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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.

Nettle is often talked about as a nutritive powerhouse. It's rich in minerals, it's supportive, it's reliable, but for many people, nettle becomes something deeper than a helpful herb. It becomes a relationship. In this episode, I'm joined by Mary Blue to talk about nettle, not just as a remedy, but as food, daily nourishment, and a long-term companion plant. Mary shares how nettle has been part of her life since her early 20s—something she has turned to again and again, not as a protocol but really as a way of feeling supported in her body. We'll explore how nettle shows up across cultures as an everyday plant, how so much plant knowledge has been lost or pushed aside, and why reclaiming herbs like nettle often has less to do with learning something new, and more to do with remembering what humans have long known.

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.

Mary, welcome to the show. I'm thrilled that you're here.

Mary Blue:

Thank you! Thanks for having me. I'm so excited to be here too.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, we got to hang out recently and—and I’ve been wanting to have you on the show for a long time, but all in all, we haven’t spent that much time together so I’m looking forward to get to know you well right now. I’m just excited for you to dive in. How did you get into herbs?

Mary Blue:

I got into herbs through activism. I started—I was looking for a job, any old job would do. I was 19 and I started working for a lobby organization, knocking on doors, raising money for them. Clean Water Act—I don’t know. People—it’s a really big national organization. So, we were knocking on doors to strengthen the Clean Water Act, shut down dirty power plants. I was a—I was good at it. I was a good canvasser. I did it for six years, did field managing, and through that I got into Earth First!, which is a very radical—it’s more of direct action-oriented. We were doing tree sits. This is back when—during the anti-globalization movement, so the late ‘90s, early 2000s. It’s like the WTO protests and IMF protests, Free Trade of the America protests, like early 2000s, anti-globalization movement.

I just sort of was like, “What am I putting in my body? What are—what are the answers here to—to medicine?” I stumbled on an herb shop in my town, took a little free class there, and then just started volunteering there, and I was like, “I don’t care what I’ll do. I’ll—I’ll clean your toilets. I’ll clean your hot tub.” I literally—the owner is still a good friend of mine, Danielle. I would go to her house and clean her house. I didn’t have a car at the time, so she let me use her car and do activism stuff around the city.

And then I started doing medic activism work. That’s where I met Grez, Greta, who’s on the West Coast. She was a big inspiration, Earth Firster in the late ‘90s, early 2000s, and CoreyPine. We met very early in those anti-globalization days. It was like on the streets washing people’s eyes from teargas, and then doing support clinics, that kind of stuff, and then ended up going to volunteer after Hurricane Katrina, and worked in the Common Ground Clinic and the Claybord Clinic and a couple of other clinics. We just brought all of our herbs down there and helped whoever we could. And then I came back to Providence where

I'm from and ended up founding an herb shop—that was 18 years ago now. A community health and education center focused on herbalism and making all of the herbal information accessible.

That's how I got into it, was activism. I didn't really expect it to be a career or—I was sort of a very staunch anti-capitalist, which I still am. I live in a world of capitalism, so I do my best to be anti-capitalist. I was very, very radical then. Now, I'm a business owner trying to operate a business in a capitalist system and be a single parent and support my aging parents next door. You know life shifts as our situation shifts, but it was really activism and I've really realized that I couldn't be on the streets anymore, putting myself at risk, especially when I became a parent. I still will put myself on the streets, especially if what's going on in Minneapolis comes to Providence. I will stand up in the streets when I need to, but it couldn't be my career-traveling-activist thing. I was like—I need to switch to activism at home, and “activism at home” for me was herbalism because I could help people. I could share what I loved. I could create community. It was—it had all the answers of what I was looking for in activism of “What do we want in the world? What do we want to see in the world?” I'm like, “Well, I need to focus on what I want to see in the world because it all becomes so overwhelming of, ‘How am I going to change things, especially now when there's so much going on in the country with awful—awful regulations and fascism on the rise?’” It's just—you just have to keep going back to have my herbalism as my—as my form of activism until I'm called to stand on the street with my community, which may come soon.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That's really interesting to hear that, Mary. My first protest was the WTO in Seattle, and that is what brought me into herbalism, eventually, as well. So similar path in that way.

Mary Blue:

Really? We were both there!

Rosalee de la Forêt:

You were there as well? Wow!

Mary Blue:

Yeah! Did you go to the Michael Franti show afterwards? There was like most—it was the first time I had ever seen him, he played in Seattle. I know he’s got some controversy now, but it was just this—this—this energy of change and shift. I worked for Pacific Crest biodiversity product—project, which was in Seattle. We were door knocking before WTL to raise awareness about it, but yeah. We were doing tree sits up in the Gifford Pinchot Forest around that time. So, that’s so awesome! Are you from Washington? Is that how you were [crosstalk]

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I was living in Oregon at the time. I was in Oregon.

Mary Blue:

Okay, okay, so we have a similar—similar start. That’s so cool!

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Background. It’s interesting to hear that you got into herbalism through activism because something that you’re quite well-known for is the fire cider action.

Mary Blue:

Yes.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

And I’m wondering—there’s probably some people here who are very familiar with this and some people who are listening who are like, “Fire cider what?” so would you mind just sharing a little bit about that?

Mary Blue:

Totally, yes. In—I think it was 2011, a corporation trademarked the name “fire cider” unbeknownst to the herbal community. Fire cider has been a really general term for a hot, spicy vinegar remedy for the last 56 years. Probably since the early 80’s we found out in court. And this company trademarked it, a group of us came together to figure out how to fight it. The trademark was already done.

