Rosalee de la Forêt:
What is the picture look of someone who could benefit from shatavari?

Lila Swanberg:
Hmm…we're going to talk about sex a little bit, is that okay?

Rosalee de la Forêt:
Absolutely.

Lila Swanberg:
I use it in a lot of libido issues. When you take shatavari—and I'll be curious to see if this is true for you—it makes everything juicy. It's one of those things that does a little bit of everything, but I think its real claim to fame is it's a female tonic. It rejuvenates our female tissues. It's good for infertility and hot flashes, and menstrual irregularities. It's also good for breast milk production. It does so many—so many different things. I don't want to give you just the list, but it's just—it's such a cool herb.

Rosalee de la Forêt:
Welcome to the Herbs with Rosalee Podcast, a show exploring how herbs heal as medicine, as food, and through connecting with the living world around you. This episode I'm joined by Lila Swanberg to talk about shatavari – an herb that can bring the juiciness back in more ways than one. By the end, you're going to see why hot flashes, libido, fertility, and breast milk all turn out to be the same conversation, and why the amount that most people are taking of shatavari might not be anywhere close to enough to feel anything. Lila is also refreshingly blunt about what got sold to women in beautiful bottles, and she brings a recipe I hadn't come across before—one that has a very particular moment that it's meant for. Let's just say you might want to keep the ingredients on hand for some juicy replenishment. Also, near the end, we get in some big questions about where herbalism is headed and whether it can hold its ground. 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.

Lila, welcome to the show. I'm so happy to have you here.

Lila Swanberg:
I'm so happy to be here. Thank you for having me.

Rosalee de la Forêt:
Absolutely! And I've had the pleasure of getting to spend time with you in person. We've released—I was going to say we have not released, but we have interviewed you for Herbalists After Hours. We'll see when it gets released since we're so—I'm not going to say behind on that, but we're—we have some time. So, it's going to be exciting to just get to know you in this new light, in this really different format. I know we have a lot in common because we've both studied with K.P., but I'd love to hear how you even began. How did you get started with all of this?

Lila Swanberg:
Alright, do you want the unabridged, inappropriate—no, it's not inappropriate, but gets a little weird, or do you want the clean, crisp version?

Rosalee de la Forêt:
Definitely, I want the "inappropriate" weird one, please. Do you know how disappointed everyone would be if I was like, "I want the abridged one?" I feel like—I could hear the collective sigh like, "Aww."

Lila Swanberg:
Oh. Yeah, so I never knew what I wanted to be when I grew up. I had a predisposition towards natural healing. We didn't see doctors. I was born at home. My dad was the one fighting because we weren't vaccinated. We were those kids. You were sick. You go to the medicine cabinet. You pull out herbs or supplements, and that—that was how I grew up. But I always was like you got to go make money and be in business and do things in a certain way. I felt a lot of pressure to take traditional paths. Nothing non-traditional even came into my purview, so go to college. I get a Business Management degree. I start my career. I get a Master's degree in Organizational Management Leadership. It's all so boring, but you do it. You go through the motions, and next thing I know I'm deep in my career. The things that are important to me are making more money, better job titles, amassing more powers like bigger leadership positions, and then the things I thought I was supposed to do, like you buy your first house, and then

you buy a bigger house, then you buy nice cars, and you have lots of dogs and chickens. You just start amassing this life, and you realize one day—or I realized one day, I am so miserable. I am so incredibly miserable.

I was overweight and I went on a huge weight loss journey, and I thought that will fix my problems and it didn't. I lost my period for over a year. I was so anxious and depressed. I was miserable. I feel like I was kind of a zombie in my own life. My little sister calls it my "bitch era." I just—life didn't feel good. I didn't feel joy. I wasn't spiritual at all. It was just—it was a lot. And so, I had this inkling in my being of just like I don't think we are put here to feel this bad, and I started doing things to just change my life. I knew I needed to leave my job. I took mushrooms. I left my partner. I bummed around for two years traveling and figuring out what it is I wanted to do. I took a year to leave my job. It was a huge thing and one of the scariest things I've ever done because that was my safety, my identity, but I just kind of blew it all up. I changed everything. Right before this process happened, my sister convinced me to talk to her medium, which is like so-

Rosalee de la Forêt:
That's a good story.

