

## 2018 Catskill Apprenticeship *Materia Medica*

This year we will be holding once-a-month weekends in Big Indian, NY that will cover the medicinal uses of herbs in the traditions of Chinese medicine and Native American medicine, with a focus on wild herbs.. Alongside botany walks and medicine making opportunities, classes will focus on local herbs as they were used by Lenape and other tribes and how local herbs are used in Chinese herbal medicine. 65 to 82 herbs will be studied. That number is based on the calculations below, but watch for changes as I still need to iron out the details. In the outline below you will also find the basic course schedule and preliminary study hour calculations. Once these details are finalized they will be released along with class descriptions. If you are not already on my e-mail list and want to be notified of Catskill Apprenticeship developments and other events, let me know by e-mail: Nathaniel Whitmore wathakes@gmail.com

While modern approaches to medicine (including herbology), claim to be founded in scientific studies and an objective mechanical worldview, traditional herbal medicine remains at the root of all forms of medications. This apprenticeship focuses on traditional uses and views of *materia medica* with classes on Native American ethnobotany and traditional Chinese medicine. Additionally, familiarity with the *materia medica* will be developed during identification and harvesting walks, as well as through opportunities to make herbal preparations with a variety of fresh local herbs.

(Clinical assessment is an additional subject of focus, which includes hara, tongue, and pulse diagnosis.)

*Materia medica* classes include **Doctrine of Signatures, Lenni Lenape / Delaware Ethnobotany, Iroquois Ethnobotany, Cherokee Ethnobotany, Dine / Navajo Ethnobotany, Moxa & Meridians, Toxic Medicinals, Classic Chinese Formulae, Local Chinese Herbs, Native Medicinal Herbs, Invasive Medicinal Herbs, Common Local Herbs, Antimicrobial Herbs, and Tonic Herbs.**

The Catskill Apprenticeship weekends will take place May 25th - 27th, June 22nd - 24th, July 20th - 22nd, August 24th - 26th, September 14th - 16th, and October 19th - 21st.

It is a daunting task for students of herbal medicine and clinical herbalists to gain thorough familiarity with the seemingly infinite *materia medica*. This course will give students the opportunity to study 65 - 82 herbs in detail; including during identification walks, harvest walks, medicine making sessions, and classes focused on Chinese herbal medicine and Native American herbal medicine. Classes on local wild herbs, herbs of Chinese medicine, and herbs used by Native Americans help provide participants with a solid understanding of traditional uses of the herbs around us. All while enjoying the beauty and plant life of the Catskills in Big Indian, NY!

**Catskill Apprenticeship course outline :** \_\_\_\_\_ class titles in **bold**, *materia medica* classes in **green**.

**Friday night:** 5/25: \_\_\_\_\_ 6/22: \_\_\_\_\_ 7/20: \_\_\_\_\_ 8/24: \_\_\_\_\_ 9/14: \_\_\_\_\_ 10/19: \_\_\_\_\_

4:00 **Herb Walk (1.5H)**

6:00 - 8:00 potluck dinner

8:00 Ethnobotany (1.5H)

**Doctrine of Signatures**

**Lenape Ethnobotany**

**Iroquois Ethnobotany**

**Cherokee Ethnobotany**

**Dine Ethnobotany**

**Importance of**

**Ethnobotany**

**Saturday:**

5/26: \_\_\_\_\_ 6/23: \_\_\_\_\_ 7/21: \_\_\_\_\_ 8/25: \_\_\_\_\_ 9/15: \_\_\_\_\_ 10/20: \_\_\_\_\_

6:00 tai chi (1H)

**Opening/Standing Meridians Basic Moves Chi Kung Do-In Healing Sounds**

7:00 breakfast

9:00 **Herb Walk (2H)**

11:00 **Medicine Making (1.5H)**

12:30 lunch

2:00 **Medicine Making / Beginners Chinese Medicine: (2H)**

**Yin/Yang Theory (Theory of Fire and Water)**

**5 Flavors of Chinese Medicine**

**Organs & Body Systems**

**Pulse & Tongue Assessment**

**Doctrine of Signatures**

**Intake & Assessment**

4:00 **Medicine Making / Advanced Chinese Medicine: (2H)**

**Pulse, Tongue, & Hara**

**Moxa & Meridians**

**Toxic Medicinals**

**Classic Chinese Formulae**

**Local Chinese Herbs**

**Pulse Assessment**

6:00 dinner

9:00 Native Lore at the Camp Fire (1H)

