acute situation, something you want to resolve really quickly, then tinctures are often a great choice. If you make tinctures yourself, they can be relatively inexpensive. The biggest expense tends to be the alcohol.

And alcohol as a menstruum excels at extracting alkaloids and resins, which is something that water is not great at. So, if you're working with a plant that has valuable alkaloids, or it's high in resins, then tinctures are often a great choice. Another advantage of tinctures is that they're great for fresh plants.

In fact, some herbs, like milky oats and chickweed, often excel as fresh tincture extracts. But there are some major disadvantages of tinctures. For one, they can appear to be easy to make; basically it's just mixing plants and alcohol. But to make potent herbal medicine, a lot more goes into it.

The type of alcohol varies for each plant, the ratio of alcohol to plants matters. Then, of course, there's other considerations like whether to use fresh plants or dried plant materials. So, a lot more goes into it than simply plants plus alcohol.

Home medicine makers often make tinctures too weak. So, a classic example is that they don't use enough plant material. And often, this happens because they're not finally chopping up the plants so that the ratio of plants to alcohol is really not ideal. And I see this all the time on social media, these pretty pictures of people making their tinctures that look like the image you see right here.

They're so beautiful, but that's actually a very, very weak, poor herbal medicine right there. So, you really want to be able to make sure you know how to make your tinctures strong.

Taking tinctures means taking alcohol. And the amount of alcohol in a typical dosage of a tincture is very small. People often say it's similar to what's naturally found in a ripe banana, but it is still alcohol. So, for people who abstain from alcohol entirely, tinctures are never going to be a good choice. Then, speaking of that, some of you may have heard that adding tinctures to hot water removes the alcohol.

That's actually a myth. It's not physically possible to remove all of the alcohol in this way. Some can be released, but not very much. Then, furthermore, adding tinctures to hot or even boiling water can diminish the plant aromatics. So, this practice isn't always even recommended, especially for plants high in essential oils.

If you make your own tinctures, they can be more affordable. But if you buy tinctures, they can be really expensive, especially if you're taking larger dosages for either chronic or acute situations. And with herbal medicine, it often comes down to taste, and tinctures can taste very bad.



But since they're used in small amounts, it doesn't tend to be that big of a deal. And tinctures can be diluted in water or they can be chased with juice or something to help get rid of that taste pretty immediately.

Alcohol excels at extracting alkaloids and resins, as I've mentioned, but it doesn't extract vitamins and minerals. So, if you're working with a plant specifically for its nutrient qualities, then you don't want to use an alcohol extract or tincture. And as mentioned, alcohol excels at extracting alkaloids, but sometimes we specifically don't want to extract alkaloids because those are potentially harmful. So, an example of that is comfrey which has pyrrolizidine alkaloids in it.

So, tinctures have a lot of advantages, and really, they're going to be best for plants that are high in beneficial alkaloids, plants high in resins. They are wonderful for preserving fresh herbs and they are fast-acting and super convenient to take.

Lots of herbs do really well as a tincture. Here's just a sampling of some herbs that are commonly made into tinctures, things like echinacea, elderberry, St. John's wort, burdock seeds work really well as a tincture. So, lots of herbs can be made into tinctures.

#### **Emily Han:**

Vinegar extracts, also called aceta or acetums, are made by using vinegar to extract the herbs. Herbalists often use apple cider vinegar, but any type of vinegar can be used. Making herbal vinegars is simple. You can easily add them to your daily life in your food and drinks.

The aromatics of herbs are infused into vinegar well, so many culinary herbs work great as vinegars. Thyme, chive blossoms and rosemary are some of our favorites. You can then use these vinegars to make homemade salad dressings and marinades.

Herbal vinegars have a special affinity for the respiratory tract and lungs. One of the most famous vinegar preparations is called fire cider, which is made with lots of spicy herbs like garlic, ginger, horseradish and cayenne. And it's used specially to break up congestion in the sinuses and lungs.

Vinegar is not a strong overall solvent, but it does extract minerals quite well. Nutrient-dense herbs like nettle leaf, dandelion root and leaf, and red clover work really well as herbal vinegars. But while vinegar is great at extracting minerals and aromatics, it doesn't extract alkaloids or resins.

If you recall, these two substances are extracted really well with alcohol. Something we often see mentioned is that vinegar extracts are essentially alcohol-free tinctures. In other words, alcohol tinctures and vinegars can be used in the same way with the same results.

For all the reasons we've shown, this simply isn't true. Vinegar and alcohol are entirely different substances and do not extract plants in exactly the same way.



Another disadvantage to vinegars is that they can't be taken in very large amounts, otherwise they can cause nausea. Vinegar is also rough on tooth enamel. So, you want to rinse your mouth out if you're taking straight vinegar. Herbal vinegars are best for plants high in minerals, low-dose herbs, respiratory formulas, and food as medicine. Some great herbs for vinegar extracts include nettle, sage, elderberry, plantain and thyme.

### **Rosalee de la Forêt:**

A few years ago, an herbalist who had access to a lab did an interesting study. She made a strong nettle infusion using one ounce of nettle leaf steeped in hot water for eight hours. And she made a nettle leaf vinegar using the same amount of herbs. She then tested the vinegar and the tea and compared the results.

She found that the vinegar was a lot higher in minerals than the tea. However, she concluded that since you can only consume a small amount of vinegar at a time, you aren't going to drink a quart of vinegar at a time, that if you drink all of the tea, you would get more minerals.

So, essentially, the vinegar was excellent at extracting minerals, but you aren't able to consume much of it, which is limiting. That isn't to say that nettle vinegar is useless, but instead it's good to know the benefits and limitations of each menstruum. Many herbalists like to use both the tea and the vinegar in their lives, which is a great way to approach the various herbal medicines.