Lila Swanberg:
So far out of my comfort zone. I was so just against anything in that realm. She's like—we talked about all the relationships and the boys and all the things, and I'm like, "I don't want my job." She's like, "Okay, you need to stay at your job a little longer. It's going to give you a lot of money that's going to allow you to do some things and buy you some time as you explore." She's like, "You're supposed to do something with herbs, or—the word 'Ayurveda' keeps coming up for me. I don't normally give this kind of detail, but they're telling me to tell you Ayurveda and herbs." I was like, "Oh, I'm going to teach people how to cook. I love cooking. I'm going to teach people how to use spices in their food." I remember thinking, "Okay, I'm going to have to digest all this." It was kind of freaky talking to a medium, for me. I'm like, "I think I'm going to start a cooking blog and write recipes that aren't obnoxious. You don't have to read ten pages about the husband's favorite whatever to get to the recipe." I thought—it was something in that realm. I remember after that call—I had never heard the word, Ayurveda, before in my life.

Rosalee de la Forêt:
Oh, wow.

Lila Swanberg:
And I go Google Ayurveda, and the first thing it says is "strict diet, toxic medicines." It felt witchy to me. I was like, absolutely not. I'm not touching that with a ten-foot pole. That sounds freaky. I can't even tell you how different I—what a different human I was back then. But she also told me to take an herb class. So, as I'm bumming around and figuring out what sparks joy and what do I want to do, I go back and I start studying functional nutrition because that really had a pull on me. I wanted to figure out how do I eat, how do I support myself, how do I actually feel good and figure out my lifelong anxiety and depression, the menstrual issues, and all these things. I signed up for my first herb class and it just so happened to be with Mr. K.P. Khalsa. Out of just total randomness. I wasn't in Portland. I just—I don't even remember how I found it. It was just like I was enrolled and there. I'm like, this is fun.

The first class—it's modular so wherever you enter in is where you enter in, and it's literally the fire hose. And I quickly realized he was an Ayurvedic doctor and that this herbal education wasn't going to be the Western education I thought it would be. Ayurveda was going to play a big role in it so I was like, "We're here. Crap. Where Ayurveda—we can't avoid it." I immediately felt such a resonance with Ayurvedic herbs and Ayurvedic concepts. It's like—it brings me to tears and I was like, "Oh, what the hell. I found something that was missing," and so I just kept taking classes and learning. I never planned to be a practitioner, but as I kept going down the path, I'm like, oh, wow. This is—this is fun and exciting. The pull is there and now we're here!

Rosalee de la Forêt:
I love that you called K.P. a "fire hose" because I think—I think, individually, all of us who studied with him walk away with that same thing because that's exactly what I would say. People would be like, "How was class?" I'd be like, "Oh, my gosh. It was just this like fire hose of information," which I loved! Oh, my gosh. I just soaked it all up. So, you took one class with him and then you were just hooked. You were like, "Okay, I'll sign up for the next module." Is that kind of how that went? You were just in it from day 1?

Lila Swanberg:
Yeah. I'm like, "I'm in Module 1 so I got to do the whole year," and then I'm like, "Well, I did year one, I got to do the adjunct summer program." I did that and I'm like, "I got to do year two," and then "I got to do the internship, and then I got to do this." Now, K.P. does a Professional Development Group for us, so I continue learning with him and it's been—it's been great. Aside from that, I went and became a Certified Functional Nutrition Counselor. I've done other adjunct things. Yeah, the seed was planted and I had to see it through.

Rosalee de la Forêt:
That's awesome, yeah. I love that you were just pulled in from so many different directions of just searching for joy, a medium, and ultimately, finding your joy, it sounds like.

Lila Swanberg:
It's so funny because looking back, maybe the writing was on the wall. I definitely have nurturing characteristics and stuff like that. The other interesting piece I think is I was terrified of the human body and disease, and health and—I ate my veggies and stuff and took herbs and supplements, but there was such a fear around those topics to me. As I started learning more, it became demystified. I remember how afraid I was to go to lab work done the first time. It was like one of the biggest things I felt like I had to overcome, and now I'm like, "Oh, my God." This is just—it has taken me to such a different world and understanding of the human body. It's just—I can't even put into words that these things aren't scary. That's part of my mission is let's demystify. Let's make our health a little less daunting because it is scary—or it's not scary but I think people feel like it's scary.

Rosalee de la Forêt:
So often our personal journeys then help us inform others who might feel in a similar way. So, to have that experience, and then have that ultimate transformation, and then be able to see that and help people work through it. It's powerful.

Lila Swanberg:
Yeah. It's been—it's been fun. It's been interesting.

Rosalee de la Forêt:
Hey, there. Just a quick note: if you'd like to hear from me in a more personal way, I'd love to have you in my free text community. I send a couple of text 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.

