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Foundation Course: Student Handbook

Updated November 6th 2025

Introduction

Heartwood Education brings together a wide and diverse community of learners and, like any community, we need regulations, policies and a code of conduct to ensure that everyone involved has the best possible learning experience.
The regulations described in this handbook are designed to protect and maintain two vital areas:

1. Academic quality by ensuring that all learners are treated in a fair way
2. The rights and responsibilities of all learners and staff to ensure that you learn in a safe, supportive environment that enables you to realise your full potential.

We encourage you to read this handbook carefully as it forms the basis of the learning contract between you and Heartwood.

The Heartwood Foundation Course is made up of 12 online Units offering a broad introduction to the field of herbal medicine, with an emphasis on the practical use of herbs to alleviate common ailments. The course is assessed using a variety of methods including online quizzes and projects tasks, and an award certificate and online badges are given to those who complete all 12 units within the deadlines and achieve a minimum of 40% grade for their monograph. Learners who successfully finish all tasks, quizzes and assignments and achieves at least 60% for their monograph, may apply for a place on the Heartwood Professional Course.

All FC units are released on the **14th of the month** in the evening, we usually say by 6pm. If the 14th falls on a weekend then we release the Friday evening before.

Please note: The name that you enter on your profile will be the name used when issuing your certificate, so please be mindful to enter this carefully.

Welcome

Welcome to the one year **Foundation Course in Herbal Medicine** and thank you for choosing Heartwood for your online studies. We are committed to ensuring that you gain maximum benefit from the course, and sincerely hope that you will find learning with us both stimulating and fun.

The course Welcome Page will be available on your Dashboard and contains detailed information on how to use the Heartwood online Learning Management System (LMS). This handbook explains the various procedures that define the relationship between you as a learner and Heartwood as a course provider.

We should emphasise that the Foundation Course is designed as an introduction to the world of medicinal herbs and, whilst it can act as a pathway to professional study in herbal medicine, it does not confer any right to practise or prescribe to others. We hope it will encourage you and give you confidence in the use of plants to enhance personal health and wellbeing, but we must stress that the medical information contained in the course is not ‘medical advice’ and should not be treated as such,

and it is provided without any representations or warranties, express or implied. You must not rely on the information in the course as an alternative to medical advice, and if you have any specific questions about any medical matter, you should consult your doctor or other professional healthcare provider.

If you think you may be suffering from any medical condition, you should seek immediate medical attention, and should never delay seeking medical advice, nor disregard or discontinue medical treatment, because of information contained in the course.

About Heartwood

In April 1971, Fred Fletcher Hyde, George Smith, Nalda Gosling, Albert Priest, Arthur Jenner and Albert Orbell set up the National Institute of Medical Herbalists Limited Education Fund

“to establish the training and tuition of students of medical herbalism giving both lectures in theoretical aspects and demonstrations in practical training.”

In pursuit of these charitable objectives, the Education Fund makes grants to organisations and educational establishments, sponsors research, and supports the provision of herbal practice and education facilities throughout the United Kingdom.

In April 2016, The National Institute of Medical Herbalists Education Fund (Now The Herbal Medicine Trust), at the instigation of Paul Hambly, FNIMH (Chair of the Fund) launched a new educational initiative, under the name Heartwood, with the aim of producing a suite of blended learning courses and programmes as part of its mission to promote excellence in herbal medicine education.

The project is currently managed by Lisa Smith (General Manager), Guy Waddell PhD fHEA MNIMH (Director of Studies), Hananja Brice-Ytsma MSc FNIMH (Clinical Director), and Veda West MSc (Course Leader, Professional Course)

In line with its charitable status, all income derived from Heartwood in excess of course production costs is used by The Herbal Medicine Trust to support new initiatives that benefit herbal medicine as a whole. Whilst the Trustees of the Herbal Medicine Trust believe that Heartwood can make a significant contribution to national and international education in herbal medicine, the Herbal Medicine Trust seeks to encourage and support the work of all institutions offering professional herbalist training, and to share knowledge and resources wherever possible.

Contact Information

You should ensure that we are kept up to date of your contact details so that all important communications reach you. Please also ensure that your personal profile on the Learning Management System is complete and up-to-date at all times.

Contact information for all tutors and Heartwood staff is available on the Learning Management System. In the event of any additional queries, please email admin@heartwoodteam.net

Payment of Course Fees

Monthly Payments are due on 1st of each calendar month without a break until paid in full. It is the students responsibility to notify accounts@heartwoodteam.net if you are experiencing any difficulties with your payment(s). Heartwood Education reserves the right to suspend access to your studies when payment has not been received and without prior notification. If a student fails to make an agreed payment, the student may become immediately liable for payment of the full balance of their Fees. They will not normally be permitted to establish a new payment arrangement and may be subject to further action by Heartwood Education, such as termination of registration as a student and/or referral to a debt collection agency. A student whose debt is referred to a debt collection agency will become liable for Charges in addition to the balance of the debt owing to Heartwood Education. A student whose registration is terminated will not be permitted to continue studies on their course or receive any award certificate.. Heartwood Education is under no obligation to reinstate an individual’s registration for the current academic year or a subsequent academic year once it has been terminated, even after full payment of outstanding Fees and Charges.

