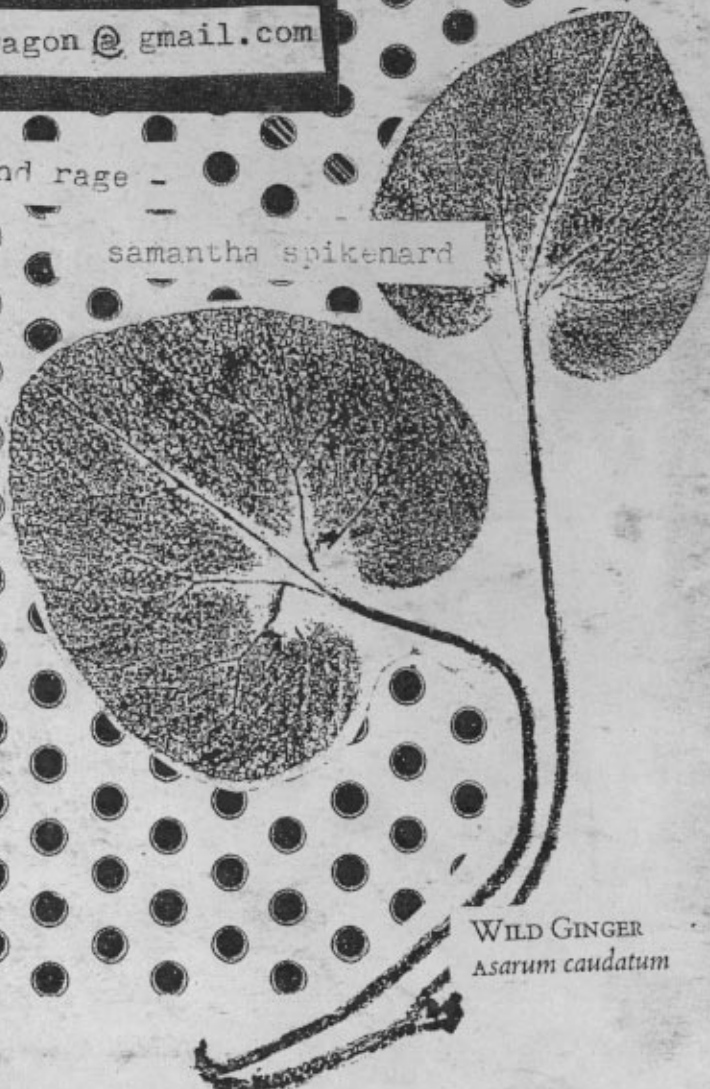


contact me at:

teawagon@gmail.com

with love and rage -

samantha spikenard



WILD GINGER
Asarum caudatum

PLANTS GONE WILD!

taking care of

plants in the wild

and making them comfortable

in yer own backyard

redefining ethical wildcrafting

we've been taking for

so long

and now its time to give back

the plants need YOUR help

take care of the plants that take care of you

or else...

(well, or else they will be gone f'orever.)

RESOURCES

crimson sage nursery - plants nor cal
530-627-3457

horizon herbs - seeds 541-846-6704

seeds of change - 888-762-7333

native plant society- www.tnc.org

calflora.org - what grows where

blue otter school of herbal medicine - 530-468-4342

united plant savers- unitedplantsavers.org

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* the whys?, hows? and whats going on

* tending plant stands in the wild

* planting in the wild

* growing medicine in yer garden

* resources





This was originally intended for herbalists, especially for wildcrafting herbalists, but really this would be useful for anybody that loves plants and benefits from having them as allies in their daily life. (which is everyone, 'cause aside from the heart-breaking extinction of beautiful creatures, none of us animals would last a week with out them)

As some of you may already know, there are a lot less plants around, medicinal and otherwise, these days. We can look to poor forestry practices (clearcutting), over development (houses, stripmalls, roads), climate change and too many people wildcrafting too much, to figure out why the plant populations have dwindled as dramatically as they have. this little book will deal mostly with the last issue, but after someone has been taking care of and loving up the plants in the wild places around them, like hell they are just going to stand by and watch it be clearcut and turned into a parking lot, so there is definitely some crossover.