Each one has their advantages and disadvantages, but none are going to always be the best or worst for a given situation. Instead, you want to know how to use each of them well. For example, if you have a sore throat, you don't want to reach for capsules, it just doesn't make sense. And if you want to rely on herbs like you would a multivitamin, you don't want to use a nettle tincture because alcohol doesn't extract vitamins and minerals.

### **Emily Han:**

We also don't want to reduce herbal medicines to simple products that we consume. Herbal medicine can be deeply transformational. But in order to find that deep healing, you have to go beyond swallowing capsules and instead weave plants throughout your life.

In this way, plants can be a gateway to strengthening our relationship to the natural world around us. By immersing ourselves in the joys and wonder of nature, we awaken to the vibrant feelings of connection and interdependence. And by directly connecting with the plants we turn to for medicine, we're able to ensure that we're using the highest quality herbs.

Just as rotten vegetables don't make a good meal, old and stale plants don't make great medicine. But it's not enough to be connected to the plants or to use the highest quality plants. You also need to know how to skillfully transform those plants into potent herbal medicines.



In that way, both the quality of the plants and your medicine making skills are both important. You can have the fanciest equipment, even be in a high tech lab, but if you're using degraded herbal materials, you won't be making strong and effective herbal medicine.

#### **Rosalee de la Forêt:**

Likewise, you could have the most vibrant and potent herbs. But if you don't know how to transform those into medicines well, you'll end up with a weak and diluted medicine that won't reliably work well for your healing. Remember, what makes a pretty photo on social media is not always what makes the best medicine.

Making potent herbal medicines with plants that you are deeply connected to is one of the most transformational and foundational aspects of herbalism. That's exactly why we created Rooted Medicine Circle. We want to guide you towards making herbal medicines that have a profound impact on your life.

This experience weaves you further into the seasons to herbal living and to strengthening your connection to the natural world. Our goal is that [Rooted Medicine Circle](https://RootedMedicineCircle.com) will transform your life as well as your medicine cabinet. As a reminder, you can check out all the details for the course, plus get your bonus sample by clicking on the button or by visiting [RootedMedicineCircle.com](https://RootedMedicineCircle.com).

Because we are supporting you through this course with live demonstrations and medicine making circles, [Rooted Medicine Circle](https://RootedMedicineCircle.com) is only available for the next few days. After that, we're closing enrollment. If you feel called to make herbal medicines that connect you to the natural world, empower you and your health journey and ultimately deeply heal, then we would love to have you join us for Rooted Medicine Circle.

We're excited to start making medicine with you. And we know that Rooted Medicine Circle will help you become a more confident home herbalist. But you don't have to take our words for it. We'll leave you with some parting thoughts from Rooted Medicine Circle graduates.

#### **Dominique:**

The Rooted Medicine Circle absolutely made me more confident in my own personal medicine making. It took me up to another level. So, you'd go into the course maybe feeling a little uncertain, maybe not sure of what you want to do on your own, and you leave it with just this confidence.

#### **Nicole:**

I just loved having access to Emily and Rosalee, like they were really good about answering questions through the Facebook group. And I was a little starstruck at first because I've been following Rosalee for a while. It was different than just a pre-recorded. I really liked the access



and the relationship. Well, I paid a lot of money in herbal courses. I've been doing this for 28 years and spent a lot of money. And this was like one of the best courses I've ever taken.

**Jo-Anna:**

I just love the approachable style of teaching that the two ladies have, Emily and Rosalee. They make you feel like you're learning from a cousin or an aunt or a relative. They make you feel so at home. And for the budding herbalist and for the experienced herbalist alike, it's just such a pleasure learning from the both of them.

**Lynn:**

The live classes were incredible. And I was very grateful I was able to do every class live. It made a difference. But I was also extremely grateful that those classes were recorded. And when I went to remake something, I was grateful that I could go back to those videos and just double-check one little, a fact or a time or a specific ingredient, or one more little piece of advice from Emily or Rosalee.

**Tara:**

The part that actually went deeper for me that I wasn't expecting was, I think it was connectedness. And in being in community with each other, it goes much deeper when you're in community with the natural world. And that struck me in a way that I just wasn't anticipating it. I think I was probably on a search at a deeper level for connectedness to the place and the natural world. And that surprised me in a wonderful way.

**Sandee:**

I definitely feel more confident. I feel like I have these tools. And plus, I have resources now. And I know, like, where to look when I need to learn more, or if I'm using a different herb that I've never used before. Now, I know how to approach that in a way that I hadn't before. And also, just seeing where the other women were from and what they were foraging and what they were growing in their gardens was so fascinating, because they're from all over the world.

**Riana:**

When you sign up for the Rooted Medicine Circle, you're actually starting a journey of your life. You get recipes that you can try, you can share, you can ask questions about. You get monographs of every single plant that you're going to learn about in the course.

They're very, very nice and considerate, because they just put everything in zip files that you can download everything as well. So, for me, it was much more than I ever expected to receive for an herbal course.



**Kristin:**

It wasn't just an herb course, that's the thing. What it taught was so much more than just the information. It was an exploration, a personal, very personal exploration into what life is with plants. How plants actually help us become more of who we are, by what we're interested in them or by how we explore the world. It just changed my whole perspective.

**Rebecca:**

It is so worth every single penny. It will transform the way you view the world and view people. I mean, you will look at each individual and want to share what is going to better their life, not only spiritually, but the vibrancy within and what they put in their mouth and how they take care of the earth.

We need that and this Rooted Medicine Circle course, again, not only teaches you about the herbs, but it teaches you about this beautiful Earth that you have to take care of. And it will open your eyes to compassion, to love for the earth, not only for the Earth, but also for the humans that live on it. And I think it's so worth the time, the money and your focus on being a better human being and a better future herbalist.