Study Interruption and Withdrawal

Circumstances may arise where it becomes necessary for a learner to defer their studies, or withdraw from studies altogether, for unforeseen reasons. If you need to take an extended absence from the course and wish to continue at a later date, you can apply to defer your participation and join a later edition of the course. This can only be done once, is at our discretion and the course must be resumed within 6 months from the start of the deferment of your studies. Students must have completed and earned the badge for each unit they have had access to, you will be added to the next intake that have reached the same point. Heartwood reserves the right to withdraw or reconfigure aspects of the learning experience in such cases, and if the fee for the course has changed during the deferment, this fee will be applied to your payment for the remaining units.

Please note that deferment of your studies will incur an administration fee of £50

Application for withdrawal from or deferment of studies should be made by emailing admin@heartwoodteam.net at the earliest opportunity.

Refunds

Should you decide to withdraw, your registration fee of £95.00 will be retained and is non-transferable. No refunds will be given for any units that have been released within your intake. Refunds are calculated from the date Heartwood receive your written agreement to our terms of withdrawal. Refunds are calculated at £40 per month for the first 10 months only plus an administration fee of £50.

If you have chosen to pay by instalments we will stop your subscription, and in accordance with the withdrawal policy, will take into account the £50 administration fee. No refund will be given.

Participation and Timeliness

Participation in the Heartwood Foundation Course requires commitment and taking full advantage of the learning opportunities it provides, understanding that the learning achieved will derive from a readiness to participate fully in all the learning activities offered.

The value that comes from making a personal commitment of time, effort and intellectual investment is enormous, and it is important to be organised and to plan your work schedule carefully. Be aware of any special course dates or deadlines, and work to those, making sure you are adequately prepared for all tasks.

Students are expected to complete all aspects of the course within the clear deadlines given. Units are released monthly, on the 14th of each month.

The course offers flexibility within the year in terms of unit completion. While students are encouraged to finish units roughly within a given month, some units are necessarily bigger than others and may take longer and we fully understand that life can get in the way at times which may mean that there are weeks when you may be catching up on your learning. However, the course must be fully completed within 10 weeks of the release of Units 11 and 12 (which are released together) in order to achieve your certificate of completion. Do also be aware that throughout the year there are 5 assignments that must be completed within a certain time-frame so look out for these deadlines. Following completion of the course there will be a two week gap before the course is archived (roughly 13 months from release of Unit 1)

At the close of the course, students will have access to an archived version free of charge for one further year. That version will not contain interactive features such as glossaries, webinars or forums. It will include all the videos, slides, documents, pages and e-book material you would need to use for reference.

For students intending to apply to the Heartwood Professional Course

For any students wishing to proceed onto the Professional Course it is imperative that all parts of the course are completed by the deadlines given during the Foundation Course.

Monographs must achieve a mark of 60% or over for PC applicants. Any that fall below this mark will be moderated and, on some occasions, applicants may be considered for interview. For September FC cohort students who wish to gain a place on the Professional Course the following September, they will need to meet an earlier deadline of mid-July to complete the entire FC. This is to ensure there is enough time for work to be marked and enrolment to take place. Guidance will be provided on how to do this.

For students intending to apply to the Professional Course on completion of the Foundation Course, they will be eligible for up to 2 academic intakes.

Feedback, Suggestions and Complaints

All Units in the Heartwood Foundation Course contain a structured Feedback activity, and we encourage learners to use the Forums and the messaging system on the LMS to make suggestions and raise issues on all aspects of study.

If you have a particular complaint or grievance about any aspect of the course, please raise it with Nikki Harrison by emailing n.harrison@heartwoodteam.net in the first instance.

Support

Academic support is available in a number of ways. General questions can be raised with the course tutors during regular online seminars and text-chat sessions, and in the Unit forums.

Particular and individual issues can be raised via the LMS direct messaging system to Delphine Sayre, the FC Course Leader, or course tutors .

If you have difficulties using the LMS, help is available and you are strongly encouraged to use it as early and often as you like by emailing support@heartwoodteam.net.

Accessibility for students with learning differences and disabilities

As part of our ongoing commitment to improving access for all Heartwood students we would like to make you aware of assistive technologies that are available on the LMS and externally. Assistive technologies are technologies that help to ensure accessibility for students with disabilities and specific learning differences but may be helpful to all students.

Assistive technology and resources available on the LMS available to all students:

Heartwood Accessibility Menu: available as a circular gold icon with a black figure, on the bottom left hand of your LMS screen. Please have a look at this to help customise your LMS experience.

Downloadable pdf documents: most of our videos that contain technical information have a downloadable pdf document to go alongside them. We are constantly building on this process to ensure there are both written and spoken forms of this type of content.

BBB (Big Blue Button) Webinars: Please make sure you have read through the document about Big Blue Button, located on your Welcome Page, just below your Monthly Webinar dates. If you would like us to switch on closed captions for webinars for you, this is something we can do and you would need to let us know about it before the webinar, so that the tutors are alerted to switch it on in advance. Please contact Delphine Sayre or Nikki Harrison to arrange this.

Externally Sourced Assistive Technology:

Many devices now have built-in accessibility support and screen readers. It is worth exploring these.

Text to Speech Software:

Text-to-speech (TTS) is a type of assistive technology that reads digital text aloud. It's sometimes called “read aloud” technology. With a click of a button or the touch of a finger, TTS can take words on a computer or other digital device and convert them into audio.