I would like to begin by talking about **wildcrafting**. Where did we get the idea that it is okay to take the plants with out giving back to them, without returning the favor they are doing us by giving us their medicine? Why would we want to take without giving back?

What right do we have to come in and take their lives without offering something back to them? How could we take from them and not come back to make sure their remaining stand is thriving and spreading their seeds to make sure they flourish next year?

i love plants, and i hope you love them too.



ANGELICA
Angelica tomentosa

person you should not be harvesting ceremonial plants. Many ceremonial plants have become popular outside native culture and are frequently harvested, for example, white sage, angelica, and tomatium.

I am calling for a moratorium on harvesting, gathering, and wild crafting. We as herbalists should not take any plants from the wild for the next seven years. There are so few wild areas left, fewer stands and so much less plant diversity. Loss of wild areas to urban sprawl, de-forestation, pollution and over-harvesting by herb people have all been contributors to this loss. I want to promote and encourage wild planting and spreading what is still there. Go out and plant. Help create and sustain healthy areas by putting native plants back in their original environments. Many books are available that will tell you how to do this; the forest service often has list of the local native plants they will let you copy, garden clubs and botanists often know the plants in their area and of course the local herbalists. Imagine what places would look like if every person involved with herbs was planting and tending in the wild for the next seven years! This is the Native American way of using the plant people: you plant, spread, tend and sustain.

In addition to this, growing your own herbs and/or buying organically cultivated herbs is a very crucial and viable option. Support small organic herb farmers and seed companies. Do not promote mono cropping of huge amounts or multi-million dollar companies. Herbs grown with the right conditions and with their families are as healthy and strong as their wild counterparts. The plant people give their medicine readily if well grown. Ceremonial plants are different, as their medicine often involves the energy of the place where they grow as well. Again, if you are not a medicine person you should not be harvesting ceremonial plants. We have to start thinking about the reality of what is now, and not what has been. Stop wild crafting and start wild planting. 🌿

Karyn Sanders has been a practicing herbalist and teacher for 30 years. She has a full time practice as well as being the head instructor of the Blue Otter School of Herbal Medicine. She was traditionally trained by her Choctaw grandparents, by other Native American teachers, and apprenticed with a Mexican curandera. She has training in Western herbalism as well. Her school and practice in California have a Native American constitutional base. Karyn also produces and hosts "The Herbal Highway" on KPEA (94.1 FM).

Now lets not get our panties in a bunch, I know that this is a controversial subject. Lets all just take a deep breath and explore this rationally. We shouldnt take from the plants wihtout tending to them for a few reasons. Firstly, its rude, it is like forcing someone to work for you and then refusing to pay them. Secondly, it is unhealthy to be in non-reciprocal relationships. And thirdly, it isnt smart to neglect beings that we are dependant on. 'cause if we keep on using and not ging back and replenishing, sooner or later, were going to use them all up.

And then where would we be?



It is a responsibility we have to take care of those that take care of us. This idea is wildly unpopular in this culture of capitalism where we are praised for getting the most for the least work on our part.



If anyone reading this is feeling upset that someone would challenge their right to harvest plants for medicine, I would ask that you take a step back and ask yourself what makes you feel like you have the right to take the plants in the first place. I would ask you to look at you own sense of entitlement and privilege and see how the colonialist mentality of 'this land and everything on it is mine for the taking', might be affecting and influencing your feelings.

And if you dont have any idea what im talking about, please go ask a friend or look some of these words up for your self.

And aside from not wanting to take without giving and taking care of our resources, another reason to check yourself before diggin up half that patch of osha is realizing whos land you are really on. I dont mean private or BLM, I mean who was living on this land before your family emigrated over here? Native folks have been here taking care of and using these plants in many aspects of their lives since the beginning of their cultural history.