Thank you so much for sharing your story, Lila. I know we're going to hear more about projects that you're working on, but for the herb you've chosen, I'm so excited you chose this herb. It's the first time it's on the show. It's an herb that I love and it's an herb that I specifically remember learning from K.P. So, shatavari, I'd love to hear why you chose shatavari for us today.

Lila Swanberg:
You know, I was trying to think, what is something I feel aligned with right now? I have herbal favorites and they come and they go. Shatavari has been on my mind. It's one of the herbs I use personally, and I've used on and off for years. I just—I wanted to do something Ayurvedic, and I had to come up with a good recipe. I thought that the shatavari ojas beverages would be unique, something people haven't heard of before.

Rosalee de la Forêt:
I'm really excited to get to the recipe a bit later because I love everything about it, but before we get there, let's hear—there's probably people who love shatavari and people who have never heard of it before, so let's just—let's examine this herb and get to know it a bit better.

Lila Swanberg:
Well, I would say it's the foremost female herb. It's like the Queen of the Female Herbs in Ayurveda. Ashwagandha is typically the go-to male herb. Shatavari is the go-to female herb, but it's so much more than that. It is a probable adaptogen. I don't think it's been officially called an adaptogen yet, but it has a lot of adaptogenic qualities. It is very demulcent. It's cooling. It's one of those things that does a little bit of everything, but I think its real claim to

fame is it's a female tonic. It rejuvenates our female tissues. It's good for infertility and hot flashes and menstrual irregularities. It's also good for breast milk production. It does so many—so many different things. I don't want to give you just the list, but it's just—it's such a—it's such a cool herb. I call it my—my partner calls it the "juicy female herb."

Rosalee de la Forêt:
It's a good name for it.

Lila Swanberg:
He's like, "Are you taking your juicy female herb right now?" I'm like—he knows when I am, but yeah, it is—it is just—it's a cool herb.

Rosalee de la Forêt:
Yeah, yeah and there's a—not a lot of yin tonifiers just like to skip—leaving Ayurveda behind suddenly, skipping into TCM language. We have marshmallow as a demulcent, but doesn't necessarily tonify that juiciness. Shatavari is an interesting one for that. It's the one that I reach for over and over again for that because we don't have a lot of herbs that do that, that are easily accessible like the way—because this is—I love that it's also an asparagus. It's a particular type of asparagus, shatavari.

Lila Swanberg:
Yeah. It being in the Asparagus family, it makes it feel more accessible I think. It's really food-like. It is tonifying and food-like and nourishing. That's such a great point. I've never actually thought about it that way. We don't have a lot of nourishing demulcents.

Rosalee de la Forêt:
Yeah, and it's the root that we use—how do you like to use it, preparations and everything?

Lila Swanberg:
I take it as a churna; powder is my way to go. I'll throw it in smoothies. I'll mix it into water. That's how my clients take it. I think it's the most economical and efficient, especially when you're using some therapeutic doses. It's just—I like the traditional use.

Rosalee de la Forêt:
Yeah, we're both K.P. students on that one. When people tell me they use it as a tincture, I do my best not to be judgmental ever. Whatever works is great, but it doesn't make sense for me even just to take yin tonifiers as a tincture. It's kind of a—an opposing energy in that way. But I'm also—I assume, like you, very particular about dosage because I studied with K.P. What do you look for in dosage with shatavari? Like a range, I mean.

Lila Swanberg:
It really—it depends on what I'm using it for. So, if I'm just bringing it in just for a little bit of maintenance and longevity and support, 1 to 3 grams, depending on the person. Right now, I'm taking it. I don't even measure in grams. I just put maybe a heaping tablespoon or two in my smoothie and call it a day. There's people—I have a couple of clients on it right now for hot flashes and we are dosing to effectiveness. But personally, I have done doses up to 30 grams.

Rosalee de la Forêt:
Oh, wow.

Lila Swanberg:
Yeah. I—there are some side effects to be aware of when you get up to the big doses, like it will make you cry.

Rosalee de la Forêt:
That was where my brain first—my first thought went to that. Sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt but let's talk about that. What do you look out for in terms of those upper therapeutic dosages? When do you start to back down?

Lila Swanberg:
So, shatavari is an interesting one because I think you're going to see side effects. I think your tolerance to withstand the side effects is going to kind of inform how much you'd keep doing. So, it does have an influence on our hormones. It's not directly—we're not taking in—it's not like there's progesterone in shatavari but it does, in a way, influence our hormones and what's happening, and so it can shift things. For me, at those really high doses, at first, it made me moody—like really, really moody. Just emotional, crying, it almost sped up part of my

menstrual cycle where that part happens, but pushing through that, that went away. I feel like it had to go through a bit of a normalizing effect. The other thing that can happen is spotting outside of your period, and I've kind of looked at it like we're normalizing things, and to get things normal, it's going to be a little bit odd. But a lot of people don't want to put up with side effects or tolerate side effects, so for clients, I don't usually push it that hard. For myself, I'm—I'm the experiment. I'm Patient Zero so I'm okay doing that, but for clients, I wouldn't normally push it that hard or fast.