Examples of text-to-speech software:

- Speechify https://speechify.com/ has a (chrome extension) page for ADHD students (free - various payment options). Speechify reads aloud and is compatible with iOS, Android, Chrome and Edge with web and Mac applications in a range of languages.
- ClaroRead for Microsoft https://www.texthelp.com/en-gb/solutions/dsa/claroread/ (some free options). ClaroRead is assistive software for Windows, Mac, Chromebook, and mobile, aiding reading, proofreading, editing and writing. It reads text aloud from Word, emails and webpages in 25 languages, with visual tracking through colour and highlighting. Features include spell check and a speaking dictionary.
- Natural Reader https://www.naturalreaders.com/webapp.html (free version). Natural Reader has web and mobile apps and is a Chrome extension that can convert text, pdf, image, web pages and physical book pages into audio with a choice of voices and languages.
- Google TTS https://cloud.google.com/text-to-speech (A free service) Google Text-to-Speech is a cloud service that converts written text into spoken audio with machine learning technology. It works with Google Assistant, Google Translate, and accessibility tools, offering natural-sounding voices in multiple languages and accents; available on Android and other platforms.
- Panopreter: https://www.panopreter.com/en/products/pb/index.php (the basic version is free). This is a great text-to-speech and text-to-MP3 program that reads text aloud with natural voices, converts it to WAV and MP3, highlights text, supports multiple languages, batch conversion, and has adjustable voice settings.
- Murf https://murf.ai/ (has a range of pricing options). Murf studio is designed to make more realistic voiceover productions. It has over two hundred voices and over fifteen speaking styles to make a more natural sounding tone, used for training videos and corporate communications.
- Lovo https://lovo.ai/ (has a free option). Lovo is a voice generator and text to speech software, which reportedly has 100 languages and more than five hundred voices to choose from.

Speech to Text Software:

If you need to use speech to text software for your assessments, please let your tutors know.

Online Time Management Apps:

These are software tools accessible via web browsers or mobile apps designed to help individuals and teams organize their time, track tasks and projects, and improve productivity.

Examples of online time management apps (most are free):

- MyHomework https://myhomeworkapp.com/ (there is a free option). This can set up a planner which then will track assignments, projects, tests etc; track webinars and other timed events and log due-date reminders.

- Trello https://trello.com/ (there is a free option). Similarly this app allows you to organise your work, create a planner and set up to-do lists and reminders.
- Evernote: https://evernote.com/ With this app you can scan and securely store documents, such as assessments, and create audionotes to yourself.
- Pomodoro Technique: there are a variety of free apps that enable this time management method that uses a timer to break down work into focused intervals, traditionally 25 minutes in length, separated by short breaks. After four “pomodoros” (the 25-minute intervals), a longer break is taken. This technique aims to improve focus, reduce distractions, and prevent burnout . Here is a link to explain it more: https://adhdandautismclinic.co.uk/unleashing-productivity-the-pomodoro- technique-for-adhd-management/
- Stayfocused https://www.stayfocusd.com/ . An extension that helps to restrict the amount of time you spend on time-wasting websites.
- Antisocial: http://antisocial.io/ . This helps you to control your smartphone usage.
- Remember the Milk: https://www.rememberthemilk.com/ . An app that helps you set up to-do lists with reminders, synced to all devises.
- 2Do: https://www.2doapp.com/ Designed for Mac users there is a free version of this app which also helps you to organise your lists, set up reminders and will sync across Apple devices.

Study Aids

- Quizlet: https://quizlet.com/ Master whatever you’re learning with Quizlet’s interactive flashcards, practice tests, and study activities.
- SimpleMind Mind Mapping: https://simplemind.eu/ Place topics anywhere you want in the free-form layout or use one of the various auto layouts - great for brainstorming. Block out distractions with autofocus feature.

Video Captions:

Video captions are not currently available for our course content because it was created before the software existed. However, please consider the variety of free captioning software available. Google Chrome has recently released one. The captioning will appear when you watch a video or listen to a soundtrack in your browser. Here are some instructions (you need to download Chrome):to enable Live Caption on Google Chrome from your desktop, go to Chrome Settings:

- go to the Advanced section
- then go to the Accessibility section
- Then click the toggle for Live Caption

The feature is currently available in English and is available worldwide on the latest version of Chrome on Windows, Mac and Linux devices. It will be available on ChromeOS soon.

A note on assistive technologies for those progressing to Professional Course

Please note that many assistive technologies now use AI. Students progressing to the Professional Course who have learning differences, disabilities and/or chronic health issues that impact on their studies are encouraged to apply for reasonable adjustments at the start of their first year on the PC. This will ensure that you can continue to use assistive technology to support your studies without this

being flagged as AI.

Academic Integrity

Heartwood Education has a responsibility to promote academic integrity as well as to identify and penalise academic misconduct including plagiarism. Academic integrity is a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility and courage. Heartwood and our tutors are committed to these values, and we ask the same of students. This is an important part of an individual's and an institution's reputation. Academic integrity is a positive and ethical approach to learning. It is not an offence to draw upon the work or ideas of another person where this is appropriately acknowledged. In fact, this is essential in developing good academic work.

Academic misconduct is any type of cheating that occurs in relation to formal academic work and includes the following:

- Plagiarism: The use, within assessments, of others' ideas or words of another without acknowledgement
- Artificial Intelligence (AI): The use of generative AI in your assessments
- Unordered List ItemContract cheating: the practice of students engaging a third-party individual or service to undertake their assessments
- Falsification: The presentation of fictitious or distorted data, evidence, references

The following is a list, ranked in order of severity, of unoriginal work, adapted from Turnitin (the main tool used in marking Professional Course assignments to alert tutors to possible abuse of academic integrity):

1. Submitting someone else's work, word for word, as one's own.
2. Containing significant portions of text from a single source, without alterations.
3. Finding and replacing key words and phrases but retaining the essential content of sources.
4. Mixing paraphrased material from multiple sources.
5. Combining perfectly cited sources with copied pages without citation.
6. Copied material from multiple sources, made to fit together.
7. Citing non-existent sources or including inaccurate information, including proper citation of sources but containing almost no original work.
8. Including proper citation but relying too closely on the text's original wording and/or structure.