Once a trademark is in place, it’s really, really hard to get rid of it. So, a group of friends of mine, Nikki Telkes, Rosemary, Helen—a bunch of us got together and we created a group. We said, “Alright, let’s file a opposition to the trademark,” which at the time we didn’t really understand what the hell we were doing. And we got a pro bono lawyer. Interestingly enough, my co-defendant, Kathi Langelier, got us this pro bono lawyer before we even got sued. Then we got sued for filing this—this opposition to it. They sued myself, Nicole or Nikki—she goes by “Nicole,” I think, professionally—and then Kathi. The three of us got sued together. It was like this million dollar lawsuit for trademark infringement. Kathi had already changed the product name because she has a really big company, Herbal Revolution, and she just didn’t want to be involved in any legal stuff. She fully supported us and was involved in some of the organizing, getting us the lawyer, but she just—for her—to protect her own business, she changed her name. But they still included her in the lawsuit, and then they included me, which I’m just this rinky-dink little herbalist. I barely sold four gallons of fire cider a year. You know what I mean? I have a tiny, little shop on this tiny, little neighborhood in Providence. I don’t sell anywhere else. I’m very intentionally small. My name was on the—the opposition that’s why they sold it—that’s why they charged me and Nikki.

So, the three of us were bound together legally for almost ten years while we fought this thing. Rosemary Gladstar was like our fourth—was like the “Fire Cider Four,” essentially, because she was with us in every legal meeting, every team meeting we had. We took it to federal court and we ended up winning, so fire cider is now generic. Thank goodness. That was the activism piece. It wasn’t random that I was sued or that Nikki was sued. Nikki and I met back in the days of Hurricane Katrina. We worked together as activists. It—it wasn’t a

mistake that we were involved because we were activists already. Our name—we put our names on it. Anyway, Kathi—Kathi Langelier, she was just their biggest competition. Herbal Revolution is a national—from the Northeast, a national business. She was doing really well, so they just decided to throw her in. Thank God they threw Kathi in because she's my—both—both Kathi and Nikki are dear, dear friends, but Nikki lives in—actually, in Seattle now, and then Kathi is really close to me in Maine. She's one of my—both of them are my soul sisters, so thank God. I'm—I'm so glad I got sued with them. The best people that-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

What a thing to say!

Mary Blue:

The best—the best people I could've gotten sued with, so that's-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Thank you so much for your dedication to that and protecting fire cider as a tradition for all of us. This is just kind of a basic question, but they should have never been allowed to have trademarked that in the first place.

Mary Blue:

Yeah, yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That was like an errant—I mean, that's why you filed the original thing.

Mary Blue:

Right.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It just shouldn't have happened. It was a mistake.

Mary Blue:

Right. Well, it wasn't a mistake. It was—it was definitely intentional, like-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Well, not a mistake on their part, but it shouldn't have been approved.

Mary Blue:

Right.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It was a mistake that it got approved.

Mary Blue:

Right, right. The trademark office definitely was not doing their job. And then a few years later, we found out about an “herbalist” trademark. Somebody was trying to trademark “herbalist,” but we caught it before it got approved. We had—yeah, it was like we just—we just called AHPA—because people got in touch with me and then I got in touch with Rosemary. We're like, “Just call—let's just call American Herbal Products Association,” and they took it over. I didn't have anything to do with it. They just dealt—they hired our lawyers that we worked with. But, it was just like—luckily, we found it. Now, I think it's on the radar. A lot of people are watching trademarks, but they didn't—they were—I mean, I can't speak to too much about. I can't even say the company name because I have a—to not have the appeal. We're not allowed to say the company name or the people's names, or like divulge too much information. But there was—our lawyers dug up some surprising facts about how they got the trademark, and it was—it wasn't—it wasn't straight—it wasn't like—they weren't truthful. So, I'm going to just—that's all I'll say.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Alright. Well, again, thank you for all the work that went into that.

Mary Blue:

Thank you, I appreciate that. Thank you. Thank you.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I'll say it on behalf of all the listeners too.

Mary Blue:

I appreciate it. I appreciate that. Thank you so much.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That's interesting too that you say that it wasn't just the fire cider that got protected, but now, there's a radar for protecting our traditions, so thank you.

Mary Blue:

That, and it was like a precedent setting case, which is cool because for any specialty industry or specialty language—like a piano company might have a specialty term for something that—some part of the piano that they use that a corporation may try to trademark. It's like—it set the precedent for small specialty language. That's cool.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, that's really cool. Big impact there, multiple levels.

Hey, there. Just a quick note: if you'd like to hear from me in a more personal way, I'd love to have you in my free text community. I send a couple of texts every week, things like behind-the-scenes updates, herbal thoughts that I'm chewing on, and little sparks of joy I don't always share anywhere else. To join, just text the word ROOT to 1-509-383-8398, and if you ever want to break up, no hard feelings. Just text STOP to the same number, and you'll be opted-out immediately. My goal is to make it so juicy and so fun that you look forward to getting my texts each week. Okay, now back to the show.

Well, the plant that you've chosen is, admittedly, a very favorite plant of mine and I'm sure for many people, but I often like to ask just why did nettle call to you as the topic for today?

Mary Blue:

So, nettle is like the plant I know the best, personally. I have a—I have a ton of experience working with people in the shop, but I don't actually know how the plant is making them feel in their body. I chose nettle because nettle is the one that I really, really know because I've taken it, I've drank it as an infusion every day since those early days, since I was 20, so I have this deep, deep relationship of how it really, really—how it works and how it has worked for me.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

So, this is something you pretty regularly are drinking nettle infusions to this day?

Mary Blue:

Every day, every day.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Wow, that's so lovely. I have an on-again-off-again with nettle, but for the past six months, we've been on again. There's something so magical and powerful about drinking infusions, the nettle infusions everyday, so I'm excited to hear from you and what that's like after-

Mary Blue:

I mix it with other things. I'll do red clover and dandelion and raspberry, and the other nutritive tonics, but nettle is always, always in there.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Lovely. I'm a big fan of the nettle-oat straw infusions. That's kind of my thing and gotu kola right now.

Mary Blue:

Nice, nice, nice.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Where would you like to start with nettle?

Mary Blue:

I think I accidentally stumbled on nettle. I just started taking herbs. I was just—I had never had anything that really inspired me the way plants did. The first gateway plant was weed. You know what I mean? I grew up very—in a very, very religious family; not academic family at all. It was all about religion. My grades, honestly, didn't really matter. As long as I could pass, it was—I was a straight D student because I had no interest in anything—any part of school. No chemistry, no math, maybe a little bit of history because I had one history teacher that I liked, but I just started the—the fire was lit.