Rosalee de la Forêt:
Interesting. The thing that I saw come up most often was generally bowel distress. Usually, somewhat mild but that was like the backing off point of like someone is like, "Things just aren't right there anymore." Maybe they had loose stools or something going on, but things changed there.

Lila Swanberg:
That's interesting. I've never had any bowel influences with it.

Rosalee de la Forêt:
Interesting.

Lila Swanberg:
Other than because it's juicy and moistening, it might help the bowels, but yeah, I could see it pushing things a little too—too in that loose direction.

Rosalee de la Forêt:
Yeah, fascinating. The different experiences with that—the upper limit. Though I can't say that I've ever gone for the 30 grams though, so that's a different one.

So, you gave a lot of the list for shatavari. I wonder if you could just bring it home for folks of like—I don't know if there's a case study you could share just off the top of your head, be vague or whatever, but just—I don't know. Something like, what is the picture look of someone who could benefit from shatavari?

Lila Swanberg:
I use it in a lot of libido issues, a lot of women who just—the vata pattern is prevalent. People are just kind of cold, dry, and we see that quite frequently. Shatavari is one of those things I will bring in to moisten everything up, make it feel juicy and help with things like libido, infertility, like I said, hot flashes. I have great success using it for libido. I've never personally brought it in specifically for libido, but I tend towards a lot of vata issues and it makes things juicy. That's one of the things. I also note that as a side effect—I have a lot of women I work with that are very afraid of gaining weight. When you take shatavari—I'll be curious to see if this is true for you—it makes everything juicy and you're probably holding a little bit more fluid than normal, so you can feel a little bit of weight gain or a little bit of heaviness that you might not be used to feeling. To me, once you get used to it, it's a good thing. Like I now crave that juiciness, but a lot of people might get a little, "I don't want to gain weight. I don't want to feel puffy," but we want to be juicy. We want to be supple and, you know, have our tissues—having the moisture and what they need to perform. So, curious if you have any experience with that.

Rosalee de la Forêt:
I do not, but I definitely know that's one of the things that shatavari is well-known for.

Lila Swanberg:
Yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:
For me, working with it was always that vata presentation that was, hands down, shatavari is always the go-to on that just because it is so accessible, so easy, so nutritious. I never had to scratch my head a lot to be like, "Oh, is this working?" It felt very reliable in that sense.

Lila Swanberg:
Right, yeah. So, I mainly do bring it in for female issues including menstrual irregularities and things like that, but it's interesting because Ayurveda talks about it being such a good pitta-pacifying remedy. It's used in Ayurveda in hypertension, in pitta-style heart disease and other cardiovascular-related issues. Just because it does help to cool and soothe pitta, I will

throw it into some protocols just as a supporting herb in those pictures, but it's definitely not doing the heavy lifting. It's a little adjunct.

Rosalee de la Forêt:
I wanted to ask if there was favorite things that you like to formulate with because I also felt like shatavari would play a supporting role. It could play the main role in a formula and it can play a supporting role. There's not—there's—not all herbs can do that, I think, as well as shatavari can.

Lila Swanberg:
Yeah. I find ashwagandha is kind of a similar—I feel like they're counterparts. I know they're synergistic, and they have complimentary energetics, so I will also use them together as just like bring in this fully energetically complete, balancing, nourishing, tonifying, rejuvenating remedy. That's probably something worth talking about is just—it's so rejuvenating. It's a rasayana in Ayurveda. It's something that gives you vitality and life force back, which in turn, manifests as things like increased libido and juiciness and feeling more vitality, but it's definitely just something that's so nourishing and tonifying and longevity and health. I think that's why it's a good supporting herb or the main herb. Like the person I have on—have it on for hot flashes right now, that's the only hot flash remedy I'm using with her. That's it. I trust shatavari to do the job. Or breast milk production, I trust shatavari to do the job.

Rosalee de la Forêt:
It's interesting to think about all these things. You could be like libido, breast milk production, hot flashes—they seem so different, but from an energetic lens, it's like all the same nourishing, supportive—I keep saying "yin tonifying," but all of that coming together. It's all the same action which in—obviously, Western medicine diagnosis, those things are not related whatsoever, but it just makes sense. It makes complete sense.