None of the above are acceptable in your assessments on the Foundation Course.

Generative AI

There is much interest in and growing use of generative AI tools, especially ChatGPT, but also Google Bard, DALLE-2 and CoPilot. Generative AI is an AI technology that automatically generates content in response to written prompts. As these tools are developing rapidly and we are in the process of understanding their implications for education and assessment, we expect that students will avoid the use of such software in generating content for any of their submitted work.

Implications of academic misconduct for progression to the Professional Course

If a student's monograph is suspected to have involved plagiarism or any other form of academic

misconduct, we reserve the right to submit the work to plagiarism software, which will store the work securely, and mark the work minus the plagiarised content, which could bring the grade below the 60% needed to progress to the Professional Course. If the results point towards academic misconduct, this may also affect the student's progression to the Professional Course. We will discuss the results with the student, with the aim being to promote academic integrity and reflection.

Disciplinary Procedures

Should a disciplinary issue arise, Heartwood normally adopts a 3-stage procedure with a warning email sent at each stage detailing the nature of the problem, and the steps required by the learner to resolve it. Failure to comply after the receipt of a third warning email may result in a learner being suspended or excluded from the course.

A member of Heartwood staff who identifies, or who is made aware of, the misconduct shall draw it to the attention of the learner. This interaction must be recorded and will be drawn to the attention of the Course Leader in writing, and the learner informed that this is happening. A disciplinary meeting will be arranged and, if a written warning is issued, a report will be issued by the Course Leader to the General Manager.

A learner who is the subject of a complaint of misconduct or against whom a criminal charge is pending or who is subject of a police investigation, may be suspended or excluded by Heartwood pending the disciplinary hearing or the trial.

No learner will be suspended or excluded unless they have been given an opportunity to make representation in person to the Course Leader and the General Mamanger. If for any reason it is not possible for a learner to attend online, they will be allowed to make written representation.

Notwithstanding the above, Heartwood reserves the right to summarily exclude students for non-payment of fees or acts of gross misconduct without the need to follow the above warning procedure.

Appeals Process

A student aggrieved by a decision to suspend or exclude shall have the right to appeal to Heartwood within 10 working days of such suspension or exclusion.

Grounds for the appeal should be sent in writing to the Course Leader who will convene an appeal panel comprising of 2 other members of the Heartwood.

Following the appeal meeting, a copy of minutes taken and a letter outlining the outcome of the appeal will be sent to the student in writing within 10 days.

Intellectual Property

Heartwood owns all rights, title and interest in any intellectual property created, devised and developed for it for the purposes of making and creating online courses in herbal medicine. Learners must not give permission to any third party to use any of Heartwood's intellectual property without

Heartwood's express written permission, nor should any learner distribute or sell such intellectual property to any third party by any means whatsoever without Heartwood's written authorisation.

Online Safety and Integrity

Introduction

Given the key role played by information technology in the delivery of its courses and educational programs, the integrity of Heartwood's computer systems must not be jeopardised. There are, accordingly, a number of basic rules and procedures that should be followed by all learners, and failure to comply with these may lead to disciplinary action being taken.

Obligations of learners

You should engage with all learning activities which form part of your course Units subject to medical issues or other personal reasons notified to the Administrative Coordinator (support@heartwoodteam.net).

Learners are required to comply in every respect with the Regulations and Conditions of Use of the Heartwood Learning Management System (and associated systems) as set out below.

In doing so they must:

- Respect others' intellectual property.
- Avoid activities which may lead to criminal liability.
- Avoid keeping of others' personal data unless registered to do so or, have explicit permission from the data owner.
- Not produce or pass on any material which could be considered defamatory.
- Understand that Heartwood will impose severe penalties – up to dismissal or even referral to the police – in order to protect the safety of learners and uphold the reputation of its courses.

Detailed regulations and conditions

Heartwood does not tolerate racial or sexual harassment in any form whatsoever or any discrimination on racial or ethnic grounds or on grounds of gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, and political or religious beliefs. This includes any material created or distributed using Heartwood IT systems.

Enrolled learners are expected to exercise responsible and appropriate behaviour when using Heartwood IT systems, and to observe all relevant laws, whether UK or foreign, including:

- The Computer Misuse Act (1990)
- The Data Protection Act (2018)
- The Copyright, Designs and Patents Acts

- The laws of libel, obscenity and discrimination.

Learners who post materials such as photos, videos, audio recordings and text extracts must ensure that they have obtained the requisite permission to do so. Explicit permission must also be obtained for the use of Heartwood's name or logo in any publication, including documents made available on the internet.

Access to the Learning Management System (LMS)

Learners are provided with access to the Heartwood Learning Management System by means of a username and password. Users must take all reasonable steps to keep their passwords confidential and not disclose them to anyone else. If an enrolled learner believes that their password has become known to anyone else, the password should be changed at the earliest opportunity. Any user who, for whatever reason, comes to know the password of any other user must not attempt to obtain access to the Learning Management System using that password nor disclose it to any other person. Use of a password by anyone other than the authorised person will be treated as serious misconduct.

