



Foundations of Vitalist Herbalism

Syllabus 2022

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Mission & Learning Outcomes

The Foundations of Vitalist Herbalism program is designed to enable and inspire students to embark on their educational journey with confidence. You will learn the foundational principles of many topics relevant in preparation for clinical work as well as many other facets of herbalism. Our focal point will move from the nitty gritty details to the broader scope of the ecological, ethical, spiritual implications of herbalism. More than just an education about plants, the course will help you develop a relationship with the land as a whole and an appreciation of the traditions that have kept that deep, intimate knowledge alive for millennia. Ethics around land stewardship and decolonization are a central focus of the program.

This program is designed around the premise of teaching one to fish, and merely giving them the fish. A key focus is to develop the skills needed for continual learning, regardless of where your herbal path leads you. We believe that the two most important qualities an herbalist can have is humility and mindset of a life-long student of the craft.

The Northern Appalachia School is not accredited, and herbalism is not licensed in the United States. While this course is intensive, it is not designed to make you a “Certified Herbalist,” nor is it designed for students to be prepared to begin an herbal practice immediately upon completion. Further studies in advanced medical herbalism, nutrition, and clinical skills will be needed for students wishing to practice clinically, or enter into a clinical mentorship under the Northern Appalachia School. This program does provide many of the foundational required skills needed to begin the process of becoming a Registered Herbalist (RH) with the American Herbalists Guild, which is the most well respected certifying body of clinical herbalism in the United States.

Certificate Track

A certificate of completion will be granted to those who request it and complete the requirements. The certificate will include the program title, number of study hours (300).

You will be required to complete all mandatory assignments, attain a minimum grade of 70% on all quizzes and exams, maintain a 90% attendance rate to live classes (see Attendance & Make-Ups for more information), and demonstrate a commitment to learning through assignments and class participation.

All grades will be available through google classroom.

Your average final grade will be calculated as follows: Quizzes $\frac{1}{3}$, Exams $\frac{1}{3}$, Assignments $\frac{1}{3}$.

Auditing Track

For students who do not wish to obtain a certificate. Auditors will have access to lectures only.

This track is best for those who need more flexibility in their busy schedules and may not complete the coursework requirement for certification or are interested in continued learning without the certificate of completion.

Students may opt out of the certificate track at any time, but may not opt in if they have already commenced the program without grading. Students who are having difficulty completing their coursework for the certificate track but still wish to pursue the certificate are encouraged to reach out to the instructor as soon as possible.

Program Structure

The program consists of 40+ hrs of live lecture and pre-recorded content.

Included in the Foundations program is a weekly Body Systems independent study unit, a biweekly Materia Medica study unit, as well as a number of other independent study assignments. Anatomy & Physiology for Herbalists is offered as a separate course which provides lecture content in addition to the independent study notes and assignments. A&P for Herbalists is more intensive with a greater focus on pathophysiology and materia medica, and is highly recommended for herbalists looking to pursue clinical practice.

The Field Botany Intensive is a 20 hr, two weekend long program that will take place in the growing season (Spring/Summer/Fall) and it is highly recommended that students take this program prior to taking the Foundations of Vitalist Herbalism Program. Students who are seeking advanced herbal education will need the skills taught in this program. Graduate students and enrolled students will receive discounted tuition to the intensive.

Live sessions will all be recorded for later review (see Attendance for more information). If sessions go past our designated time slot (5-8pm EST), students will not be required to stay for the remainder of the class, but may be asked to review the recorded material.

Students may submit questions for the pre-lecture Q&A section of the live sessions regarding lecture content, independent study, personal experiences and challenges, etc. Questions are welcome during the live lectures, however we will only have a total of 6 lecture hours together each month, and so if there is not time to answer questions during the live session, you may email your questions directly to the instructor, or submit them to be reviewed in the Q&A section of the next live session. There will be a private facebook group available for students and alumni to interact with each other. You may also post questions and conversations in the facebook group for group discussion outside of the live sessions.

Students are encouraged to spend as much time as they need with each assignment, but should be prepared for several hours per week of assignments. Several assignments will be shared with the rest of the class, and for some of these shared assignments, students will be required to review and comment on their classmate's work.