Lila Swanberg:
Right, right. I like that it kind of—it's funny 'cause you—we pigeonhole so many herbs into doing "This herb does this one thing." Like saw palmetto, that's the prostate herb and that's all it does. I really like when we hear about an herb and we can see the full scope of all it does. It's not just like, "That one herb is for that one symptom." It's like, this herb will normalize

these functions in the body and it will do so many things because of it. I think that's a hard thing for people to wrap their head around because we're so used to medication being for a specific thing. That's what I love about things like shatavari or other herbs in this category, is that they do so much. You bring that nourishment and that tonification back and it just helps so many different things.

Rosalee de la Forêt:
Yeah, beautifully said, Lila.

Hey, it's Rosalee. You know, creating this podcast has been one of the most rewarding parts of my herbal work, and if you found something meaningful here whether it's a new perspective, a favorite recipe or just a sense of calm, I want to let you know there's a good way to go even deeper. It's called the Podcast Circle. Inside, you'll get access to live classes taught by some of my favorite herbal teachers, behind-the-scenes updates, and a beautiful library of herbal resources that we've gathered over the years. But more than that, it's a space to connect with fellow plant lovers who care about the same things you do. And truly, your membership helps make this podcast possible. It's how we keep the episodes coming and the herbal goodness flowing. So, if you're ready to be part of something more, something rooted in connection, head over to HerbalPodcastCircle.com. I'd love to see you there.

The recipe that you have shared is also nourishing and brings moisture back. I'm excited to hear you talk about this. It looks so good. I love that it's just simple ingredients that sound so delicious. It's my kind of recipe, so please take it away.

Lila Swanberg:
So, Ayurveda looks at—we're going to talk about sex a little bit, is that okay?

Rosalee de la Forêt:
Absolutely.

Lila Swanberg:
Okay, so Ayurveda looks at sex as one of the three pillars of health: diet, sex and sleep. And sex is not-

Rosalee de la Forêt:
Is that the three pillars? It's not just-

Lila Swanberg:
Those are the three pillars—what more do you need?

Rosalee de la Forêt:
Alright, just making sure here.

Lila Swanberg:
If your—if your sex—you are healthy, you have healthy libido, if that's dialed in, your diet's dialed in and your sleep's dialed in, you're in pretty good shape!

Rosalee de la Forêt:
Nice.

Lila Swanberg:
Ayurveda looks at sex as, one, an important part of life; two, it's something that's energetically a little bit depleting. One of the traditions that we practice is after sex, we replenish our ojas. We replenish those energies that were just lost. Ojas is our vitality, our life force. It's that juiciness that we have. I keep saying the word "juiciness."

Rosalee de la Forêt:
That's great.

Lila Swanberg:
Because that's what I think is on-brand for shatavari. After you have sex, this drink is to replenish what was just lost. You don't have to think about it. You don't have to be net negative. After you perform the act, you go make the drink, and then share a cozy beverage with your partner, which is also restorative and rejuvenating, but it is just completely aimed to replenish what was lost. That's where the shatavari comes in. We are replenishing the sexual, the Shukra Dhatu juices that were just lost we are bringing in. It's tonifying. It's nourishment. That's all it is. It's shatavari, dates for that sweetness which are also used for sexual potency

and vitality, 25 soaked almonds that, again, it's just nutritive, cinnamon—get some warming, flavorful, aromatic spices going, your milk of choice, and then ghee—which ghee is also just used to keep everything nice, moist and-

Rosalee de la Forêt:
Juicy.

Lila Swanberg:
Juicy, yeah, juicy. So, you put it all together, you blend it, and you drink it. It's just like this thick, warm, sweet, cinnamony beverage. It's super good.

Rosalee de la Forêt:
I love that it's heated, and everything gets a moment to come together and that, and then, yeah, I can imagine it's just like—it's more than a tea because you have all of the dates and the almonds adding substance to it, as well.

Lila Swanberg:
Yeah. It's a thick experience. It's interesting. I have experimented a lot with them. My partner is part of my experimentation, so he's like, "These are so cool! Can we do an iced version?" I was like, "No, I think that kind of defeats the purpose." He's like, "But it's so hot in the summer," but you know, maybe leave at room temperature or something. I think the warmness is part of the—part of the magic here.

Rosalee de la Forêt:
Yeah, yeah, I could see that. I could also see it being good iced to someone who is a fan of the cold beverages, but yeah, the heat immediately appealed to me. Thank you so much for sharing this. I'm now going to call it a very—it needs to be called the "sexy shatavari ojas blend." It sounds absolutely delicious. For people who are listening or watching, you can download your beautifully illustrated recipe card. Just check out the show notes for a link or you can go to herbswithrosaleepodcast.com. Thank you so much for sharing that, Lila.