All reasonable efforts will be employed to ensure that Learning Management System will be made accessible to all learners, regardless of disability, who have a legitimate reason for using them.

You are expected to become familiar with the use of the LMS as part of the course. If you have any problems in using the LMS, you should contact support@heartwoodteam.net at your earliest opportunity.

Penalties

Failure to observe these regulations and procedures will be considered a serious matter by Heartwood and may result in the learners right to access the IT facilities being withdrawn. Misuse of the Heartwood IT systems may also result in court proceedings. Learners will be held responsible for any claims brought against Heartwood for any legal action resulting from their unauthorised use of its IT systems.

Data Protection

Heartwood is registered as a data controller with the Office of the Information Commissioner, and collects and processes information about students for various teaching, research and administrative purposes. All such activity is now governed by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) that came into effect on the 25th May 2018 (replacing the Data Protection Act,1998).

GDPR represents a major revision of data protection legislation, and introduces new requirements for how organisations process personal data. Students are entitled to have access to the records held about them to ensure accuracy and fairness.

Timeliness & Foundation Course Access

You should engage with all learning activities which form part of your course Units subject to medical issues or other personal reasons notified to the Administrative Coordinator, support@heartwoodteam.net

You are expected to become familiar with the use of the LMS as part of the course. If you have any problems in using the LMS, you should contact support@heartwoodteam.net at your earliest opportunity.

The course remains available in its current form to learners for 6 weeks after the initial 12 month study period.

- Some activities have deadlines, and you are advised to check submission dates in advance.
- At the close of the course, students will have access to an archived version free of charge for one year.
- That version will not contain interactive features such as glossaries, webinars or forums. It will include all the videos, slides, documents, pages and e-book material you would need to use for reference.

Learning Agreement

By accessing the Foundation Course Welcome page you are confirming that you have read and understood this document in its entirety, and that you agree expressly to abide by all the regulations and policies it contains for the duration of your studies with us.

Using Herbs in Pregnancy and during Breast-feeding

As you are beginning to taste herbs on this course, some of them for the first time, we would like to say a little about the use of herbs in pregnancy.

There are many herbs that are completely gentle and safe to use in pregnancy in the form of teas, far too many to list here. Google will come up with many over-cautious lists so it is better to look at some of the herbal textbooks you may be acquiring as the course develops (some of which have lists of herbs to avoid in pregnancy).

With the exception of one, all the herbs studied on the course are safe to use during pregnancy and whilst breast-feeding. The one that we would suggest you refrain from (which is included in the tea samples you may have bought for the course) is **Yarrow, which is best to avoid in pregnancy.**

Here is some extra guidance you may find helpful. Women often respond to lower doses of herbs in pregnancy, perhaps because their organs and circulation are all enhanced to manage the extra demands of having another system to support. We feel it’s fine to use alcohol tinctures in small doses but teas are lovely and provide the extra fluids needed. With any herb **listen to your body first**: smell the herb and roll a sip round your mouth to see if you like it and then, if so, drink in small quantities to see how your body responds. **If you instinctively feel it is not right for you, then**

try something else.

It's always good with herbs to start with one and develop a personal understanding of how it works for you. For digestion you could try chamomile, fennel, lemon balm or peppermint for starters. Ginger tea is quite safe to use during the first trimester. Try boiling a piece of crushed fresh ginger. It works well for indigestion, nausea and bloating and you can also just have ginger juice (just a teaspoonful) although it may taste quite strong.

During the subsequent 6 months of a pregnancy, most things can be treated (eg pre-existing conditions, heartburn etc) but ideally under guidance of a herbalist. Many women opt to drink raspberry leaf tea in the last few months of a pregnancy which has a long tradition of being used safely as a uterine tonic. For women who feel confident enough to self-medicate there are several herbals written specifically to guide you through, for example:

The Herbal for Mother and Child by Anne McIntyre
The Natural Pregnancy Book by Aviva Jill Romm

Lastly, for those of you that are interested in this topic, there is a recording of a lovely webinar delivered to FC students in 2024 on the topic of pregnancy from herbalist and midwife Rosemary Umolu. You will find this under the link "FC Information":
https://heartwood-uk.net/lms/course/view.php?id=121

UNIT 1: The History, Scope and Philosophy of Plant-Based Medicine

Introduction

This unit touches on many different approaches to the art and science of Western herbal medicine.

Overview

- The Learning Management System (LMS) and virtual learning resources
- Introduction to the history and development of Western herbal medicine; plants as medicine and using plants for healing
- Exploring the modern 'evidence base' of herbal medicine and published research.
- Herbal regulation and patient safety.

Learning Outcomes: In this Unit, you will:

- Discover how contemporary herbal medicine is distinct from conventional medicine
- Research a key figure in the history of herbalism
- Understand the difference between qualitative and quantitative research, and learn a variety of technical terms used in herbal medicine
- Learn about the holistic nature of herbal practice.

By the end of Section 1, you will understand:

- The aims of the Heartwood Foundation Course
- How to navigate and use the LMS and its virtual learning resources. By the end of Section 2, you will have an understanding of:
- Different definitions of herbal medicine
- Compounds contained in plants
- Types of herbal remedies, including tonics, relaxant and stimulants
- The role of the Medical Herbalist
- The scope of herbal medicine
- Concepts in Ayurveda and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM).

By the end of Section 3, you will have an overview of:

- The historical context of contemporary herbal medicine (sometimes called Phytotherapy)
- The lives of people influential in the historical development of herbal medicine.