Imagine that you had a garden you had been taking care of for years and you wake up in the morning to a bunch of people eating your apples and carrots, cause 'you werent around'. This example pales in comparision to the reality of the situation at hand of native people's traditional harvest sites being overwildcrafted and decimated.

process, you can never fully understand and realize the sacrifice they are making for your well being and life! It is simple respect ~ give before you take. Just because you are an herbalist or medicine maker does not mean the plant people belong to you. Quite the opposite! Their medicine is a great gift to us.

Times have changed and the taking of plants from the wild needs to be re-addressed for many reasons. Herbalists and herb people have to look at the reality of dwindling and damaged wild areas. So many areas have been devastated by over-harvesting and incorrect harvesting. I have gone to stands that I have planted and tended for 20 years and found that someone has harvested horribly and in-correctly and half ~in some cases all ~ of the plants are gone. This is a hard fact to absorb; herbalists and herb people have been and continue to be a part of the problem of plants becoming endangered or extinct.

American ginseng and goldenseal used to be very common plants found in the mid-west to the southeast. They became very popular with herbalists and the general public and have been harvested almost to extinction. These are slow-growing sensitive plants that have not made a comeback in the wild but are being successfully

cultivated. In the west, osha and lomatum have been over-harvested, but both osha and lomatum are hard plants to cultivate and have not become readily available in commerce.

Plants have very specific needs in how they should be cut or dug. To cut or dig a plant without knowing what you are doing will possibly kill the plant. Being shown where a plant grows and learning its medicine is not the same as knowing how to harvest without hurting or killing it. For each plant you need to know it's specific needs or you are going to be doing nothing but harm. You can so easily damage an area by not knowing the correct way to harvest or whether the whole family is healthy so that someone may be harvested. Anytime you go to harvest wild areas you stand a good chance of taking from an area someone has already been using.

Most Native American medicine people that I know try and hide their stands and collecting areas, yet stands and areas that have been tended for thousands of years have been decimated or destroyed. Traditional plants are gone or there is not enough growing to be able to gather. Ceremonial plants, plants absolutely integral and necessary for ceremonies to be effective, are lost to us. If you are not a Native American medicine

whole, a family. This differs from the scientific or empirical method of classifying plant families by stems or flower structure. In scientific classification plants can be family simply by looking similar, yet live nowhere near each other. Without the family, the plant does not have its complete medicine. You should know what weather each plant likes and thrives in, the soil it likes, light and shade conditions and water sources. Does this plant like a lot of family nearby, or is it shy and quiet and live off to the side or behind others? Often plants do not even show themselves because conditions have changed or an area is being abused. Last year, this certain orchid that grows in high altitude, alpine conditions, was all over the place. I had not seen that orchid there for seven or eight years because the conditions weren't right, there had not been enough of a snow pack. Had I not been coming to the area for so long, I would not have even known they lived there, or that they were back. Eight years is a long time to wait for a friend.

If you regularly visit an area and sit quietly for long periods, the plant people with show themselves to you and talk with you. They will not sound like a voice out loud saying, 'Hi, I'm columbine!' but they

do talk in many ways. You may experience them through sound, images of color, or images of animals. You may see an illness, or feel the plant in certain parts of your body. The point is, you have to spend time with the plants to develop a relationship. You will find your own way of communicating with them.

Once you know an area and have a relationship with it, then you can plant native seeds and roots of the plant families in that area. You can also spread seeds, roots and bulbs. To save yourself frustration and not hurt the plants, you will want to be trained by someone who knows how to do this. In most places, there are local gardening clubs or plant nurseries that can help you. Be sure and plant what is part of the medicine family and native to the area. Tend this area for four seasons. After a full year, you have set yourself to that area forever. You are responsible for caring for that stand. This will help you feel and be a part of nature and not outside looking in or always visiting. The land will no longer just be a place you visit on vacation or when you need something.

Without growing plants or watching their life

Please don't take this an attack, try not to get defensive. Just consider it another way we can help out the plants that give us so much, another way that we can subvert the dominant paradigm and do what is right for our land base.