Lila Swanberg:
Of course. If you try it, let me know. I'd love to-

Rosalee de la Forêt:
I'm definitely going to try it.

Lila Swanberg:
I'd love to hear about it.

Rosalee de la Forêt:
Absolutely going to try it, and-

Lila Swanberg:
And I will say if you—I will say if you—if you don't have time to soak your almonds ahead of time, like you are not planning out your ojas beverage needs, you can just boil, simmer them with everything and it will just be a little thicker, and that's okay. You can add some extra liquid, thin it down. Play with it. You don't have to be perfect.

Rosalee de la Forêt:
It sounds great. Nice. Is there anything else about shatavari that you'd like to share before we move on?

Lila Swanberg:
I have to tell a slightly embarrassing story.

Rosalee de la Forêt:
Oh, great.

Lila Swanberg:
I remember going on shatavari very early on in my herbal studies, I was taking like a gram and I ran out. I'm like, "This is so important that I keep taking it." I ended up at this Jew shop in Sedona and they were selling shatavari tinctures in Sedona. It was like $50 for a one ounce tincture of shatavari. I'm like I need to keep taking my shatavari, and so I buy this $50 tincture of shatavari just being so young and naïve and not knowing any better. Looking back, I'm like, "Oh, my gosh. You were so silly." Shatavari is such a—I feel like it's such an affordable, accessible, abundant herb. Like you said, now, looking back, I would never take it tinctured. I

see it going into a lot of women herbs, women supplements. You go to the health food store, you will see it formulated in a lot of things that are really costly. We are advertising them to women that, “Hey, you need this formula. You need this mix of herbs.” Shatavari is doing the work in that formula, but we’re marketing it in a way that’s becoming really like hiking up the price, making it bougie and well-branded. I just want to say, at the end of the day, the herb-taking does not have to be sexy to work. My shatavari comes in a—comes in a bag and a powder, and that’s it. It’s just, like I said, really affordable and accessible. You don’t have to—you don’t have to go that route to get your shatavari in.

Rosalee de la Forêt:
That reminds me. Maybe this is a little adjacent, but it reminds me of K.P.-ism where he would say, “You can save time with money or money with time.” So, he would talk about that with herbalism and that you can—he specifically talked about making your own capsules, for example. You can buy shatavari powder and if you want to put it in capsules, take the time to make the capsules. So, you spend a lot of time, but it’s really cheap to do it that way. Or you can go to the store like you’re saying and buy a very expensive tincture, which neither of us are recommending in any way, shape or form. Or these formulas, which again—I’m sure this happens to you in clinical practice. I’ll have people come—this happened a lot with ashwagandha, but any plant, really, where you take—you do their intake and everything, and you think, “What’s coming to me is I think this ashwagandha or shatavari would be very helpful,” and they say, “I already take that.” You’re like, “Oh, okay. How do you take that?” They’re like, “I take one capsule from the bottle.” I’m thinking like, “I’m thinking you’ll need 12 capsules.” And then the response is like, “Oh, my God. That would be so expensive!” Yes! If you buy it in a bottle that will be very expensive, but you can save time with money or money with time. So, I think about that often. I have so many K.P.-isms that run through my head with some frequency. That’s what happens when you study with someone for years. He’s a good one too. He just has a lot of things and wisdom he’s shared in his five decades plus.

Lila Swanberg:
Very influential. For sure. The thing about shatavari, it’s a pretty well, mild-tasting herb. There are plenty of gross herbs out there, shatavari isn’t one of them. It’s pretty benign. You can sneak it in a smoothie or—it’s easy to get in.

Rosalee de la Forêt:
Yeah, you could just mix it into applesauce, yogurt. I'm not a big fan just into water but people who do that, it's not a problem. I just have kind of a gag reflex on that one. I never was cured of it.

Lila Swanberg:
That's fair.

Rosalee de la Forêt:
Thanks so much for sharing about shatavari. Thanks for this wonderful recipe as well. I'd love to hear what you have going on in your herbal world, offerings you have, etc.

