

OHLONE CENTER FOR HERBAL STUDIES

Spring & Summer 2011 Wholistic Herbal Letter

In Depth: Menopause, Every Woman's Journey

This is the first story of a three-part special report

By Anna Kazanjian

Herbalist and Ohlone Center Teacher

annakaz@hotmail.com

Menopause is a personal journey for each woman, yet there are many symptoms that all women may share as estrogen and progesterone levels drop. This gradual decline usually happens between 35 and 55 years old; the average age is around 51. Although the path leading to menopause can last for one year to more than five years, the quality of the journey is dependent upon the distinct qualities of each woman's inherited traits, as well as her body, mind and spirit.

Exercise and diet can work in tandem to manage physical and emotional changes. Cardiovascular and bone health support in the perimenopausal and menopausal years is key because estrogen helps bone health and protects the

heart. Weight-bearing activity can strengthen bones at a time when lowered estrogen levels can make bones more brittle. Engaging in just two, 20-minute sessions a week of weight-bearing activity—like walking, dancing, bicycling or weight training—will keep bones healthy. Drinking calcium-rich herbal teas as part of an ongoing routine can also be an added help, especially in the perimenopausal years leading up to menopause.

Diet also plays a large role in managing the process. High-sugar diets can stress and weaken the adrenal glands, so that estrogen isn't converted efficiently. Healthy functioning is essential because adrenal glands partly assume estrogen production at menopause. Blood-sugar fluctuation, or hypoglycemia, can be a factor in hot flashes. A healthy liver processes the hormones and toxins in the blood, allowing for a fresh supply of blood to re circulate and nourish the tissues and cells.

...continued on Page 3

A Bird's Eye View: David Crow and Principles of Ayurvedic Wisdom

By Meredith Calero

Western Herbalist and Third-Year Ohlone Student, Clinical Program

rarebird.r.evolution@gmail.com

A ripening community of healers and plant lovers welcomed renowned aromatherapist and author David Crow to Ohlone Herbal Center, where he held a Principles of Ayurvedic Wisdom community talk and workshop. He and other herbalists spoke and held workshops as part of the Indigenous Lecture Series. Also speaking about various aspects of herbalism during the six-month series were Karen Aguiar and Terri Jensen, David Hoffmann, Sage La Pena, Luisah Teish, Xochipala Maez-Valdez and Jeff Nagel.

At his Friday night lecture in March, David expressed his vision that emerging world events will dictate a biological necessity to change our relationship to plants and usher in "a revival of folk medicine." This prophetic introduction laid the foundation for applying specific Ayurvedic terminology at the all-day

workshop that followed. The meaning of his vision was magnified against the backdrop of an announcement that morning about the meltdown of the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant in Japan.

He proceeded to illustrate the biological unity of all existing life forms with historical evidence, scientific facts and personal observations. In his words, Ayurveda is a "system of medicine that describes health and illness in terms of eco-physiology—the influence of the planetary environment on the physiology of living creatures." We learned how this macro-cosmic view can deepen our understanding of, and relationship with, a range of subjects such as meditation, plants, and the science of light. "Plants are agents of nature's self-organizing intelligence," he remarked.

We then learned about two root causes of disease as recognized by the Traditional Chinese Medicine system: deficiency and excess. Prana deficiency, or poor nutrition, can translate into weakened immunity.

...continued on Page 2

Inside

- Page 2** Genetically Engineered Alfalfa
David Crow: Ayurvedic Wisdom
- Page 3** Menopause
Tea Recipes
- Page 4** City Schools: Reflections from an Urban Herbalist
- Page 2-4** Pictures from OHC field trips

Upcoming Events

August

20-21st Pulse Diagnosis with William Morris

September

19th Herbal Foundations - San Francisco

21st Herbal Foundations - Berkeley

22nd Herbal Therapeutics

October

7th Student Herbal Medicine Show

21st Herbs for Colds and Flu

November

7th Clinical Internship

18th Herbs for Kids

December

4th Mushroom Identification

Genetically Engineered Alfalfa: What's Next?