Ideally, we would all take a big break from taking a nd focus on replenishing the plant communities around us. Realistically, this is unlikley for many reasons i wont take the time to list here. So the goal of this is to get folks to start replanting stands that have been destroyed and to give people ideas on how to make sure the areas they wildcraft continue to thrive, by tending and care taking them. Really people, if you are going to wildcraft, make sure you help the plants you took grow back.

Ultimatly, this is to help people see how they could be allies to the many plants that take care of us so well. In my mind, this is integral to the term 'ethically wildcrafting'.



WESTERN FIVEFINGER FERN
Adiantum pedatum

some things you and yer friends

could do to help the plants you

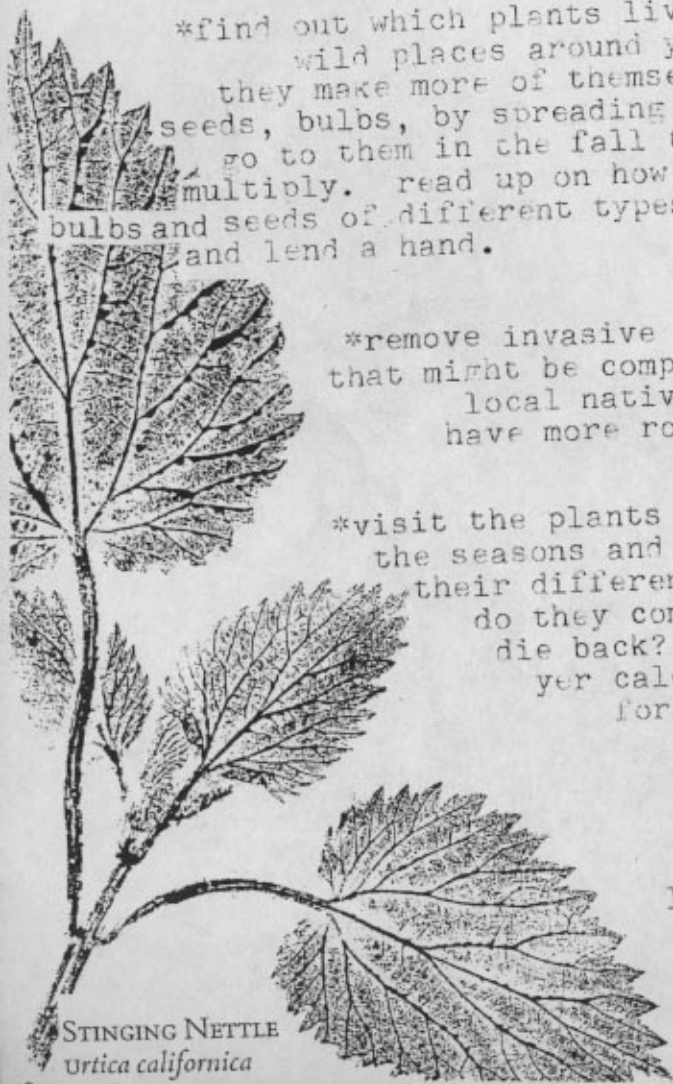
love stay healthy and bountiful are....

*find out which plants live in the wild places around you and how they make more of themselves- by making seeds, bulbs, by spreading their roots? go to them in the fall time and help them multiply. read up on how to spread the bulbs and seeds of different types of plants and lend a hand.

*remove invasive plant species that might be competing with the local native plants, so they have more room to grow

*visit the plants throughout all the seasons and see them in all their different phases- when do they come up, go to seed, die back? mark it down in yer calendar so you know for next year

*join yer local native plant society



STINGING NETTLE
Urtica californica

WILDCRAFTING: WHY WE SHOULD

NOT

A NATIVE AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE

by Karyn Sanders

When I was being trained as a child to work with the plant people, I was taught that you never take a life before you have helped start and sustain life. I was not allowed to take a plant person until I had grown a stand and spread seeds, bulbs and roots in an area. This was to show that I could sustain life and not just take it.