By the end of Section 4, you will have an understanding of:

- The benefits of herbal therapy during pregnancy, and in the treatment of children and the elderly
- Therapeutic approaches within herbal medicine, and the use of herbal remedies alongside conventional drugs.

By the end of Section 5, you will have an understanding of:

- Research into herbal medicine and the efficacy of herbal remedies
- The difference between qualitative and quantitative research.

By the end of Section 6, you will have explored:

- The safety of herbal medicine
- The efficacy and potential adverse effects of herbal remedies
- Beliefs about drugs and dosage
- Treatment of the common cold.

By the end of Section 7, you will be able to describe:

- The history and current status of regulation of herbal medicine in the UK
- The Quacks Charter, the Medicines Act, the thalidomide tragedy and subsequent health legislation.

By the end of Section 8, you will have an understanding of:

- All of the topics discussed in this Unit
- Herbal practice and the role of medical herbalists
- The importance of collaboration with other health care professionals for the benefit of patients.
- The future of Phytotherapy.

Additional Information

This Unit contains a **Glossary** of terms as well as a **References and Resources** list.

UNIT 2: An Introduction to Plant Science

Introduction

This unit explores plant classification and plant anatomy, and introduces the basic pharmacology of some important plant families used in Western herbal medicine.

Overview

- Explore plant identification and understand the terms used in plant anatomy
- Get to know four important plant families
- Review key plant constituents including mucilage, tannins and saponins, and understand their properties
- Explore the nature and importance of toxicology in the study of herbal medicine
- Discover more about the many interesting medicinal plants that grow all around us.

Learning Outcomes In this Unit, you will:

- Understand how a plant’s active compounds can benefit human health
- Observe and identify a plant of your choice using a plant flora
- Begin to construct a monograph for your chosen plant
- Use an experiential tasting method for deep exploration of medicinal plants.

By the end of Section 1, you will:

- Know the meaning of the term ethnobotany, and what a monograph is
- Be aware that modern plant classification is based on DNA analysis and not just on the visual recognition of plant structures
- Have chosen one plant from the four plant families to gather information about during the course so that you can produce a monograph.

By the end of Section 2, you will:

- Understand that there is a hierarchy of plant classification, and recognise the importance of the species and variety names that make up the scientific name of each plant
- Know the classification and key features of the rose family, carrot family, mint family and the daisy family
- Understand the differences between dicotyledons and monocotyledons
- Have made a simple onion syrup cough remedy
- Added basic identifying structures to your monograph.

By the end of Section 3, you will know more about basic plant science including:

- The fundamentals of the plant growth cycle including the structure of vascular transport systems, the definition of photosynthesis, the universal names of different leaf shapes, and botanic terminology
- The main features of leaves, flowers and stems
- The connection between the plant echinacea and the hedgehog
- Alternate (spiral) and opposite leaf formation
- What sepals are, and how to identify some of the key attributes of your chosen plant to use in your monograph.

By the end of Section 4, you will have:

- Looked in detail at 4 important medicinal plant families: the Apiaceae
- Understood the difference between annual, biennial and perennial plants.

By the end of Section 5, you will:

- Be able to describe the different compounds that may be found in any one plant
- Understand the concept of secondary metabolites
- Be able to describe mucilages, tannins and saponins
- Know why essential oils are sometimes called volatile oils, and the amount of volatile oils that plants contain.

By the end of Section 6, you will:

- Be aware of the potential dangers of ingesting certain plant constituents
- Understand the difference between poisons and toxins
- Be able to discuss the actual risk of poisoning from the use of medicinal plants
- Have considered six clinical trials on the benefits of milk thistle.

By the end of Section 7, you will:

- Have explored using your senses to understand more about medicinal plants

- Have gained an understanding of the basic principles of plant identification
- Have used a plant identification book or flora, and considered the location, height, flowering time, flower morphology, colour, and leaf shape of your chosen monograph plant.

By the end of Section 8, you will:

- Have understood key aspects of the phenomenological approach to plant study including Goethe's methodology
- Have tasted Nettle tea, using Goethe's methodology to record your findings
- Have drunk an infusion of your selected plant for your monograph, using the Goethean method to record your findings.

Additional Information

It will be useful to have access to the following items/books whilst studying this unit:

- A good wild flower book, or plant flora
- A small hand lens (10x magnification)
- Some drawing materials and/or a camera or mobile phone.

UNIT 3: An Introduction to Human Science

This Unit presents a concise systematic review of the structure and function of the human body.

Overview

- Key concepts, including a brief look at the building blocks of the body and homeostasis
- Blood and the cardiovascular system
- The lymphatic and immune systems
- The digestive system
- The musculo-skeletal system
- The respiratory system

Learning Outcomes

By the end Section 1, you will be able to:

- Describe the structural organisation of the human body
- Accurately identify the structures of a eukaryotic cell and describe their functions
- Discuss the concept of homeostasis.

By the end of Section 2, you will be able to:

- List five main blood vessel types
- Explain how the structure of arterial and venous vessel walls differ, and how this relates to their function
- Describe the structure of the heart
- Name the two different circulatory systems and understand what differentiates them
- Understand what creates the pulse.
- Be introduced to one major herbal medicine with affinity for the cardiovascular system.