Required & Recommended Reading

Required Texts

- *The Earthwise Herbal Repertory: The Definitive Practitioner's Guide* by Matthew Wood
- *Planetary Herbology* by Michael Tierra
- *Encyclopedia of Herbal Medicine* by Andrew Chevallier

- *The Modern Herbal Dispensatory: A Medicine-Making Guide* by Thomas Easley & Steven Horne
- *The Concise Human Body Book: An Illustrated Guide to its Structure, Function, and Disorders* by DK
 - (From what I understand, the kindle version of this book is difficult to read. For a larger print hardcopy, you can purchase DK's "The Human Body Book," which is essentially the same book but the page numbers in assignments might not line up)
- *Newcomb's Wildflower Guide* by Lawrence Newcomb or appropriate field guide to your bioregion (contact us for assistance)
- *Winter Botany* by William Trelease OR *Fruit Key & Twig Key to Trees & Shrubs* by William M. Harlow

Highly Recommended for the Course but Not Required:

- *Herbal Medicine from the Heart of the Earth* by Sharol Tilgner
- *Peterson Field Guide to Medicinal Plants and Herbs of Eastern and Central North America* by Steven Foster
- Any book by Samuel Thayer
- *The Earthwise Herbal, Volume I and Volume II* by Matthew Wood
- *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer
- *The Earth's Blanket* by Nancy Turner
- *Plants Have So Much to Give Us, All We Have to Do Is Ask: Anishinaabe Botanical Teachings* by Mary Siisip Geniusz
- *Our Knowledge is not Primitive* by Wendy Djinn Geniusz

Recommended Texts:

The following list includes books that we have found to be highly valuable as herbalists and land stewards. None of these are required for the course. If you would like suggestions for more books that are specific to your bioregion, please feel free to ask us.

Medical Herbalism/Materia Medica:

- *The Botanical Safety Handbook* by Zoey Gardner
- *Botanical Medicine for Women's Health* by Aviva Romm

- *Herbal Vade Mecum* by Gazmend Skenderi
- *Evolutionary Herbalism* by Sajah Popham

Botany:

- A variety of other field guides specific to your region
- *The Plants of Pennsylvania* by Ann Fowler RHoads and Timothy A. Block
- *Bark: A Field Guide to Trees of the Northeast* by Michael Wojtech
- *The Sibley Guide to Trees* by David Allen Sibley

Ecology, Wildtending, & Decolonization:

- *1491* by Charles C. Mann
- *Rambunctious Garden* by Emma Marris
- *Tending the Wild* by Kat Anderson

Plant Spirit Medicine:

- *Thus Spoke the Plant* by Monica Gagliano

Phytochemistry:

- *Herbal Constituents* by Lisa Ganora

Flower Essences:

- *The Encyclopedia of Flower Essence Therapy* by Mechthild Scheffer
- *The Bach Flower Remedies* by Edward Bach

Cultivation:

- *The Organic Medicinal Herb Farmer* by Jeff & Melanie Carpenter
- *Farming the Woods* by Ken Mudge & Steve Gabriel

Course Calendar

Announcements, assignment reminders, quizzes, instructor feedback, and grades will be posted on the Google Classroom.

Class Schedule:

Online lectures will take place on Zoom.

Tuesday, January 4 5-8PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Syllabus Review● Plant Relationships● Organoleptics
Tuesday, January 18 5-8PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Herbal Processing● Medicine Making Part I
Tuesday, February 5 5-8PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Medicine Making Part II
Tuesday, February 15 5-8PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Introduction to Vitalism● Plant Spirit Medicine
Tuesday, March 1 5-8PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Herbal Actions, Energetics, & Tissue States
Tuesday, March 15 5-8PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Phytoconstituents
Tuesday, March 29 5-8PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Research Techniques
Tuesday, April 12 5-8PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Herbal Safety
Tuesday, April 26	<i>BREAK</i>
Tuesday, May 10 5-8PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Decolonization● Kincentric Ethnobotany
Tuesday, May 24 5-8PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Formulation

Tuesday, June 7 5-8PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Herbal First Aid
Tuesday, June 21 5-8PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fatigue & Adaptogens ● Detoxification & Alteratives
Tuesday, June 28 5-8PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Apothecary Management ● Bioregional Apothecary

Additional Content (pre-recordings, audio, etc.)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● History of Western Herbalism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Botanical Morphology & Plant ID ● Winter Plant ID
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nature Cure & Returning to the Land

Attendance & Make-Up

If you are absent for a live webinar, you will be required to watch/listen to the recording and provide notes within one week of the scheduled class for up to two missed classes.

Google Classroom & Drive

Announcements, assignments, class powerpoints, recordings, and materials will be posted in google classroom and google.

Some of the materials posted to the classroom will redirect to Youtube. In order to access these private videos. The email address provided/linked to google classroom needs to be the same email address linked to your youtube account.

The google drive will contain a folder titled "Documents & Resources" with several useful files. The Herbarium Online Resources file is continually updated and students

may make suggestions for additions if they find a useful resource by emailing us.

Quizzes & Exams

Quizzes will be held every other week. Quizzes will be posted on Saturday and due back by Tuesday at 5:00pm. Online quizzes will not have a time limit, but students are asked to complete them in one session without the use of study aids. Students may not discuss the quiz with other students until the following class.