Before you think to take plants from the wild, you should plant and tend some. You need to have a relationship with the area and the plant people. Spend time, sit, talk and listen to them. I do not mean for five minutes or once a year or once in your lifetime. You really need to be with them on a regular basis daily, weekly, or monthly. Watch them through every season, every change. Know every plant that grows around them and in the area, for these are their families. This way you will know who should be around and who is missing. Families are made up of plants that have co-existed from generation to generation in the same area. The plants support each other, and together they will create the medicine as a

In Native American culture we see ourselves as part of nature, intertwined with life, not separate. We as humans are connected to everything on this earth and in the universe. Every living being is our relation. Every action we take affects another. As Native people, we feel our purpose here is to protect Mother Earth, to tend this place we call home and help all living beings.

The plants have and could thrive without us, however we cannot live without the plant people. The plants are our family: our grandfathers, grandmothers, aunts, and cousins. Plants are people, living beings with the capacity for knowledge, intimacy, relationships and communication. Plant families have been in the same place, in their ancestral soil since the beginning of this planet. Plants and trees are in complete relationship with everything around them, the soil, stones, water, sky, animals, birds, and insects. If just one element is taken or changed, it weakens and often kills the plants.

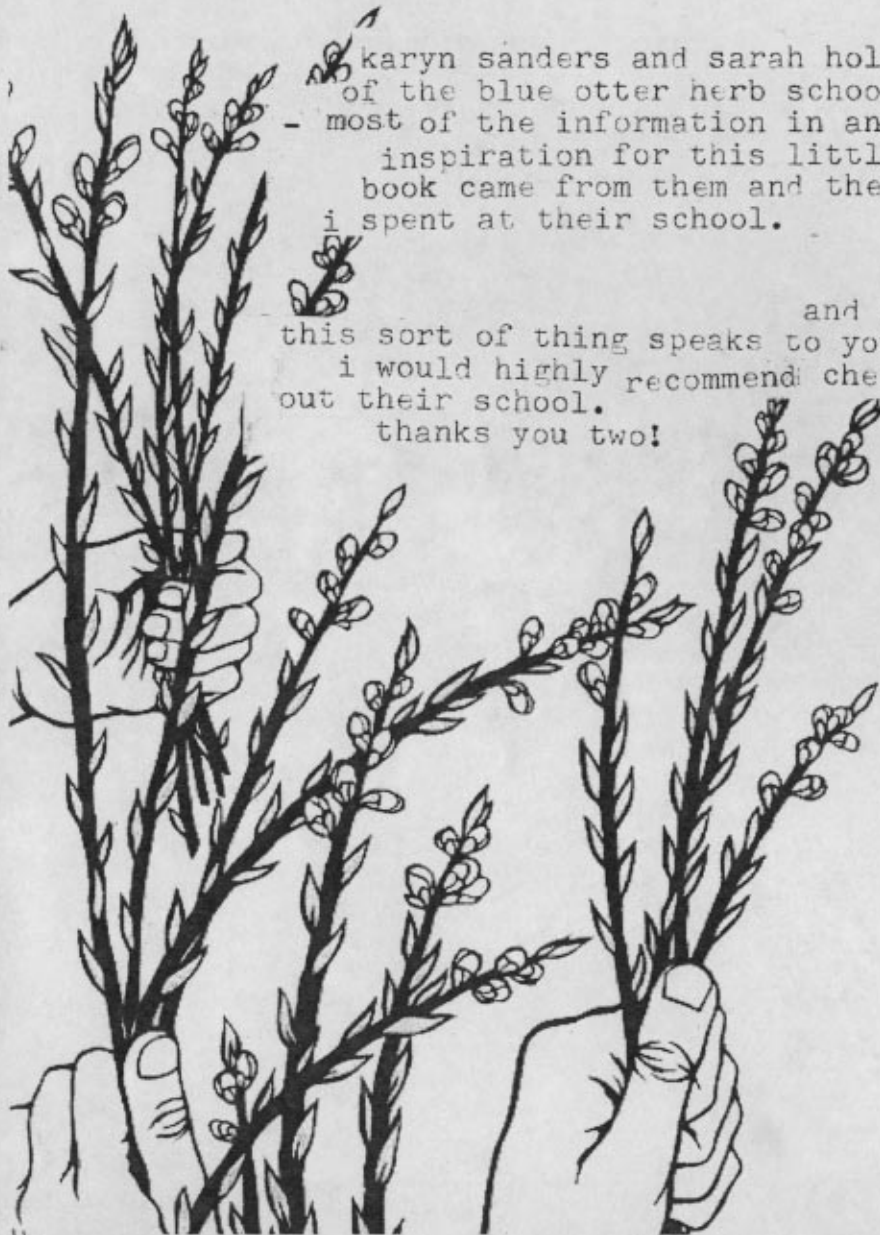
As an herbalist, one of the most important relationships you need to develop and nurture is the one between you and the plants. If you don't have a deep, intimate relationship with the plants, your work and medicine will always be on the surface. This sounds obvious and basic but there are plenty of herb people who spend very little or no time with the