By the end of Section 3, you will be able to:

- List the structures which comprise the lymphatic system
- Describe the composition of lymph
- Explain the functions of lymph
- Describe the main functions of the spleen.
- Be introduced to one major herbal medicine with affinity for the lymphatic system. •

By the end of Section 4, you will be able to:

- Name the three salivary glands, and describe the functions of saliva
- List the various sections of the small intestine, and describe some of the hormones involved in controlling its function
- List five functions of the liver
- Describe the function of the large intestine.

By the end of Section 5, you will be able to:

- List six functions of bones
- List the three types of bone cells and explain their functions
- Explain the endocrine regulation of bone growth
- Differentiate between smooth muscle, skeletal muscle and cardiac muscle.
- Be introduced to one major herbal medicine with affinity for the musculoskeletal system.

By the end of Section 6, you will be able to:

- List the structures comprising the respiratory system
- Outline the structure of the lungs
- List the main muscles involved in breathing and describe how they perform their actions
- Learn to measure the respiration rate
- Differentiate between internal respiration and external respiration.

By the end of Section 7, you will be able to:

- Accurately label the major anatomical features of the kidney
- Give an example of the endocrine function of the kidney
- Explain how urine is formed
- Consider the kidney and its connections with other systems of the body

Additional Information

Includes references to articles, videos and recommended reading.

UNIT 4: Materia Medica 1

Introduction

This is the first of three Materia Medica units, the first of which contains a detailed consideration of five common medicinal plants:

- German chamomile, Matricaria recutita L.
- Fennel, Foeniculum vulgare Mill.
- Elder tree, Sambucus nigra L.
- Lemon Balm, Melissa officinalis L.
- Meadowsweet, Filipendula ulmaria (L.) Maxim.

Overview

- Get to know 5 important medicinal plants (particularly how and why they are used), and develop a strong affinity with each plant so that you can use them wisely and appropriately
- Understand research into medicinal plants compounds and into the effects of whole plant extracts
- Use key texts and modern sources to conduct your own research into the historical use of key plants within Phytotherapy, and compare these uses with modern approaches confirmed by research
- Learn to use your senses to identify and know more deeply the subtleties of medicinal plants, thus building up a more complex and nuanced understanding and relationship to them
- Explore the making of simple home recipes and practical pharmacy, learning how to transform a plant into something pleasant and remedial to use (e.g., tisanes, infused oils and electuaries).

Learning Outcomes

By the end of Section 1, you will have an understanding of:

- The structure of this Unit, and some central concepts underpinning Western herbal medicine.

By the end of Section 2, you will have:

- Undertaken a Plant Tasting with the 5 herbs using the Goethean method
- Defined 5 keywords for each tasting

By the end of Section 3, you will have an understanding of:

- The basic botany of German chamomile
- The parts used, main constituents, main therapeutic actions, methods of preparation and use, cautions and care, and research relating to the plant
- The central role and importance of the digestive system and mucus membranes in herbal medicine
- How to use tisanes/herbal teas.

By the end of Section 4, you will have an understanding of:

- The basic botany of fennel
- The parts used, main constituents, main therapeutic actions, methods of preparation and use, cautions and care, and research relating to the plant.
- Links between the digestive system and other systems in the body, including the nervous system and the hormonal system
- How to make an aromatic digestive electuary.

By the end of Section 5, you will have an understanding of:

- The basic botany of the elder tree
- The parts used, main constituents, main therapeutic actions, methods of preparation and use, cautions and care, and research relating to the plant
- The effectiveness of herbal medicine in the treatment of children
- The uses of elderberry, and how to make an elderflower infused oil.

By the end of Section 6, you will have an understanding of:

- The basic botany of lemon balm
- The parts used, main constituents, main therapeutic actions, methods of preparation and use, cautions and care, and and research relating to the plant
- Making a lemon balm infused oil
- How the nervous system interacts with other body systems, including the digestive system and the immune system.

By the end of Section 7, you will have an understanding of:

- The basic botany of meadowsweet
- The parts used, main constituents, main therapeutic actions, methods of preparation and use, cautions and care, and research relating to the plant
- Case histories demonstrating how the herbalists’ approach is uniquely tailored to each individual.

By the end of Section 8, you will have taken part in an activity about herbal history and folklore and have an understanding of:

- Have gained a good understanding of some of the history and folklore surrounding the herb you have selected.
- Know where traditional uses of your chosen plant have been carried forward into present day use and reflected in research.
- Explored how to take information from one referenced source and show you have understood its meaning by putting it in to your own words.

Additional Information

This Unit contains **Reference and Resources** lists as well as the tutor's own tasting notes.

UNIT 5: Human Science 2 – Physiology and Comparative Nutrition

Introduction

In this Unit, we review of the main nutrient classes (carbohydrate, fat, protein, water soluble vitamins, fat soluble vitamins, minerals, trace elements, and essential fatty acids), andconsider their relevance to human health. This unit does not present any specific approach to diet, but includes general reference to widely accepted principles of healthy eating.

Overview

- Introduction - why do we eat?
- The major food groups
- Inflammation and diet
- Self-medication with culinary herbs
- Foods with 'bad press'
- Gut biota
- Constitutional and other healing perspectives
- Seasonal eating and foraging
- Phytonutrients
- Water
- Medicinal foods

Learning Outcomes

By the end of Section 1, you will have

- Explored some of the underlying reasons why we eat
- Examined how our emotions may impact on the physiology of digestion and absorption of food.

By the end of Section 2, you will be able to

- Name the five major food groups
- Explain how carbohydrates, proteins and fats are broken down and absorbed in the gut
- Define the word vitamin
- Name vitamins that work synergistically
- Define the functional role of minerals in the body.