Lila Swanberg:
Well, I run a virtual one-on-one practice, but what I'm most excited about is back in June, I launched a community—a mentorship community called "Path to Practitioner Potency," where we are supplementing and filling the gap that exists between herbal learning from books or teachers, and what it takes to step into the clinical practice. This is monthly trainings, we do materia medica, you have a message board for support anytime. We do case reviews and all kinds of fun stuff that are all aimed at actually taking these concepts that we learn about, and turning them into what actually works in clinical practice, because I think there's a huge gap between what we learn and how to actually apply it. As people listen to my podcast, they kept asking me, "I need support. You just talked about a loading dose. I've never heard about that before." You're using doses I can't find anywhere, so people continually kept asking like, "How do I actually going to embody this information and practice like you're practicing?" So, I launched that in June. We have a great initial cohort, seats are open. That is the most exciting project I'm working on. What I most love about it is—I don't—it's hard for me to talk to the one-on-one clients in my marketing and stuff because they don't want to hear the nerdy stuff I want to talk about. They don't care about tincture math and proper preparations. They just want to get better, but I want to talk about all the things that excite me about the world of herbalism, and this allows me to do it. I get to talk about the stuff that I find exciting, so it's a really great community that will just continue to grow in participation and resources and trainings, and things that are available. That is—that's what I want to share about.

Rosalee de la Forêt:
Oh, that's awesome. That's such a real gap in the herbal world and one I keep hearing discussed more and more of just that it's difficult for people to make that leap from—even if they go to a full certified program, to then actually put it in practice. Not every program out there has practicum and case studies and just real life application, so it can be hard to go from the philosophical to the—to the real life and having the support is often the difference between if someone sticks with it or not, or has success early on or not. We want to see more successful herbalists out there, so we can keep growing. That is absolutely wonderful.

Lila Swanberg:
Thank you.

Rosalee de la Forêt:
Thanks for offering that, and of course, we'll put links to everything in the show notes so people can check that out.

Alright, Lila, before you go, I've got one last question for you and that question is—I hope it's a really hot take because you are famous for these. No pressure. What part of herbalism turned out to be harder than expected?

Lila Swanberg:
All of it—no.

Rosalee de la Forêt:
Alright, thanks for coming.

Lila Swanberg:
I feel like there's such a magic when you get your first herb book and you read in the herb book, "Take this for this. If you have psoriasis, do this tea." Whatever it is, you feel so empowered to read an herb book because you're like, "Look at all the things I can do with herbs." I think the most kind of like shattering moment of herbalism for me was I realized it didn't necessarily work like I thought it did from the books. There is this whole other piece and this ties back into my purpose for founding the community I founded. There's this whole

other piece of "How do you actually take this and make it practical for the human sitting across from you?" because people are complicated! They are not linear. No person I've ever worked with has been like textbook, "Oh, you have A, let's give you B." And I think that the books are magical, they give us so much information, but they're not the complete picture. When I realized—I felt like I got to this point where I couldn't trust any herbal information out there because it's just—it's such a vast complex world. There's a lack of consensus. You might read things and you're going to read something else that's completely contradictory. You're going to read dosing that's all over the place. I'm like, oh, my gosh, we actually don't have a full system here. You really have to figure it out yourself. You have to put the puzzle pieces together yourself. I think that's one of the hardest pieces of herbalism, is to one, recognize that, and then two, figure out how to put that puzzle together.

Rosalee de la Forêt:
That's so true. I was just talking about this with someone because we were talking about the contentious licensing issue—should herbalists be licensed? The thing about being licensed is you have to have an agreed upon core curriculum. Herbalists are never going to agree on a core curriculum, because like you said, there's just no standardization there. First of all, we have this plethora of Western herbalists who just practice dramatically different. You have your specific indications and drop dosages with Matthew Wood. You have energetic herbalism where they are really paying attention to four or six qualities. You have herbal action-based Western herbalism where people are just anti-inflammatory or whatever. There's just this whole range, then you throw Ayurveda in there. You throw TCM in there and then all the other practices of herbalism around the world. It's very difficult to have an agreed upon core curriculum about anything of what should be taught in an herbal school. That's going to be a huge hurdle for licensures. It will just never happen because herbalists are a bunch of weirdo anarchists, for better or for worse, and they're never going to agree.

Or, worst case scenario I think is that these super Westernized schools will get the core curriculum standardized, and then so much of what makes herbalism so strong and brilliant and beautiful will be lost to simply studying chemical constituents rather than what makes herbalism special. So, that's definitely a worry, but it is an interesting thing of there's no clear path, like you said. You have to figure out what works.

What I always say is I never argue. I learned with K.P. significantly, so I have a lot of strong pulls towards that with dosage, the plants I use. Sometimes I come up against people who are like, “Whoa! You used this much of that? You can’t do that. I use this.” I’m like, “Do you get results?” They say, “Yeah.” I say, “Okay.” No argument there. You can’t argue with what works, but that’s the thing. There’s so much variation out there. That was a good answer, Lila. I have never really thought about that in that context.