By Jennifer Dant

Wholistic Herbal Letter editor and writer

Everyone will have plenty to chew on following the U.S. Drug Administration's approval earlier this year of genetically engineered Alfalfa as an unregulated crop. The decision, which has caused another round of lawsuits, allows farmers to plant, harvest and sell Alfalfa modified with the Monsanto-patented pesticide Roundup Ready. This turn of events is cause for concern not only among organic dairy and livestock farmers concerned with the high potential for cross-contamination, but is also of concern to herbal practitioners and consumers.

Alfalfa, or *Medicago Sativa*, is a nutritive-rich plant chock full of a wide spectrum of minerals, chlorophyll and amino acids mainly used as a tonic. The leaves and seeds can also be used to stimulate milk production for new mothers and can act as an estrogen precursor for menopausal women, among other applications, according to Linda Rector-Page and John Lust.

"It's a wonderful plant," said Leslie Gardner, director of the Sonoma County Herb Exchange, who said the plant is an important part of European herbalists' materia medica. It's a mystery to her why it's not used more in the U.S.

She has grown Alfalfa intermittently for more than 10 years, and suggests that herb consumers should know their source, buy certified organic products, ask questions and read product labels, if they want to do their best to sidestep genetically engineered Alfalfa.

Currently, one of the best ways to avoid GE Alfalfa is to buy organic, since the federal National Organic Program currently disallows genetically engineered foods. Even those restrictions aren't a cure all, because of potential for seed drift.

Gardner, also garden manager at the California School of Herbal Studies in Forestville, said that if there's pesticide drift, cross-breeding can occur and contaminate other types of Alfalfa. The plant, in its natural pesticide-free state, doesn't attract many insects, which raises the questions about the need for genetically engineered Alfalfa.



A Bird's Eye View: David Crow and Principles of Ayurvedic Wisdom

...continued from Page 1

We then learned about two root causes of disease as recognized by the Traditional Chinese Medicine system: deficiency and excess. Prana deficiency, or poor nutrition, can translate into weakened immunity. Deficiency issues can be tied to prana—or fundamental nutrition—and excess, the presence of toxic levels of elements within the body system. Toxins are disorganizing aspects of nature, he said.

A great limitation of allopathic drugs is they do not correct such imbalances. Herbs, on the other hand, give nutrition to build immunological vitality and organize elements via detoxification of blood and tissues. Life is animated by the energy of the sun. Plants metabolize sunlight then animals ingest plants, so in a way we are "solar-powered, nectar-consuming creatures".

He also introduced a term encompassing the layers of information available to us via sense

perception: organoleptic. The opposing pairs of Ayurvedic qualities used to describe elemental aspects of creation, are organoleptically derived and applied to the three doshas, or constitutional types Vata, Kapha, and Pitta. At this point, we used our olfactory sense to inhale the aromas of Cinnamon, Jatamansi/*Nardostachys* and Peppermint, and described their effects using newly introduced terminology. A macrocosmic worldview, the root of Ayurvedic philosophy, is applicable in our daily lives.

Now is the revolutionary time to build a bridge of understanding of the symbiotic relationship of plants and society because our priorities do not change unless forced to, he suggested. The explosions of toxicity, as also seen in Deepwater Horizon/BP Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill, of 206 million gallons of oil almost a year ago, are wounds to the planet and represent an emerging sensitivity within the species. We are "losing fundamental knowledge of how to care for one's self," David observed.

In Depth: Menopause, Every Woman's Journey

...continued from Page 1

Dandelion root tea can be a friend to anyone wanting a healthy liver, better digestion and ease of menopausal symptoms.

Symptoms

The emotional changes that occur during menopause can feel chaotic and unstable as hormonal levels can fluctuate dramatically, as witnessed by hot flashes. Because the body is rebalancing itself hormonally, it is important to know that feeling irritable or depressed can happen.

Some common symptoms can include hot flashes; night sweats, or hot flashes at night; irregular periods; insomnia; mood changes; anxiety; depression; irritability; heart palpitations; vaginal dryness; dry skin, hair loss or thinning; diminished or absent sexual desire; incontinence; thyroid imbalance or brain fog. At menopause, estrogen is also made by the adipose tissue in addition to the adrenal glands, which is why women with more fat often have less symptoms going through menopause.