a very special thanks and big acknowledgement

to

karyn sanders and sarah holmes
of the blue otter herb school
- most of the information in and
inspiration for this little
book came from them and the time
i spent at their school.

and if
this sort of thing speaks to you,
i would highly recommend checking
out their school.
thanks you two!



*pick up any trash you might
find around the area, plants
like a clean home as much as we
do

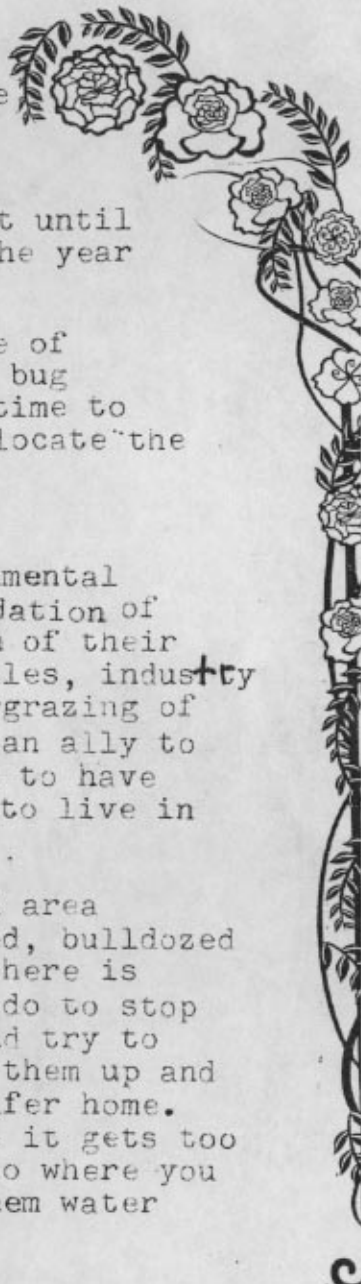
*dont harvest the root of a plant until
it has dropped its seeds for the year

*if you notice that some of
yer plant friends have a bug
infestation, take the time to
clean them off, or relocate the
offending insects

*stay abreast of the environmental
issues in yer area, any degradation of
the environment is degradation of their
homes. find out about timber sales, industry
polluting land and water, overgrazing of
livestock, a.t.v. use. being an ally to
plants means fighting for them to have
unpolluted environments to live in

*if you know for sure that an area
is about to get badly logged, bulldozed
or otherwise destroyed, and there is
absolutely nothing you can do to stop
it, go in before it happens and try to
rescue the plants by digging them up and
transplanting them to a new safer home.
do this in the morning before it gets too
hot and remember to come back to where you
have moved them to and bring them water
and check on them.