Sunday: 5/27: \_\_\_\_\_ 6/24: \_\_\_\_\_ 7/22: \_\_\_\_\_ 8/26: \_\_\_\_\_ 9/16: \_\_\_\_\_ 10/21: \_\_\_\_\_

6:00 tai chi (1H)

Basic Moves    Chi Kung    Karate    Meridians & Tsubo    Chi Kung    Do-In

8:00 Herb Walk (2H)

10:00 brunch

12:30 Local *materia medica* (2H)

Local Native Herbs

Invasive Herbs

Common Herbs

Local Chinese Medicine Herbs

Antimicrobial Herbs

Tonic Herbs

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*Materia Medica* (including Ethnobotany, Local Materia Medica, and Plant Walks) = 63 Hours

+ Beginner's class (5 Flavors) = 67 Hours

+ Advanced classes (Moxa & Meridians, Toxic Medicinals and Local Chinese Herbs) = 69 Hours

*Materia medica* class time (including Sunday *Materia Medica* classes, Lenape Ethnobotany, Iroquois Ethnobotany, Cherokee Ethnobotany, Navajo Ethnobotany) + Toxic Medicinals (Adv. Chinese Med. 7/21), and Local Chinese Herbs (Adv. Chinese Med. 9/14): **22 hours of *materia medica***  
+ 33 hours of plant walks = **55 hours of *materia medica*** (51 for beginner's course)

### Recommended Reading / Reference List:

Planetary Herbology by Michael Tierra

The Energetics of Western Herbs by Peter Holmes

Western Herbs According to Traditional Chinese Medicine by Tomas Garran

Chinese Herbal Medicine: Materia Medica by Dan Bensky

Chinese Medical Herbology and Pharmacology by Chen and Chen

Native American Medicinal Plants by Daniel E. Moerman

Folk Medicine of the Delaware and Related Algonkian Tribes by Gladys Tantaquidgeon

Iroquois Medical Botany by James W. Herrick

Plants of the Cherokee by William H. Banks

## Sunday *materia medica*

### 5/27: **Local Native Herbs:**

Sassafras, Calamus, Partridge Berry, Oak, Boneset, Jack-In-The-Pulpit (6)

### 6/24: **Invasives:**

Japanese Knotweed, Reed, Garlic Mustard, St. John's Wort, Teasel, Wild Rose,  
Kuzu, Tree-of-Heaven, Air Potato (9)

### 7/22: **Common Herbs:**

Dandelion, Burdock, Yellow Dock, Plantain, Self-Heal, Ground Ivy, Oregano, Fennel, Privet (9)

### 8/26: **Local Chinese Herbs:**

Mulberry, Peony, Ginkgo, Schisandra, Rush, Horsetail, Cattail (7)

### 9/16: **Antimicrobials:**

Barberry, Goldthread, Echinacea, Toothache Plant, Goldenrod (5)

### 10/21: **Tonics:**

American Ginseng, Reishi, Chaga, Hawthorn, Licorice, Astragalus (6)

= 42 herbs covered

### + **Toxic Medicinals**

(Adv. Chinese Med. 7/21): Aconite, Coltsfoot, Peach Pit, Rhubarb, Hellebore, Iris, Elder, Poke (8)

+ herbs (such as trees) covered during walks: Hemlock, Pine, Yellow Birch, Chaga, Poplar (5)

### + **Local Chinese Herbs** Advanced Class:

Mugwort, Japanese Pagoda Tree, Wild Ginger, Willow, Amaranth, Peach, Clematis, Violet (8)

### + **Lenape Ethnobotany**

Class (not previously covered/counted): Sycamore, Sassafras, Oak, Black Haw, Elm, Sweet Fern (6)

+ **Iroquois Ethnobotany** Class: Bracken Fern, Larch, Bloodroot, Witch Hazel (4)