I remember the first herb class. My teacher, Danielle, was talking about drinking nettle everyday and made some peppermint and nettle tea. I just started drinking it everyday and giving it to everybody I knew. It was just this like (makes sound) because I had no background in science or math, I learned plants from just taking them and experienced them. As I had teachers, I started learning basic language or the chemistry of making herbal medicine, those kinds of things, but that took me 15 years to just pick apart what I—the foundations of herbalism. There wasn't any herb school back then that was just teaching these foundations, so I was just taking herbs and randomly putting things in jars with alcohol or oil and hoping something happened.

Nettle just made me feel better. I got this—I guess it was not—not addiction in a bad way, but it was just when I didn't have it, I could feel it in my nervous system. I was also a cyclist. I rode my bike everywhere. I rode my bike across country.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Oh, wow.

Mary Blue:

Doing—doing activism stuff so my knees and joints were always really affected. I was trying to support my—my musculoskeletal system, and build cartilage. I was very active that way. I also had eczema, so I was looking to support my skin health. Nettle just did it all!

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It's like one-stop shopping with nettle right here.

Mary Blue:

I was like, “Okay, bye-bye.” The food allergies weren't as bad. Obviously, I started eating better, but my joints, my nervous system—I remember traveling once and I couldn't have my infusion until 12:00. I was all like, “Ugh” agitated, and I took one sip and I was just like I could feel my nervous system just—for me, it was self-care. For me, treating my body better was activism. It was like saying no to this standard American lifestyle like, “I am going to be as healthy as I can.” That said, I have totally drank, smoked, did really stupid things to my body, and still every once in a while do. I'm not a purist, but on my day to day, I want to be healthy and that's part of my activism against this really oppressive system. Nettles was it for me, nettle was the one.

Through nettle, I was able to learn constituents. I was able to learn about soil health. I was able to learn botany. I was able to learn solvency. There were all these—these doors that opened up for me of like, “Oh, wait. Now, I have to learn anatomy. Oh, wait. Now, I have to learn chemistry. Oh, wait!” It was like—not just nettle but all the plants. “Oh, wait. Now, I have to learn Latin.” You know what I mean? It's like—it was like this—this plant that was just—kept opening these doors. I just wanted to share it, so, and I just kept drinking it.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I love that. You're saying it's truly a gateway herb and I can just imagine that young Mary is not going to a class on phytochem, right?

Mary Blue:

Yes.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That's not—you're not necessarily, but then [crosstalk]

Mary Blue:

There weren't any!

Rosalee de la Forêt:

There weren't any too, yeah. It's the plants that are opening up the door of beginning to learn things in a super practical way, which really speaks to me because I'm also more of a—a plant-inspired learner. I want to learn about the plants, then you learn about the other things.

Mary Blue:

Yeah, yeah. Back then, there wasn't. There was—there was only books or you learn in person, and then I think around 2006, 7, 8, we started to get more conversations about constituents, and *Medical Herbalism*, I don't know what year that came out, but it's probably the late 2000s that book came out. I was just like, "Oh, my God!"

Rosalee de la Forêt:

David Hoffmann's *Medical Herbalism*.

Mary Blue:

Yeah, yeah. Look at all these constituents. I couldn't understand. Lisa Ganora came out with her online class in 2010. I took that two times, still don't understand it. I do a little bit now, but you know what I mean?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I'm with you. I'm with you.

Mary Blue:

I was like I have no—I get the basics, but wow!

Rosalee de la Forêt:

My brain doesn't work like that, but I'm so grateful for Lisa [crosstalk] all these folks out there.

Mary Blue:

But for me, it was just like, "Let's just take these plants." That doesn't always work for everybody because some plants—most of the plants we have access to that aren't banned because they're proven harmful aren't—aren't going to hurt you that much. In fact, you'll—you'll—you'll feel better, so nettle—nettle was the one for me.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Back in the day, were you harvesting all of your nettle to make your teas?

Mary Blue:

Yes! Yep, we still do. Yep. I have some—a friend of a friend, my friend, my good friend, Lee, who lived here on my farm with me, introduced me to this other farmer. They have a compost farm, which is—it's an organic compo—compost farm with tons and tons and tons of minerals. It's right by the ocean and they get all the shellfish, so it's really, really high mineral compost, and their farm is covered in nettle. Covered. The owner, Jane, I had become friends with. Every year we go two weeks in a row, fill up a huge trailer, probably at least a thousand

pounds fresh. Fill the drying room a few times and that nettle lasts us usually through February, March. We sell it. It's our top-selling herb, not because I even talk about it all the time, but because it's—people love it.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I'll bet! To grow in that super mineral-rich soil that it loves, that must be some really amazing nettle. I'll bet people come back for that.

Mary Blue:

Yeah, yeah. Jane is—Jane is just so—they're so committed to organic farming. It's—it's great. Every year, I take my intern crew a few times and it's an awesome hook up because—

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Wow. What a gift to your community, honestly. I mean, that's really cool that your community gets to enjoy this incredibly awesome nettle that's totally local. Oh, my gosh.

Mary Blue:

We run out and we'll order from Mountain Rose or wherever in the spring until we—we usually run out, like I said, February, sometimes March, depends on how busy it is, but it's great. It's super, super nutrient-dense. You could tell the harvests are different based on the droughts or a lot of rain. The nettle are different every year. It's cool to get to know that relationship as well. [crosstalk]

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Do you have any insights on that? What are—what's a good year for nettle?

Mary Blue:

I would say not super dry. I would say they—they do—the thing is, is when it gets hot quick here in May—we usually harvest mid-May—sometimes here it just grows from cold, straight to hot. This happens with any plant where a lot of heat will cause it to go to seed really fast. I like

a nice, slow spring with—with regular rain. I also like regular rain because the nettles are cleaner. They're not as dusty. Rain a few days before gives it—gets some of that compost dust off of there. We'll—we'll miss a week if it gets hot. You know what I mean? It'll go straight to 80, 85 or 90, and the plants just go, "Nope. I'm done. I'm seeding. My job is done. It's hot." We try to get it before it goes to seed, so we get all the minerals in the leaf.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Right. Do you all just head out in gloves and long sleeves?