Lila Swanberg:
You bring up a good point about the licensure ‘cause I am—I’m a bit in favor of it. I know that’s not a popular opinion, but I do think herbalists need more recognition and we’re not getting it with what we’ve been doing for all these years, so I think we need to do something different at this point. But the lack of consensus is such a great point, although I do think the—like the Registered Herbalist Guild has found a way to move through that as they give people the RH credential, but yeah, that’s a hot mess out there.

Rosalee de la Forêt:
Yeah, it really is. The other big discussion I think that’s very relevant in the herbal world today is how do we maintain our identity and purpose, and moving forward, when we have functional medicine practitioners and naturopaths who are also using herbs often in very different ways than we do, but they are licensed. They are doctors. They can take insurance and they just have, honestly, more respect in our culture than an unlicensed, hippy-dippy herbalist. I’m not saying we’re all hippy-dippies, but we often come across as that, that we’re going to have a difficult time moving forward and maintaining who we are. There’s a lot of big considerations out there. I do not have the answers, just for the record, but I see the writing on the wall-

Lila Swanberg:
Rosalee, fix it!

Rosalee de la Forêt:
-of just like these are important discussions to have because we do have a very wide range of herbalists under that umbrella, but there is a certain culture that makes us different from

functional medicine practitioners and naturopaths. I hope we don't lose the rights to be who we are in the face of it all.

Lila Swanberg:
I totally agree. I do think at the end of the day, one of the most tragic things would be if herbalism dies out here. I do think it is at risk of dying out the way that we are doing things currently. As like you said, the naturopaths and the functional medicine doctors, the integrative health professionals are gaining traction, are we maintaining our traction or gaining traction to have a seat at the table? I think herbalism and the well-practiced, sophisticated herbalists have so many answers that these other professionals don't. It would just be such a loss to the health of humankind for us to become eradicated again.

Rosalee de la Forêt:
Yeah, and then just lose out to this literally, billion dollar nutraceutical, chemical constituent this-for-that.

Lila Swanberg:
Yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:
All the magic and effectiveness oftentimes—not always, but oftentimes, out of it as well. We have an uphill battle that we've been facing for a really long time. That's the other thing. It's very difficult to come to the table and have discussions about this because there are strong feelings either way, so-

Lila Swanberg:
Very strong feelings.

Rosalee de la Forêt:
Go to an herbal conference and bring up the word "licensure" and see how it goes, and duck. I'm just kidding. We're a peaceful crowd.

Lila Swanberg:
Put your shield up.

Rosalee de la Forêt:
Well, thank you so much for coming on. Thanks for having these important conversations. Thanks for bringing shatavari to the show, especially with this juicy recipe. I really appreciate it. It's been great to catch up with you.

Lila Swanberg:
Yeah, great to see you! And I hope everybody goes out and drinks some ojas beverage.

Rosalee de la Forêt:
I cannot see how anybody wouldn't want to. It was a great—great promotion. Thanks again, Lila.

Lila Swanberg:
Thank you, Rosalee.

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 Sim Gupta in India. Sim is a student in this year's Rooted Medicine Circle who combines previous herbal experience with an open, curious approach to learning. She discovered that slowing down and using more intentional medicine making techniques helped her experience familiar herbs like chamomile in an entirely new way. I love that. One of her favorite creations was a beautiful *Rosa damascena* syrup whose rich, floral aroma, vibrant color and layered flavor made the entire process memorable. Thank you so much, Sim, for being a part of our community.

If you'd like to be an herbalist, you can check out my foundational courses at herbswithrosalee.com.

Okay, you've made it to the very end of the show, which means you get a gold star and this herbal tidbit. There's a trial from 2024 that's worth mentioning here because it looked at shatavari on its own rather than buried in a formula, so that's pretty cool. In this study, 75 women between 40 and 65, some of them were perimenopausal, some of them past menopause. They took either a standardized shatavari root extract or a placebo for 60 days—neither the women or the researchers knew which had which. At the start, every woman in the shatavari group was having hot flashes. By Day 60, four of them were. In the placebo group, 19 still were. Night sweats went from 16 women down to 2. Sleep scores improved by about 40% in the shatavari group, and got worse in the placebo group. But the number that I think is really cool in this was the quality of life. The researchers used a scale that asks about work and health, emotional life, sexual life, and the shatavari group scores climbed steadily over the two months; the placebo groups went down. That's the piece I really love here because it's not just about the symptoms getting better, but it's also about life getting better while you're living it.

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