Study guides will be provided at least 5 days prior to the exam. There will be a review of each exam at the beginning of the following class.

Exams & Quizzes constitute $\frac{2}{3}$ of your final grade. Exams and quizzes may be made up or retaken with certain circumstances under the discretion of the director.

Assignments & Independent Self Study

Instructions for Submitting Assignments:

If you have questions or problems with any assignment or course materials please let us know immediately so we can help you keep on track. All late assignments automatically incur a 10% grade deduction unless you have communicated with the instructor. Late assignments may not receive instructor feedback and may delay grading. If you need an extension on an assignment, please contact us. We are generally pretty accommodating for when life circumstances arise, within reason to prevent students from falling behind. Assignments constitute $\frac{1}{3}$ of your final grade.

All assignments and detailed instructions for submission will be provided via Google Classroom. The following information is intended to give you an idea of what to expect during the course and is subject to change.

All assignments must be submitted directly via Google Classroom.

Assignments must be submitted as a *google doc or .docx* in the following format:

Lastname_FirstName_AssignmentName_Date

Assignments shared with the group are noted in the assignment instructions. Students will be reviewing and commenting on each other's shared assignments.

Anatomy & Physiology Assignments:

Reading Assignments will be provided weekly. All materials not available through the required reading list will be provided.

Intro to Systems of the Body
Skin
Digestive
Respiratory & Mucus Membranes
Cardio
Muskuloskeletal
Urinary
Nervous
Endocrine
Reproductive
Immune
Lymphatic
Hepatic

Biweekly Herbarium Assignments:

Every two weeks you will work with an herb corresponding with the body system study unit of that week.

Herbarium independent study includes 4 areas of study:

Section A: Research

Section B: Personal Experiences - Herbal Medicine

Section C: Personal Experiences - Field Studies

Section D: Personal Experiences - Plant Spirit Medicine

You will be required to complete:

- **Section A for all herbarium entries**
- **Section B for 10 herbarium entries**
 - You will be encouraged to interact with the plant in as many forms as possible, and work with it daily for the duration of the two weeks (unless a reaction occurs).
 - During week one, only work with the **single herb**. During week two, experiment with **formulation** with others herbs.
 - You may opt to study 1 at-risk or toxic plant for the week where second B is not required. For this entry you will need to complete all other sections.
- **Section C for a minimum of 2 herbarium entries**
- **Section D for a minimum for 2 herbarium entries**

2 Herbarium entries will encompass all 4 sections. For these entries:

- Provide as much detail about your experience as possible
- Include all drawings and photographs
- Include phenology entries if there is any crossover
- The overall expectation for these entries to go the extra mile and really get to know the plant like the back of your hand, and your report should reflect this

Whenever possible, you are encouraged to work with bioregional herbs.

It is up to you to keep track of which sections you complete for your Herbarium and meet the quota for all of them.

Other Assignments:

In addition to the assignments listed below, Reading Assignments will be assigned regularly, and may occasionally include a short essay prompt. All materials not available through the required reading list will be provided.

Assignment	Description	Submission
Herbalism Through the Ages	Describe how the application of an herb classically used in herbalism has changed (or remained the same) over time, using historical texts as your resource. Discuss the cultural and pharmacological impacts throughout history of the plant, if applicable. If possible, choose an herb that has significance to your cultural, ethnic, or ancestral background.	500-750 words
Toxic Plants in Your Area	List the primary toxic plants in your area and describe their key identifying features, where they grow, and possible medicinal or edible lookalikes. Choose one focus plant: Visit the plant, if possible, or search images in field guides or online and sketch it. Describe its toxicology: phytoconstituents, physiology, symptoms, & severity. Research historical or pharmacological uses.	Presentation format, sketches
Toxicology Assessment	Read the provided scientific journal article on Kava Kava (<i>Piper methysticum</i>). You may also investigate other relevant studies before class and form a hypothesis regarding the safety of Kava, though this isn't required for class.	Class Discussion
Differential Morphology	Pick one medicinal plant in your bioregion and discuss morphological differences with other local plants (incl. toxic species, edible, and medicinal)	Presentation format
At Risk Plant	Research and discuss one at risk plant in your area: dispersal, how unethical harvesting may put it further at risk (or has), how to improve its stability through	Essay Format