*go back year after year and see how
the stands you have helped along
have grown and how that has changed the
surrounding area- have new types
of plants come in? animals? insects?



when we take herbal medicine

part of the plants
and drank and exp

you're depending on, so you bet
all the best

it to them to look out for their kind and the

traditional plant gathere

anything from the wild. i usually say somethi

you heal me and ill

build over you, or log you, or pick too much of yo

so this true herbal healing

and a commitment to the eart

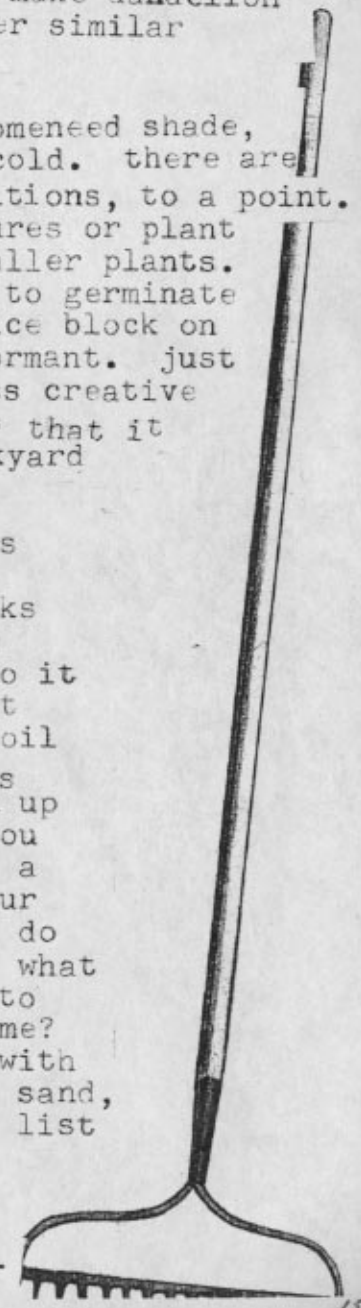
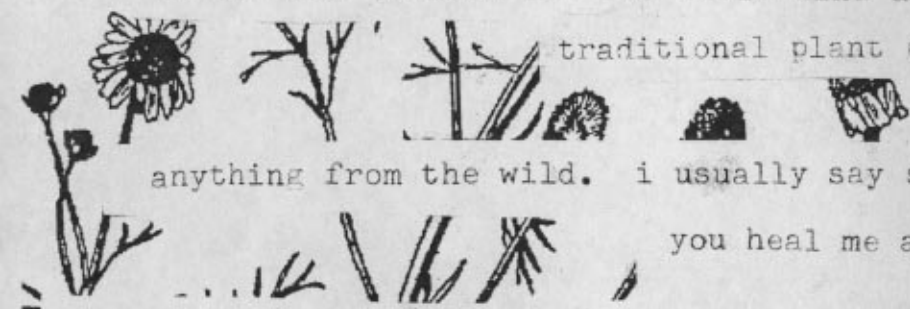
-- la

*not all medicinal (well actually relatively few medicinal plants) need really cushy garden soil, infact if you think about some common medicinals, they are usually doing their thing in really rocky disturbed non irrigated ground. this sort of hard conditioning can be what makes certain plants medicinal. keep this in mind when you catch you self trying to make dandelion a home in potting soil and other similar situations.

*so, some plants need sun and some need shade, some need hot and some need cold. there are even ways of creating these conditions, to a point. you can always build shade structures or plant small shade loving plants under taller plants. if you have plants that need frost to germinate and you live on the coast, sit an ice block on top of where they are laying dormant. just think about it, there are countless creative ways to give a plant what it needs that it otherwise wouldnt get in your backyard

*what if comes down to is all plants need different things- there are many books that talk allabout it- im here to encourage you to do it in yer own backyard. just figure out what kind of soil a plant needs and if its growing conditions match up with the weather around you and if the conditions are a match, get to building your soil. what kind of soil do you have to work with and what do you need to add to it to make the plant feel at home? you could ammend the soil with different types of manure, sand, gravel, peat, compost, the list goes on.