+ **Cherokee Ethnobotany** Class: Maidenhair Fern, Wood Fern, Spicebush, Smilax (4)

+ **Navajo Ethnobotany** Class: Sagebush, Bitter Herb, Creosote Bush, Red Root, Juniper (5)

42 + 31 = **65 herbs** covered for *materia medica* (beginner's course)

Advanced course = **82 herbs** for *materia medica* study

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## Friday Night 8:00 Ethnobotany:

### 5/25: **Doctrine of Signatures**

An introduction to one of the oldest and most widespread theories in traditional herbalism. This ethnobotany class will focus on Native American application of the Doctrine and examples of our local plants.

### 6/22: **Lenape Ethnobotany**

The Esopus were the local (Big Indian, NY) band of the Lenni Lenape, or Delaware, tribe. Although much was lost of the Lenape's knowledge of the area and mastery of local herbalism, tribal members from Oklahoma and other places have passed down some lore that. Since it pertains to Native people of the area using native plants, this material should be studied by any serious student of herbalism. We start our ethnobotany focus with herbs used by the Lenape.

*Materia medica:* Sycamore, Sassafras, Oak, Black Haw, Elm, Sweet Fern (plus some listed elsewhere)

### 7/20: **Iroquois Ethnobotany**

The Iroquois 6 Nations were centralized in New York state. They utilized many native herbs and also maintained an interesting medical system that was partially recorded in [Iroquois Medical Botany](#). This class looks at some of the beliefs and herbs of Iroquois medicine.

*Materia medica:* Bracken Fern, Larch, Bloodroot, Witch Hazel (plus some listed elsewhere)

### 8/24: **Cherokee Ethnobotany**

The Cherokee remain one of best-known Eastern tribes. Having relations with the Lenape and an herbal medicine that uses many herbs we know locally, in addition to some influential herbalists of today (such as David Winston and Jody Noe who come from the Cherokee herbal tradition) and several books on Cherokee medicine. This class will look at some herbs and beliefs of the tradition.

*Materia medica:* Maidenhair Fern, Wood Fern, Spicebush, Smilax (plus some listed elsewhere)

### 9/14: **Dine Ethnobotany**

The Dine, or Navajo, tribe is one of the biggest and maintains a strong herbal tradition. Even today herbs are sold in markets (alongside the famous Navajo jewelry) and many Native people rely on herbal medicines. Although many herbs of the southwest are not found locally, this study of Dine herbalism will give a glimpse of western ethnobotany, including herbs known to commerce as well as some unique to southwest Native tradition.

*Materia medica:* Sagebush, Bitter Herb, Creosote Bush, Red Root, Juniper (plus some listed elsewhere)

### 10/19: **Importance of Ethnobotany**

While ethnobotany largely remains in the realms of history and anthropology, the study of medicinal plants by Native people still has much to teach the modern world. This ethnobotany class will wrap up the series with continued discussion of the herbs already mentioned as well as inspiring the herbalist of today to maintain connection with Native traditions and to learn from them towards a greater understanding and practice of herbal medicine.

## **Saturday 2:00 Medicine Making / Beginners Chinese Medicine:**

### **5/26: Yin/Yang Theory (Theory of Fire and Water)**

This class introduces yin/yang theory, particularly how it is applied in Chinese medicine. This is foundational material that students of herbal medicine will constantly consider and refine. We will look at general associations of yin and yang and the body, the alchemical metaphor of fire and water and how this relates to chi and the body, and basic yin/yang characteristics of herbs.

### **6/23: 5 Flavors of Chinese Medicine**

The five flavors are at the heart of the classification of herbs in Chinese herbalism, the understanding of their properties, and the formulation of medicinals. Learn about the flavors of herbs - what they mean and when they are indicated.

### **7/21: Organs & Body Systems**

This class will explore the organs and body systems as understood in Chinese medicine. Still uncertain about what the “spleen” does according to Chinese medicine, or what the “liver” is in Chinese medicine beyond what you know from modern physiology? This class introduces all the basics of organs and body systems in Chinese herbalism.