	stewardship, ethical harvesting techniques and whether it should be harvested at all.	
Winter Plant ID	Identify 3 plants in their winter life cycle (2 of which may be trees). Explain what methods you used for identification, any winter applications of the plant, and challenges.	Presentation format
Phenology	Choose one location (preferably one with diversity and/or an abundance of plant life) to visit biweekly for the duration of the course. Each visit you identify as many new species as possible, will observe changes in general flora & life cycles of established flora. You will take photos of the area, including of the landscape, as well as of details of changes in plant life.	Presentation format
Dietary Change	Make one dietary change of your choosing for 2 weeks. Complete before & after worksheets. Journal experience	Before & after worksheets, Journal entries
Tincture Making	Prepare two plants of your choosing, prepare one using the Folk method and one using the Standard Method	Process description and experience, tincture log
Water Extractions	Pick three herbs: 1 root or bark, 1 flower, 1 leaf. Prepare as a decoction, hot infusion, and cold infusion. Experiment with infusing for 5 minutes, 15 minutes, 1 hr, and 8 hrs. Compare differences organoleptically and journal your experience.	List of herbs used, preparation details, & journal notes
Decolonization	Research the ethnobotanical uses of a plant native to your area. Identify and discuss colonizer behavior. Find indigenous authored resources, and	Essay Format 500-1000 words

	identify the key differences between native and colonizer presentation.	
Nature Cure	Practice two Nature Cure therapies of your choosing for two weeks. Journal your experience.	Journal entries
Non-native Plant	Research one plant labeled as “invasive” in your area: discuss the origin of the species and how it got here, ecological effects, medicinal and edible uses, possible market potential, current management practices. How is this plant harmful AND/OR beneficial to the ecosystem? Opinions and hypotheses welcome.	Presentation or essay format
Sit Spot	Find a place in nature to sit and observe as frequently as possible (several times per week, if possible). Record your overall experience and how it affected you. See “How to Choose a Sit Spot”	Presentation of your choice

Local Learning Opportunities

Local students may be invited to learn in-person during our Apprenticeship Days. These are separate from the program and may incur additional fees, but they will be offered at a fraction of what they would normally cost. Barter and/or work trade may be an option but cannot be guaranteed. Topics may vary but will mostly focus on hands-on topics such as field botany, plant sits, and medicine making. The amount of in person learning opportunities will be dependent on the number of local students, interest level, and current events concerning the COVID-19 pandemic.

Apprenticeship Days are not mandatory for course completion.

Payments

A non-refundable deposit of \$150 is required to hold your place in the program.

The full cost of the program is \$1300. Sliding scale from \$700 and up is available based on income and household size. A 10% discount off final tuition is available for those who refer other students (with deposit). This may be applied to your tuition or donated to our People's Folk Medicine Project scholarship fund.

Full and partial scholarships for racialized people (BIPOC) and Community Improvement Scholarships. To apply, please email us.

There is approximately \$100-150 worth of required texts for the course.

Auditing

The auditing fee is \$600. Auditors will be invited to attend and participate in all lectures. Auditing option does not include assignments, anatomy & physiology notes, or instructor feedback, and will not qualify for certification. Certification may be a requirement for certain enrollment in future advanced level programs.

Payments

You may opt to pay in full before the program commences, or pay in four installments. A late fee of 5% of the payment is incurred for late payments.

Payments made be made by check, cash, or venmo. For alternative payment options, please contact us.

Refunds/Withdrawals

If you choose to withdraw from the program, you may request a pro-rated refund as follows:

- Before program commencement: 100% refund
- By February 1st: 75% of remainder
- By March 1st: 50% of remainder
- After March 1st: refund not available

If you are enrolled in the certificate track and choose to opt out, you will also receive a prorated refund of your remainder.

If you need to withdraw from the program, please notify us as soon as possible. Your refund amount will be processed based on the date of notification of withdrawal. We cannot provide backdated refunds.

The cost of herbs and required reading materials are not included in the price of

the program.

Policies

At Northern Appalachia School, we embrace our students' differences in age, color, ethnicity, disability, family or marital status, gender expression, religion, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, veteran status, and other characteristics that make our students unique. It is part of our mission to create an environment and a mindset that is not only inclusive, but actively works against systemic racism, colonization, and bigotry. We expect all students and faculty members to embody this work and act in a way that is respectful and inclusive of the diversity of all our students. Any student that exhibits discrimination or hateful speech may be dismissed from the program without refund.

All students are expected to demonstrate respect, mindfulness, and responsibility for the plants and the landscapes with which we will be interacting.

Communication & Student Support

Students are encouraged to ask questions and seek out guidance from the instructor as needed. One-on-one communication must be within reason. Questions related to a student's health will be limited to what is applicable to the program, beyond that we ask that students schedule a consultation.

If you have questions or problems with any assignment, quiz, etc. please let us know immediately so we can help you keep on track.

We encourage students to interact with and support each other as well through the facebook group, and to make local connections in the herbal community whenever possible.

We welcome feedback and ideas about how to improve the program! Students will be asked to fill out program evaluations, but you are also welcome to email concerns or suggestions at any time.