Mary Blue:

We just wear beehive—beekeeper gloves, which are like long leather gloves with canvas—canvas fingers. We use a saw. We have those landscaping saws. We just grab a huge handful and put them in paper bags and then fill the trailer.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Wow.

Mary Blue:

It's great. Some of the interns. It's a very supportive environment. People—it's disarming. You're doing something so it's easy to chat. It's the beginning of our intern season, so it's usually like the second or third week. Everybody is getting to know each other. There's like—I'm a hustler. I like hustling, so I'm always (makes sound) just going really fast, but it's also like I have a few on my crew that I know are my hustlers that come. Terry and Maggie are always with me. I'm like, "We'll get it done." The rest of the crew definitely works hard, but it's definitely a really peaceful environment on—it's called Earth Care Farm. It's down by the beach. It's just like—it's a lovely, lovely experience. I like it. Every year—we've been doing it about at least twelve years now, maybe—maybe longer.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Wow.

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.

Do you feel like folks are coming in the shop, they're asking about different ailments they have, do you feel like you're a nettle pusher?

Mary Blue:

I am. All of my products have nettle. Not the tinctures, because of solvency. Some of them do, but most of them don't, but all of my teas and my infusions, every blend I have has nettle in it. When people come in, not necessarily—I'm not necessarily pushing nettle on them or—if someone asked me to make a formula, like I'll have people come in and be like, "Can you give me a formula for cardiovascular health?" I'm not necessarily going to put nettle in it, but I do find that nettle helps other herbs work better. I think my observation is because of its alterative effects, it helps the body get rid of toxins, process extra hormones. I find that having nettle in there, if they're not too dry of a constitution or not on blood coagulants or whatever, nettle helps other herbs work better in my experience. It could be biased. It could be biased, but I think it—I think it does. I think it's just—everybody can use nutrients. Everybody can use kidney support. Everybody can use detoxification. When you have those things acting with another herb to lower stress or like your—your infusion, gotu kola and infusion—and oat straw, those herbs work I find a little bit better because of—because of its supportive effects.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah. I never really thought of it like that, but it doesn't surprise me. Let's talk about solvency because you brought it up, and so someone out there might be curious. "What do you mean it's not in tinctures? What about solvency?" so let's dive into that.

Mary Blue:

Sure. Solvency is like a concept that I wasn't taught about at all. Nobody talked about it until—I think it was 2008 when I heard Mimi Hernandez who used to work at ASG do a class on it. She was talking about wild cherry and the glycosides, and how they're only water-soluble. Like I said, my background—I barely graduated high school. I didn't—I was helping my son with a lab report last week and I was like, this is the first lab report I've ever done. I'm not—I wasn't a science person. I didn't go to college. I went straight into activism.

This concept that are—liquids that we're using—water, alcohol and oil, all act differently based on the herb, and that water dissolves constituents. Nettle is an herb, in particular, that's really high in minerals and minerals need water to be dissolved. Alcohol will dissolve some constituents, but for vitamins and minerals, I'm always going 100% water. Now, my classes are—my Level 1 classes are basic solvency; really, really basic phytochemistry and understanding when to use water, alcohol or oil, and how to use them.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

So important. If you—this is a while ago, but it still reverberates. There was a wellness blogger that wrote about multivitamin tinctures.

Mary Blue:

Oh, yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I feel like we're still having to deal with that, years later.



Mary Blue:

If you're—if you're double extracting, which I do all of my tinctures double extractions, I make my water part separate than my alcohol part. I'm always heating my water part. If you're making a concentrated double extraction where you're decocting and concentrating your minerals, you're going to have some, but still the dosage of 60 drops isn't going to do what four cups of a daily infusion is going to do. I have a nettle tincture that I put into my allergy blend, and it's double extracted so I could get some of the minerals. I do know that its antihistamine properties work with alcohol and water. I don't remember which constituent is the antihistamine property, but it works as a tincture for certain things. It doesn't work for a tincture for everything. If I was taking a tincture for my musculoskeletal back in the day, it wouldn't be doing as much with me drinking a tea. Luckily, I loved it in a tea back then. Taking it all the time and making it for my friends that I was traveling with. Solvency is, for me, is a—it's like a huge aha moment. I still, every time I make something as a double extraction or like with deep color, I'm always like, "Oh, my God, this is so cool!"

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah.

Mary Blue:

I could still—so just seeing the life force of the medicine and being able to really understand it is just awesome. I still get really excited by it.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

So, you're—I'm fascinated with how you're describing your double extractions. You're making a concentrate with the water, and then you're also making an alcohol extract with nettle too, and then combining both of them. Is that what I understood? Cool.



Mary Blue:

Yep. I do that with 100% of my tinctures now because we make—we make tea with water. We make hot water. We make soup with hot water. You could just enhance your tincture practice with using heat, but heating alcohol is dangerous. I almost lit my kitchen on fire. I burned—I was trying to heat up some alcohol and do a double extraction. I wasn't heating the alcohol itself, but I was—had a flame on, doing my double extraction and I spilled the alcohol next to the stove, and the f***ing whole wall went up.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Whoa!

Mary Blue:

Excuse my—yeah, F bomb there—but the whole wall went up and the alcohol dripped all over my sneakers and my pants, and my eye was on fire. I had to use a fire extinguisher, and then we had to clean out the whole production kitchen and get rid of anything—everything because the—the chemical from the fire extinguisher was everywhere, so I don't heat alcohol in the same room anywhere near it.

You know when you do something dangerous enough, like you use a chainsaw all the time, you sort of forget how dangerous it is? That's how heating up tincture is because I was like my tinctures need heat. Now, I was doing a double—I was doing a—a double boiler heating them up outside most of the time, but then I had done it so much that I was like, "Wait. I got to stop this." That's why I started doing double extractions because I used to just heat all my tinctures because I knew I wanted—heat stimulates those "polar cells" whatever you want to call it. I'm not Lisa Ganora. She could say it better than I. But it definitely extracts it better. Then I was like, "Let me just do it separate so all of my tinctures are separate," and the quality, the color, the taste is, I would say leaps and bounds better than just cold tinctures.