### **8/25: Pulse & Tongue Assessment**

Pulse assessment is the quintessential form of touch diagnosis in Chinese medicine. Tongue assessment is a primary form of visual diagnosis in Chinese medicine. Together they represent the main focus of two of the “four pillars of diagnosis”. Alongside symptoms, pulse and tongue qualities are primary in clinical assessment and selection of herbs and formulae.

### **9/15: Doctrine of Signatures**

The Doctrine of Signatures is a universal theory, used by essentially all traditions of herbal medicine. Though often represented as historical, the Doctrine of Signatures is very alive and relevant today. Learn about the signatures of herbs and how to connect more deeply with the plants through their signatures.

### **10/20: Intake & Assessment**

This class will wrap up the previous material on diagnosis and cover some basics about health intake and clinical health assessment. This “putting-it-all-together” class will help beginner herbalists to take comprehensive assessments for herbal consultations.

## **Saturday 4:00 Medicine Making / Advanced Chinese Medicine:**

### **5/26: Pulse, Tongue, & Hara**

This class will review some of the fundamentals of pulse, tongue, and hara assessment and will present some more advanced material. Beyond the basics, this class will include hands-on practice and plenty of time for questions.

### **6/23: Moxa & Meridians**

Learn more about the various species of Mugwort and their use in moxibustion (Mugwort-burning treatment). Alongside acupuncture, moxibustion is one of the most important practices in Chinese medicine, though relatively little-known today for several reasons. This class will cover some basic moxibustion techniques, including hands-on practice. Meridians and acupoints will also be covered.

### **7/21: Toxic Medicinals**

Explore the scary subject of toxic medicinals. This class will cover some common herbs with (perhaps unknown) mild toxicity, following the spectrum to the most poisonous herbs known.

*Materia medica:* Aconite, Coltsfoot, Peach Pit, Rhubarb, Hellebore, Iris, Elder, Poke, and more

### **8/25: Classic Chinese Formulae**

This class will present a number of traditional Chinese formulae that are well-known today or otherwise relevant, such as representing herbs in the Catskill Apprenticeship *materia medica*.

### **9/15: Local Chinese Herbs**

This advanced class will cover some details regarding the use of local herbs used in Chinese medicine and will introduce (if introduction is needed) a number of wild plants of our area that should be better understood by herbalists of the area.

*Materia medica:* Mugwort, Japanese Pagoda, Wild Ginger, Willow, Amaranth, Peach, Clematis, Violet

### **10/20: Pulse Assessment**

As the quintessential diagnostic method of Chinese medicine, American herbalists of all levels need additional study time. This class will answer questions and include hands-on practice.

## **Sunday 12:30 Local Materia Medica:**

### **5/27: Local Native Herbs**

This class will cover some of the most important native herbs of our area. Native uses will be covered as well as the energetics of Chinese herb classification. Closely related Chinese herbs will be compared.

*Materia medica:* Sassafras, Calamus, Partridge Berry, Oak, Boneset, Jack-In-The-Pulpit

### **6/24: Invasive Herbs**

Many invasive plants are very medicinal and it is every herbalist's duty, in initiating balance in people and on earth, and in the name of holistic health, to better understand the invasive herbs.

*Materia medica:* Japanese Knotweed, Reed, Garlic Mustard, St. John's Wort, Teasel, Wild Rose, Kuzu, Tree-of-Heaven, Air Potato

### **7/22: Common Herbs**

This class covers the commonly known, though sometimes overlooked, herbs. Particularly unusual uses will be presented and novel perspective to gain deeper understanding of common herbs.

*Materia medica:* Dandelion, Burdock, Yellow Dock, Plantain, Self-Heal, Ground Ivy, Oregano, Fennel, Privet, and more

### **8/26: Local Chinese Medicine Herbs**

This class will cover some of the most important Chinese herbs that are found locally.

*Materia medica:* Mulberry, Peony, Ginkgo, Schisandra, Rush, Horsetail, Cattail

### **9/16: Antimicrobial Herbs**

The thorough understanding of antimicrobials and how to use them is one of the most important areas of mastery for herbalists. This class will cover the herbs, as well as practical information to assist in the successful use of these important medicinals.

