

The spirit of herbs

With Fay Johnstone

As any home herbalist knows, growing and making your own herbal remedies not only creates immense joy and satisfaction, but it also connects us in a deeper and more intimate way to the plant itself.



Homemade herbal medicine from plants that are grown in our back gardens, window sills or hedgerows carry such a vibrancy and vitality, as the life-force of the plant has become deeply entwined within our very being.

These plants that we often nurture from very tiny seeds and care for throughout the growing season (and year after year in the case of perennial herbs), to the point that they are in their prime and ready for harvest, form a vital part of our holistic well being.

Even hedgerow plants such as nettle, elder and hawthorn that we forage for when the time is right, are under our watchful eye all year round, and creep into our awareness prompting us to create deeply healing plant medicine at the perfect moment.

These medicinal plants in our environment are our allies and just as we may communicate with them while they grow and blossom, admiring their beauty, it only makes sense to deepen this friendship as we harvest, asking them to empower our herbal medicines as we invite them to accompany us on the final phase of the journey.

Infusing with the spirit of herbs for medicine making

Step 1

Choose your moment wisely. Make sure you are harvesting on a good day. It doesn't have to be when the moon is in a certain phase, but make sure you feel good, like life is flowing. Consider the energy that you are putting into your harvest and the medicine making that will follow.

Step 2

Before diving in and harvesting your chosen plant, stop for a moment to tune in and breathe. Drop your awareness from your head down into your heart and connect with the plant. Notice how the plant looks and feel into the space between you. Does it feel right to harvest from this plant today?

Step 3

Introduce yourself - if this plant is new to you - and explain your intention and desire. For example, 'I would like to harvest your flowers to make an infused oil to give to my friend, who has a rash on their skin'. Feel for a response. If you feel that things are flowing, and it feels right, then begin your harvest.



Step 4

Invite the plant on the journey with you. Talk to the herb. Ask for its blessing for your medicine making. Whisper the journey that you would like to take it on. Tell the herb who its medicine is for, describe their personality and what they suffer from, tell the herb what you are hoping to make with the plant material, how you plan on doing this. Invite the plant to offer its qualities for your medicine making and most of all allow yourself to open to inspiration and feel excited.

Step 5

Give thanks. When you have gathered all you need, show your gratitude and appreciation to the plant. You may want to water it, leave an offering or simply tell it how beautiful it looks. Be still once again in your heart space and allow yourself time to receive. Notice if any further inspiration or creative ideas that come to you. There may be another plant that is coming into your awareness or you make feel that the plant requires something from you.

Step 6

Making the medicine itself, keep the conversation going, whispering the journey to the herb. Asking for its blessings every step of the way as your chop, infuse or hang to dry. Hold the plant material or medicine in your hands and feel how precious this is. If you are making a tincture or infused oil that needs turning every now and then, then each time you connect with the medicine make sure you tune in and say a prayer.

Step 7

When the remedy is ready, re-visit the plant with your thanks. As you enjoy the herbal preparation invoke the spirit of the plant each time you apply it or use it. If the medicine is for someone else, be sure to introduce them to the plant in a way that will help them also appreciate the journey that the plant has been on from its humble and beautiful origins to the vibrant life force that is now contained in a jar!

Stay connected to your plants throughout the year, attuning to their vibration and awakening your senses to them in each and every way with simple prayers, offerings and time spent appreciating them at every stage of their growth.



ABOUT FAY



As a master teacher of Usui Reiki, Fay offers Reiki training from beginner to master level, as well as Shamanic coaching and teaching. Her sessions aim to open participants to their intuition and plant spirit medicine, and restore relationships with the earth.

Fay runs online courses, individual retreat days for private clients, group workshops and transformational retreats.

Look out for Fay's first book: *Plants that Speak, Souls that Sing* and find out more about Fay's courses at www.fayjohnstone.com