I want to make good medicine. I want to help people. You know what I mean? I want to just dig in as much as I can because I want to make the most effective stuff. The access and

people—the trust is built because a lot of people have lost access and trust to herbalism because someone made a crappy tincture or they got a pill from Walgreens that was heated and cooled, and heated and cooled and doesn't work. So, yeah, solvency was—is part of my activism. I'm like, "Let's just make the best stuff we can make," and I still learn from it.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

You mentioned that one time you do make a tincture with nettles is for allergies. That went by real quick so I want to circle back to that because I bet there's someone out there who's interested.

Mary Blue:

Yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I guess you did mention. We have some antihistamine qualities going on. Maybe the next best question will be, are there other times when you would reach for a nettle tincture versus a tea?

Mary Blue:

Let's see. I would say if I had someone who didn't have access to making infusions, I would say a really well-extracted nettle tincture, double extracted with a high-mineral concentrate of the leaf, but I would do a higher—a little bit of a higher dose. I would say, "Okay, you want it for your musculoskeletal, you can't take your infusions because of xyz in your life, I would do 60 drops six times a day instead of three times a day." Make sure my tincture is 60%-70% water, push that edge of how much water you could put in your tincture. It's a little bit—a little bit higher. I would say that that's the only time I ever really do nettle in a tincture is for allergies. I also like it because you can dose it a little more frequently, and especially with allergies sometimes people need to dose it in the moment when they're having a reaction. I don't use it for—maybe—maybe some detoxification, but no, I really like it as a—as an infusion.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I like how you mentioned if somebody really can't have infusions, then maybe in that case, because that really just speaks to your dedication to accessibility too and just working with where people are at, but yeah, it's definitely a—it's a wonderful tea herb. I'm with you though with the allergies, that especially fresh nettle extraction seems to work really great.

Mary Blue:

Yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Both in prevention and in the need.

Mary Blue:

And sometimes you'll just be like, "We got to find a different herb." You know what I mean? If it doesn't work in the infusion and you're pushing it in this—what? With a square peg and a circle or whatever? You know what I mean? Let's just find something else that works.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

You also mentioned nettle supporting the kidneys. I'd like to hear more about that.

Mary Blue:

Yes. I know it is an alterative, which alteratives—when I first learned about alteratives, they were just herbs that alter your health, and then heard of it as a blood cleanser. What does that mean? How does it clean the blood? The only time I hear these—would hear things like this, I felt like I had to be like an herbal detective like, "What do you mean? How does something clean the blood?" It supports the kidneys and the kidneys function to clean the blood and all of the eliminatory organs. It's—it's a detoxifier.

For me, I first learned about it because of its effects with eczema. I used nettle and burdock together. They were known as blood cleansers. I took them and it cleared up my eczema along with cutting out the toxic foods that were causing it. So, the—the blood cleansing, and there's—I haven't actually looked even recently if there's any studies on nettle—nettle's effect on the kidneys, but I do know this is how herbalists have talked about nettles for years—as an alterative, and I find it definitely, definitely helps.

That said, because it's an—not all alteratives are diuretics, but nettle is a diuretic. If you're not drinking enough water during the day in addition to your nettle infusion, you will—might feel a little dried out. I've had students who—especially in the mouth, you get dry lips and dry mouth. I've had—part of my homework for my programs is that people drink a daily infusion throughout the course. We pick the three herbs the first day of the course, and then everyday their homework is to drink the infusion because the best way to learn about herbalism besides having a teacher and reading is to take the herbs yourself. Nettle—I have some people who come back and say, “I felt worse. My eczema got worse and then it got better” or “I felt really too dry so I had to switch to something—a different alterative that wasn't as drying.” Like burdock is not as drying or whatever.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

All a learning experience to be able to experience that and understand that.

Mary Blue:

Or to be like, “Hey, how much water did you drink?” “Oh, I accidentally replaced my water intake with my infusion.” You don't want to do that. You still want to have your eight cups of water in addition to your two to four cups of infusion, whatever you're—you're doing. So, yeah, for—for—in my observation, as I've learned it, it's a very kidney supportive herb. I find that because we live in a toxic world, there's—there's pollutants everywhere. It's in our clothing. It's in the air. Our body is constantly detoxing. That nettle is just like a great, great plant to help your body just detoxify.



Rosalee de la Forêt:

I have this interesting thing going on with nettle that I haven't really been talking about. I'm curious on your take on this, but—so I started drinking nettle infusions—well, I have for the past two decades. I started nine months ago of taking—I was in an on-again situation with the nettle, so I started taking it everyday. After a while, I noticed that I wasn't peeing as frequently, which I thought was interesting because nettle is a diuretic and people often report that they have to pee a lot more, but this was after a couple of months. I was like, wow! I just—because I am someone who just pees all the time, every hour on the hour, got to go. And I thought that was—anyway, it was really cool. I really felt it was because of the nettles, and then I left for a month for Europe. The first couple of weeks was fine, but then I just got back into my pretty frequent pee schedule. I did not realize I was going to talk about peeing on this episode. Anyway, I was going to keep going with it here. I think it's really cool. This is something I've stopped and started and tested it. I don't know the exact action, if we can say like from an herbal perspective, it's tonifying the kidneys or maybe it's doing something to the bladder. I don't know, but I now maintain that I have solved my frequent peeing issue by drinking nettle infusions, which seems opposite of what often happens. But again, I often think that when you first start taking nettle, it has that more immediate diuretic effect, just like if you first start drinking coffee, it's more diuretic or even more laxative in that case, but after a while, your body just kind of habituates.

Mary Blue:

Yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Anyway, I guess this is me coming out and talking about nettle-

Mary Blue:

I believe it!



Rosalee de la Forêt:

Effect on the urinary system, but I would be so curious. I want to hear if other people have experienced this.

Mary Blue:

I know. I totally believe it.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I can't be the only one.