-go forth and build soil!-

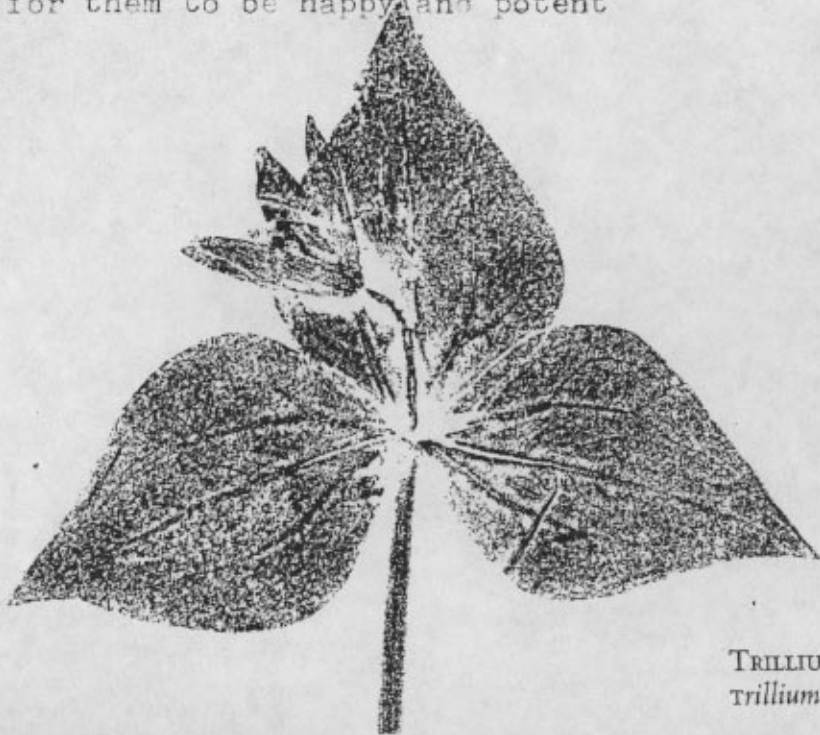


GROWING MEDICINE IN YER GARDEN

I would like to take this opportunity to dispell a nasty rumor about wild plants being more medicinal than 'cultivated in yer garden' plants. this is just plain silly. there is no reason that this would be true if you were to give your garden plants the same conditions and soil that they are used to getting in the wild.

that said...

*you are what you eat, so you have to recreate the natural environment your plant friends are used to for them to be happy and potent



TRILLIUM
trillium ovatum

we are taking in environment. everything it ate or experienced has formed the medicine

after make sure it gets

. when we are healed by plants, we owe places where they live.

people often have a prayer they recite before they take

care along the lines of 'ok plant

look out for you. i got your back. no ones gonna

take you while im around.'

the system has at its heart a deep environmentalism

h.

of a natural luddite

'anarcho-herbalism'



NARROWLEAF PLANTAIN
Plantago lanceolata L.

PLANTING IN THE WILD

*really get to know the native plants in yer area- seek out the local native plant societies, naturalists, native tribes, botanists, native plant nurseries, etc. get to know the people and offer to help them out for a bit in exchange for telling you a bit about local plants

*you could collect some seed from plants you find in the wild and bring them home to sprout if they dont come up when you just spread them in the wild. consult resources like the horizon herb seed catalogue for info about how to germinate certain plants

* find out the conditions these plants thrive in and look around your area for places that match those descriptions, are those plants already growing there? what other plants are growing there?



*when you go to plant the starts that you are absolutely positively sure belong in the area you are planting them in (neglecting to make sure could result in you introducing an invasive species and destroying an ecosystem) take with you a shovel and lots of water for you and the plants and a flower essence called 'rescue remedy'. (just add a couple of drops to their water) *if you are going to do this, you have to be willing to come back to them often to check on them and bring them water= so this is something to consider when you are deciding where to plant- how far do you want to hike out water?

*plan to plant when there is still lots of naturally occurring moisture, but not too much frost. schedule it so you can transplant your plant friend to their new home in the early morning or in the evening- so it doesnt have to brave the heat of the day



YARROW
Achillea borealis