Read about anatomy of a hot flash— and maiden, mother and crone lore— in the next issue of Wholistic Herbal Letter.

Take Time for Tea

Menopausal Support Recipes

from Anna Kazanjian

Calcium Tea

Horsetail 3 parts (pt)

Nettles 2 pt

Oatstraw 1 pt

Peppermint 1/4 pt

A long infusion is best – four hours or overnight;

Drink four cups or more a week.

Bring to boil and leafy teas and steep for 20 minutes or longer.

Healthy Liver Tea

Dandelion Root

Bring a tsp.-tbsp. of root per cup to a boil, take off heat and cover for 10 to 20 minutes. You can add Nettles for nutritive value and Peppermint for taste. One or more cups/day will support liver function in breaking down the hormones in the body, and may improve liver function and health as a result.



SECOND ANNUAL STUDENT HERBAL MEDICINE SHOW!

OCTOBER 7TH • FREE • 12-7PM

COME JOIN THE OHLONE HERBAL CENTER STUDENTS AS THEY SHARE THE ART AND SCIENCE OF HERBAL MEDICINE. THERE WILL BE HAND-CRAFTED MEDICINE AND HERBAL GIFTS AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE. (ALL MADE BY STUDENTS, ALL PROCEEDS GOING TO STUDENTS.) IN ADDITION, THERE WILL BE MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT AND RAFFLE.

All photos taken by Ohlone teacher Tatiana Almendral on the Anza Borrego camping trip.

City Schools: Reflections from an Urban Herbalist

By Pam Fischer

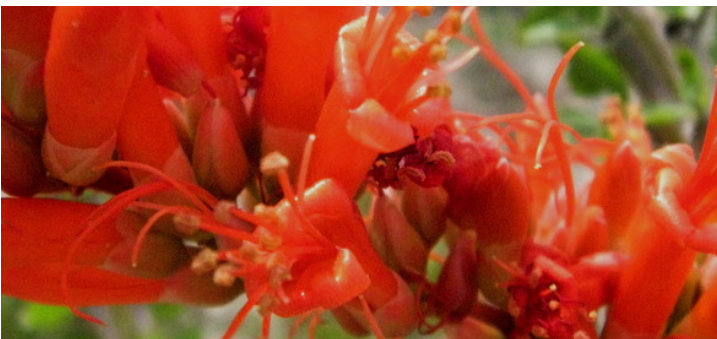
Ohlone Herbal Center Director

Many herb schools are located in the sacred temple of the woods. In these places there is more immediate access to the mindfulness of the plant spirits. There the pace of life slows and we are reminded by the breeze and the buzzing of bees about the present moment. In these temples we find teachers who have created these sanctuaries from the very depth of their hearts. They magnify their love for plants and animals creating a haven in which to learn. The human spirit loves to dance and frolic in these beautiful places.

The urban school has a different flavor, often a bit more edgy and geared toward how to serve. In these spaces we attempt to carry the plant energies from wild areas back to the place of the greatest suffering and pain. In these centers we teach not just about the herbs but how to hold, protect and feed ourselves. It is a warriors path, and not right for all. The vibration quality of the city is much more maniac, constant distractions of noise, lights, and sensory stimulation creates a far different experience. The urban herbalist must carry the wild within them. The city atmosphere requires us to perceive and respond to things quickly with both compassion and urgency all while staying grounded and centered. No easy task in the midst of so many distractions. Urban schools are also a creation from the hearts of the teachers and the manifestation of their work in the world. The urban herbalist is edgy and forthright...a reflection of the world in which they walk.

Mother Theresa's work to relieve pain and suffering called her to the most impoverished areas of India, many carry on her work as nameless army doing amazing things to transform the state of the world. The urban herbalist are doing no less in the trenches of the inner city.

We are a hand in times of cultural mental illness that provides a type of sanity and direction to healing. It is not our task to care for (creating dependence) rather to enable all to care for themselves physically, mentally and spiritually (creating independence). We are herbalists, but also counselors, social workers, botanists, chemists and visionaries. We often feel inadequate to the task at hand, but are called forth to spite this feeling to that of the world needs.



Ohlone Herbal Center
1250 Addison St. Ste 113
Berkeley, Ca 94702

www.ohlonecenter.org