Mary Blue:

No. I fully believe it. I will say that I am not—I don't have to pee every hour. I'm like every—I mean I drink water but—pretty regularly, but I am not a frequent urinator, so maybe. I don't know. I haven't gone off it in a while, but-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It's very handy when you're traveling because that was like always the time that it was just the most annoying, like when you're traveling and-

Mary Blue:

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

You have to always think about, "Where is the next bathroom going to be?"

Mary Blue:

Yeah, yeah.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It's been very handy. I've really liked it.

Mary Blue:

I like that. That's so good. That's so good empirical evidence right there.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

A case study of one, but I would love to hear from other people.

Mary Blue:

No. Me too! Me too.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I can't be the only one. Oh, yeah. Case study of two. Alright, well, yeah, I think about it from a Chinese medicine perspective. Is it a kidney yang restore—I don't know. I think about it for a lot of different things, but-

Mary Blue:

Yeah, I like that though.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah, yeah. Alright, thanks for listening.

Mary Blue:

That reminds me though of this sort of—this happens a lot in class where someone will take an herb for one reason, and then they get this other result they never expected. I always joke, I want to make a commercial out of it. Someone in my last class was like, “I can pet kittens again!” It was because of the antihistamine effect of the herbs she was taking. I think it was nettle and goldenrod. There's these funny, funny magical results of like, “Oh, wow! I don't have to pee as much. I didn't expect that. I was taking it for my nails or”—you know what I mean? I love it. Or *Astragalus*. I had someone come back and be like, “My doctor said my blood pressure was lower” and I was like, “I didn't mean to do that,” but that was a good thing. It's just like you never—you never know.

There's lots of things that we do know about plants, but because the information really has been systemically oppressed through lots of different cultures for generations, we're sort of starting to have this new observation, at least, in the last 70, 80 years of like, "What do the plants do? Somebody tell us again." There are cultures that are—haven't lost their—their connection to it, which is amazing, but most of it through colonialism. That information is—is gone! It's like the witches, the midwives, the enslaved peoples, the—all of the Indigenous people of North America, South America. There's all of these conquests that just burn this information out of us, so it's cool to be in a place, to be like, "Let's—let's be a part of making this information accessible again." And of course, that goes back to nettle. It always goes back to nettle for me.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Mary, you've talked about nettle as a tea and your love for nettle in that way, as a tincture, and we also have a lovely recipe from you from—for nettle pesto. Nettle as food. I'd love to hear about that a bit if you wouldn't mind sharing.

Mary Blue:

Sure, yeah. When you all asked me for a recipe, I was like, well, I guess I could just give them my peppermint nettle infusion recipe, but that just sounded a little boring. That's what I make everyday – my peppermint nettle infusion.

In the spring, I do nettle pesto and I do have a video of it up on my Instagram from a few years back. I can send you a link if you need it. It's basically using nettle leaves the same way you would use basil and make a pesto, and it's absolutely delicious. I—I really, really love it. I'm a pesto—I love pesto. I eat it all the time. I love growing basil. I love making pesto out of different plants. Nettle is my favorite spring one; especially in the spring because the green is just coming back. It's after the winter and you really, really—I, personally, really, really love the fresh—the freshness of it, the nutrients in it, and just getting out there and touching plants, smelling plants, smelling the fresh plants.

It's a super simple recipe. It's nettle, pine nuts, garlic, parmesan if you're not vegan. It's delicious. You can eat it with crackers. I also love doing stuffed nettles as a—use it like you would a grape leaf, steaming them and making little stuffed nettle—nettle things. You can make anything out of nettle. You can do nettle pancakes. You can make nettle fiber. It was one of the original plants that people used for—for fiber before the logging industry took over. That and hemp. Nettle and hemp were—were really, really important plants, so-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

When I was in Europe a few years back, we were at a museum and they—they had actually a nettle shirt that was really-

Mary Blue:

So cool.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It was from the early 1900s and it was still looking good.

Mary Blue:

Yeah!

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Preserved, obviously, not worn everyday but it looked pretty nice.

Mary Blue:

It can be rope. It can be clothing. It can be paper. There are so many things. I've never made rope, clothing or paper. Maybe I should because that would be my next step. There's a new movie, I think called, The Nettle Dress, that's-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yes, it's lovely.

Mary Blue:

Have you seen that?

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I have, yeah. We'll put a link for that in the show notes.

Mary Blue:

Yeah, yeah. It's a—it's a historically important plant. It's really, really, really—used to be very accessible. Now, it's just like, "Oh, it's a weed that gives you welts. Get rid of it."

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It still catches our attention though, absolutely.

Mary Blue:

Yes, yes.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Going back to the recipe, thank you for sharing that with us, the nettle pesto. Listeners, you can download your beautifully illustrated copy either by checking out the show notes for a link there or you can head over to herbswithrosaleepodcast.com to get your copy. Thanks, Mary, for sharing that with us.

We've talked about nettle in all these different capacities, different ways to work with nettle, different reasons to work with nettle. Is there anything else that we might have missed that you would like to hit?



Mary Blue:

Let's see. Well, interestingly enough, we didn't talk about the stings, about nettle—using nettle topically. So, we've had—last year, we had an intern. We went to do our annual harvest. We're out there all day harvesting. I sent the email that's like, "Wear jeans. Don't wear leggings because nettle stings through leggings." She didn't get the email, shows up in shorts. I'm like—she's a totally different size from me. I would've given her my pants. She showed up at the farm where we were harvesting. I was like, "I wish I could give you my pants, but we're just two different sizes." She's like (makes sound) She's like, "No, no, don't worry about it. Don't worry about it." She's like, "I'll just harvest," and I was so worried about her all day. I was like, "Oh, my God, Marissa. Marissa, are you okay? Are you okay? Are you okay?" I was like, "Don't do that." I was trying to protect her and she's like, "It's good. I like it. I like it. I like it. I want the stings." She's like, "My legs are"—she's a bartender. She's like, "My legs have been hurting so much. I just want a few stings. I'll get a few stings."