*Materia medica:* Barberry, Goldthread, Echinacea, Toothache Plant, Goldenrod, and more

### **10/21: Tonic Herbs**

This class presents an overview of the various kinds of tonic herbs and covers in detail several of the most widely used.

*Materia medica:* American Ginseng, Reishi, Chaga, Hawthorn, Licorice, Astragalus



**Sunday materia medica**

**5/27: Local Native Herbs:**

Sassafras, Partridge Berry, Oak, Boneset, Jack-In-The-Pulpit (5)

**6/24: Invasives:**

Japanese Knotweed, Reed, Garlic Mustard, St. John's Wort, Teasel, Wild Rose,  
Kuzu, Tree-of-Heaven, Air Potato (9)

**7/22: Common Herbs:**

Dandelion, Burdock, Yellow Dock, Plantain, Self-Heal, Ground Ivy, Oregano, Fennel, Privet (9)

**8/26: Local Chinese Herbs:**

Mulberry, Peony, Ginkgo, Schisandra, Rush, Horsetail, Cattail (7)

**9/16: Antimicrobials:**

Barberry, Goldthread, Echinacea, Toothache Plant, Goldenrod (5)

**10/21: Tonics:**

American Ginseng, Reishi, Chaga, Hawthorn, Licorice, Astragalus (6)

= 41 herbs covered

**+ Toxic Medicinals (Advanced Chinese Medicine 7/21):**

Aconite, Coltsfoot, Peach Pit, Rhubarb, Hellebore, Iris, Lily, Elder, Poke (9)

+ herbs (trees) covered during walks: Hemlock, Pine, Yellow Birch, Chaga, Poplar, Sycamore (6)

**+ Local Chinese Herbs Advanced Class:**

Mugwort, Japanese Pagoda Tree, Wild Ginger, Willow, Amaranth, Peach, Clematis, Violet (8)

**+ Lenape Ethnobotany Class (not previously covered/counted):**

Sycamore, Sassafras, Oak, Black Haw, Elm, Sweet Fern (6)

**+ Iroquois Ethnobotany Class ("):** Bracken Fern, Larch, Bloodroot, Witch Hazel (4)

**+ Cherokee Ethnobotany Class ("):** Maidenhair Fern, Wood Fern, Spicebush, Smilax, Calamus (5)

**+ Navajo Ethnobotany Class ("):** Sagebush, Bitter Herb, Creosote Bush, Red Root, Juniper (5)

41 + 26 = **67 herbs** covered for student course *materia medica*

41 + 43 = **84 herbs** for herbalist course *materia medica* study

*Materia Medica* (including Ethnobotany, Local Materia Medica, and Plant Walks) = **73.5 Hours**

+ Beginner's classes (5 Flavors & Doctrine of Signatures) = **77.5 Hours**

+ Advanced classes (Moxa & Meridians, Toxic Medicinals and Local Chinese Herbs) = **83.5**

**Hours**

**TOTAL : 18 Hours (per weekend) x 6 weekends = 108 Hours**

Certificates to be awarded:

**Catskill Herbal Apprenticeship**

**Catskill Herbal Apprenticeship Advanced Studies**

Variations include:

Adaptations for one or more weekend (but less than 6)

Medicine Making Focus (if attending both Sat. afternoon medicine making sessions)

Academic Focus (if attending both Beginner's Chinese Medicine and Advanced Chinese Medicine on Saturday afternoons)

*(class hours adjusted accordingly on certificate)*

**COST:**

\$1800.00 for full series, paid in full

\$350.00 per weekend

Full participation is encouraged, but not necessary. Alternatively, come to one or as many as you can or would like to. Attendance of beginner and advanced classes and medicine-making sessions (regarding Saturday afternoons) is by choice of the participant.

*Please note:*

The above curriculum is still being developed and is subject to change. While this basic outline, including the class schedule and *materia medica* focus, will mostly remain as presented, minor changes are likely to occur while we iron out the kinks. Thank you for your understanding.

**Catskill Herbal Apprenticeship**

With Nathaniel Whitmore

In Big Indian, NY

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