So, we go back to the farm and her freaking legs are just—my farm—and her freaking legs are covered in welts. It looks like she got attacked by bees and I felt horrible. I was like, "Marissa,"—I felt like I should've just told her to go home, but she was so insistent. You know what I mean? I felt like I wasn't protecting her and I just felt like—oh, my God. So, we made it—we did this lesson where we made a poultice, helped her with the stings. I kept checking in on her everyday—everyday like, "How are you? How are you? Is everything okay?" She's like, "My legs have never felt better." She's like—the next two months, she had no pain in her legs. It was this like—like this anti-inflammatory reaction to the stings. It's—it's—the stings are very inflammatory in the moment, but they give you lots of blood flow and reduce inflammation in the long term. People have been doing that for a long time with nettle stings, using it for joint pain and arthritis.

In that moment, she had—she knew that—she knew what she was doing. I kept trying to stop her because I felt responsible because I didn't want her to be in pain. Obviously, we don't want our interns to be in pain. I was like—at the end of the day, I was like, "Okay, she's an adult. She's consenting to going into the nettle field with shorts on. It's okay." I had another



intern who wouldn't wear gloves and she wanted the stings. I was like, okay, they're consenting adults. I did—I did my due diligence, make sure they're okay. At the end of the day, we learned so much. The crew learned so much just from making a poultice. A lot of times, people have never seen anyone make a poultice, see it in action, try to make it, collect the fresh herbs and actually apply it. Then seeing her—we have our internships on Mondays, so seeing her the next Monday and every Monday after, she was just like, “Can we go back? I got to go back to Earth Care Farm so I can get some more nettle stings.”

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Oh, I love that story.

Mary Blue:

It's just like a great—when you're doing it, it's not comfortable. Stinging yourself you can have—it gives you welts and could be really irritating, but after a minute—not—probably five minutes, ten minutes, the pain isn't as bad and then it has a sort of—it has this anti—really, really wonderful anti-inflammatory effect. I wouldn't tell one of my clients to go out and do that. It might be like, you know, but seeing it as an intern who knew what she was doing and wanted to do it and consented to it. It was like that's so cool to see that reaction because sometimes you don't get to see that stuff because you're—you want to protect someone. You don't want someone to get hurt. You know what I mean? You wouldn't necessarily prescribe that, although I'm not a prescriber, but you know what I mean—recommend it.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It is pretty fabulous. I've done that on my neck when I've had a lot of neck pain. I've had—put the nettles on it like this and it works out great. My original mentor, she said when she was in Germany that she was in this village and the older women in the village would go out and purposely handle the nettles to deal with arthritic joints [crosstalk]

Mary Blue:

Arthritic hands. Yeah, it's so cool!

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Yeah. Thank you so much for sharing that story and thanks for sharing your wisdom on nettle. Unless you have anything else, we could move on a bit.

Mary Blue:

I could keep—I could talk about nettle for—no, I’m kidding. I don’t have anything else.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

You could, you could.

Mary Blue:

I probably do have a few more. I probably have a few more, but I’m good.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Alright, well, I would love to hear more about just how you’re offering your version of herbalism out into the world. I know you have a school. I know you have a shop. Also, you have some interesting books too, so I would love for you to share about it all.

Mary Blue:

Sure, yeah. Most of my teaching is in-person. I do have an online program, but that’s all pre-recorded. I very much prefer to teach in-person. I do have three—I have five different programs that I do in-person in Rhode Island. I have a Level 1 program, a Level 2, and then I have a kids program. I run the Level 1 three different times a year. We have a kids camp—kids program, kids camp, and then—then I have an online program as well. The online program is—is all of my Level 1 program, but like I said, it’s all pre-recorded. I do have a free introductory, *Become an Herbalist Guide*, that just takes you through basics of herbal actions and solvency. That’s on—I think it’s on my Instagram. Actually, I don’t think it’s on my Instagram anymore right now, but it will be back up there soon. Right now, it’s some mutual aid stuff. I’ll put it back up there soon though.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Wonderful, that would be great. I really want to hear how your kids' book came to be.

Mary Blue:

Oh, yeah, the kids book. I just—I put that out in 2025. I've been working on it with my kid group for a few years. While working on it, we put on plays. Every summer we do a kids camp and at the end of the camp, we do an herbal play. We've been developing these herbal super heroes. The kids' book is a super hero book. It is—some of the character—most of the characters were developed by the kids, like Captain Calendula. One of the favorites is Captain Calendula. Nettle is also a character. We have Captain Calendula's sidekick is Plantain Pup. Yeah, they're so dang cute. It's called *Herbal League*, just like the super hero league, whatever it was from the '70s. Red clover is one that looks like Wonder Woman. It's—it's really fun. When I get around to it, there will be a Volume 2 of different adventures. That was super fun. That was—I'm—I'm really glad that I finally just got it. Just sat down and did it, finished it. I had been working on each of the characters, just making a version of them. It's all digital. I piece them together on Canva. I have limited Photoshop experience. I finally got them all together and it's super fun. I love it. I'm really into kids, like I love hanging out with kids. I have a blast hanging out with kids. They're my favorites. I just—going to teach at an herb conference, I'm like, I'd rather just hang out—just teach a kids class. You know what I mean? Sure, I could talk about solvency or whatever you want me to talk about, but I'm like, "Can I just do a play with the kids?"

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It's so cool this book was developed with the kids through these plays. That's really interesting.

Mary Blue:

A lot of the kids grew up in camp, so a lot of them started as little ones. Here it is, *Herbal League*. There's a picture on the back of my kid crew—of all the kids and me. They all grew up

with the class. A lot of them are 17, 18. Some of them, the first round of kids are like 30. I started this camp in probably 2003 or 4, before I opened the shop. Some of the kids are full grown adults. It's so cool.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Wow, it's so cool. It had an impact. You have this shop, Mary. Will you mention that as well for people who are in the area who might want to come visit? I think you have a bit of an online presence as well.

Mary Blue:

Yes. I have an herb shop in Providence. We opened 18 years ago. It's in a tiny, tiny, little garage that I renovated into a tiny, little shop. It's like 400 square feet. We have a little garden and a classroom and a commercial kitchen next door where we make all of our products and we do all of our classes. We're open five days a week now, which is wonderful. I was open seven days a week for over ten years. I just switched my schedule to five days a week, which is amazing. And then online, I am actually retired from Instagram. I did create a business on Instagram for many years and decided to retire from Instagram and just focus on my in-person classes and my shop. I still will post here and there on Instagram, but I'm not—I don't actively market on there. I just—it was—it worked for a while and then I just decided I didn't want to do marketing anymore. I didn't want to hand marketing off to—my personal marketing off to someone else, so I said—it was great for the time I did it because I was able to home school my son while I did it, and that was about four or five years, and now, I'm just focused on my shop and my in-person classes.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Wonderful! Where is the best place for people to find you then?

Mary Blue:

You could definitely DM me on Instagram. You may or may not get an answer, but you can check out my website. It's FarmacyHerbs.com, and it's Farmacy with an F. F-A-R-M-A-C-Y.

Herbs, H-E-R-B-S.com. I have a summer camp coming up—an adult summer camp coming up in July on my farm from July—I think it’s 10 through the 13th. It’s a four-day intensive. That’s super fun. People can camp on the farm. We don’t do food. I don’t provide food. We have a potluck. People bring their own food, but they’re welcome to camp on the farm. And then I have a spring program and a fall program as well. I also have a Level 2 on my farm, the first weekend of August. My good friend, Suzanna Stone from Owlcraft Healing Ways, she comes up and teaches that—helps me teach that. Those are two events on the farm. They are really fun, super small. I just—I’m very hesitant to get—I like being small. I like my little, tiny herb shop. I like selling a few tinctures. I like selling a few classes and that works for me. I-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I bet that’s a wonderful experience for everyone to come have this intimate experience.

Mary Blue:

Yeah, yeah. It’s fun. We have fun. I like to—I like to sing. You don’t have to sing, but I’m a lively, lively, fun person, I think. I have fun—I have fun with myself.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

It sounds like that keeps you all very busy. I highly recommend people check out your website. I was on there earlier today. There are lots of things to check out. They can find your books there as well as more information. Go check that out.

Before you go, Mary, I have one last question for you.

Mary Blue:

Sure.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That question is how has working with herbs change the way that you see the world?

Mary Blue:

That's a great question. How has herbs help me change—so, I think for me, being able to be empowered to heal myself is amazing, or to heal my own child—obviously, I'm going to get advice when I need it, but that empowerment has enabled me to have confidence in lots of other areas. My success with herbalism, my success with taking nettle everyday or my success with—even that one poultice we used gives me confidence in other areas in my life where I'm like I can have the—the confidence to go on Rosalee's shows because I know I have the confidence in herbs and I can talk about them because I have this—this really, really deep experience with them.

But even before I had this 25 years of experience, the plants, just having the connection to nature help me have that confidence that I didn't have growing up. All I had was this—was this toxic really oppressive religion, really awful public school. Coming out of that, finding plants was just—opened up this window or opened up this whole new world. It was more of a world of me stepping into really me being myself authentically. It's cool because I got into herbalism because I want to help other people, but at the end I—I really benefited from it. I have been able to build my life and spend my time, and my community connections have been really, really—it's been very fulfilling. Even though it was like I want to help people, but wait, look. This is cool. I got a career, so I think that would-

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That's a beautiful sharing, Mary. Thank you so much.

Mary Blue:

Thanks.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I'm so glad that the plants found you and you found the plants, all the work you've done, which I think most—you have such a long reach especially through the fire cider work.

Obviously, that has infused through your own community and all that you're doing through accessibility and empowerment. You can see that you've returned the gift tenfold outwards.

Mary Blue:

Thank you. Now, can I interview you? Because I want to know everything about you. I just told you everything.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

That'll have to be another time!

Mary Blue:

I won't be starting a podcast though. We were—we were joking. We were—it's so funny because I don't read Google reviews, but for some reason, I noticed on email about a Google review. Me and my staff, we read all of our Google reviews from 10, 15 years ago. I was joking, I'm like, "I need to start a podcast where I just read my—my Google reviews. That would be freaking hilarious!"

Rosalee de la Forêt:

There's always time. There's always time.

Mary Blue:

There's always time to look at my Google reviews.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Alright. Noted, noted. Thanks again so much, Mary. It's been lovely hanging out with you. Thanks so much for sharing your wisdom.

Mary Blue:

Nice to see you too. Thank you so much for all you do too. I really, really appreciate your work and your voice and your commitment to herbalism as well. I appreciate it and thanks for inviting me.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

Absolutely! I look forward to the next time we get to hang out in person too.

Mary Blue:

Yeah! Come to the East Coast.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

I will. I will. Thanks, Mary.

Mary Blue:

Yeah, thank you.

Rosalee de la Forêt:

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

This podcast is made possible in part by our awesome students. And this week's Student Spotlight is on Ann-Sophie Jerome in Florida.

Ann-Sophie completed the Herbal Energetics Course and continued into Rooted Medicine Circle, where her careful, hands-on approach to medicine making truly stood out. For her capstone project, she hosted an Herbal Syrup Skill-share that included a virtual class and an in-person tasting with DIY mocktails featuring herbs like rose, saffron, cinnamon, clove, and cardamom — truly a beautiful celebration of herbal traditions and community connection.

Her sensory reflections are just as memorable; describing linden, she wrote that it smelled like “honey and sunshine” and brought a warm, hug-like sense of calm.

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

And if you’d like to be an herbalist, you can check out my foundational courses at HerbsWithRosalee.com.

Alright, you’ve made it to the end of the show which means you get your very own gold star and this herbal tidbit.

Nettle sting isn’t just a defense mechanism. It’s part of why fresh nettle has traditionally been used for joint pain, like we talked about in the episode. The stinging hairs inject a mix of compounds including things like histamine, acetylcholine, and formic acid. When applied intentionally to painful joints, this creates this controlled, acute inflammatory response, and that local irritation appears to do two things: one, it increases blood flow to the area, and it also may temporarily overwhelm pain signaling pathways that’s a phenomenon similar to counter irritation. Several small clinical trials have found that fresh nettle application can reduce pain in osteoarthritis, particularly in the hands. It’s really a great example of how an herb’s irritating qualities can actually be therapeutic when used appropriately.

As always, thanks for joining me in this episode. I’ll see you next time.