By the end of Section 3, you will be able to

- Describe the mechanisms of inflammation in the body
- List some common chronic illnesses where inflammation is believed to play a key role
- Discern the difference between saturated and non-saturated fats
- Know the optimal ratio between Omega-3 and Omega-6 fats in the diet
- Recognise key anti-inflammatory food groups.

By the end of Section 4, you will have

- An overview of the medicinal uses of five common culinary herbs
- Discovered the history of gripe water 21
- Made a garden salad and a salad dressing.

At the end of Section 5, you will have

- An overview of the history of salt, sugar and bread
- Understood why these foods have become problematical in the Western world
- Considered the potential problems resulting from the widespread availability of processed and purified foods.

At the end of Section 6, you will

- Be able to differentiate between the terms microbiome, microbiota, prebiotic, probiotic and commensal
- Know the main functions of gut flora
- Be familiar with some of the main illnesses linked to dysregulation of gut flora
- Be familiar with some strategies for optimisation of gut flora health
- Have prepared a lacto-fermented vegetable.

By the end of Section 7, you will have

- Gained an overview of constitutional medicine from the perspective of the Greek/Unani traditions
- Explored the concept of the four qualities, and the humoural approach to Western herbal medicine

- Gained understanding of the concept of digestive fire
- Considered the similarities and differences that characterize a variety of herbal traditions.

By the end of Section 8, you will have

- Considered the benefits of wild foraging
- Gained an understanding of the nutritional and medicinal value of seaweeds
- Read about the positive impact of wild foraged foods on the gut biome.

By the end of Section 9, you will have

- Gained an understanding of the term free radical
- Understood the word phytonutrient, and be able to list some examples
- Explored the concept of taste in humoural medicine.

By the end of Section 10, you will have

- Gained an understanding of the importance of water to health
- Considered the nutritional value of water
- Learnt how to choose a good quality bottled drinking water
- Examined the role of water as a signal conductor in the body.

By the end of Section 11, you will have

- Considered ways in which your larder can act as your medicine chest
- Considered what to eat when weaning your baby
- Explored food sources of phyto-oestrogens.

UNIT 6: Materia Medica 2

Introduction

This is the second of three Materia Medica Units in which we consider 5 more valuable medicinal plants in the herbal materia medica:

- Hawthorn, Crataegus monogyna Jacq.
- Marigold, Calendula officinalis L.
- Lime Blossom, Tilia europea L.
- Lavender, Lavendula angustifolia Mill.
- Nettle, Urtica dioica L.

Overview

- Deepen your understanding of major plant compounds, research, safety and efficacy

- Explore case histories, plant tastings, simple home recipes and practical pharmacy
- Consider Western Herbal Medicine's approach to the treatment of conditions of the nervous system, the circulatory system, the skin and allergies
- Gain knowledge of common pharmacy preparations including tinctures, salves, ointments and plaisters

Learning Outcomes

By the end of Section 1, you will have an understanding of

- The structure of this Unit, and some central concepts underpinning Western Herbal Medicine
- Get to know five more important medicinal plants
- Recognise that the circulatory system is given particular emphasis in traditional herbal medicine as it is a key area of action and benefit for many medicinal plants
- An introduction to the concepts of tonics and adaptogens
- Understand that the health and treatment of the skin is viewed as an ecology of health in Western Herbal Medicine and that there are many herbs with a huge capacity for wound healing.

By the end of Section 2, you will have an understanding of

- Revisit the method of contemplative plant tasting introduced to you in Unit 2
- Consider how you would make a tea with each of the five herbs in this unit, and record your findings from following the tasting methodology
- Learn how to share your five key words from your plant tastings on the LMS

By the end of Section 3, you will have an understanding of

- The rose family, including hawthorn
- The parts used, main constituents, main therapeutic actions, methods of preparation and use, cautions and care, and research relating to the plant
- The central role of hawthorn as a heart medicine
- Cardiotonic cordials.

By the end of Section 4, you will have an understanding of

* Tinctures and how they may be more or less suitable for certain people, and at different stages of life.

- What the terms menstruum and marc mean in relation to tincture making
- Marker compounds.
- Get to know 5 more important medicinal plants in Western herbal medicine, (particularly how and why they are used)
- Deepen your understanding of major plant compounds, research, safety and efficacy, case histories, plant tastings, simple home recipes and practical pharmacy

- Consider Western herbal medicine’s approach to the treatment of conditions of the nervous system, the circulation, the skin, and allergy
- Gain knowledge of common pharmacy preparations, including tinctures, salves, ointments and plaisters.

By the end of Section 5, you will have an understanding of

* The asteraceae family including marigold

- The parts used, main constituents, main therapeutic actions, methods of preparation and use, cautions and care, case history and research relating to the plant
- The central role of marigold as a wound healer
- Marigold and the management of cancer
- Ointments and plaisters.

By the end of Section 6, you will have an understanding of

- The basic botany of lime flowers
- The parts used, main constituents, main therapeutic actions, methods of preparation and use, cautions and care, case history and and research relating to the plant
- Tonics and adaptogens
- The role of lime flower as a tonic for the nervous and circulatory systems.

By the end of Section 7, you will have an understanding of

* The basic botany of lavender

- The parts used, main constituents, main therapeutic actions, methods of preparation and use, cautions and care, and research relating to the plant
- The adaptable nature of lavender as a first aid medicine
- Allergy and gut flora
- How to make a lavender and oatmeal bath sachet

By the end of Section 8, you will have:

* The basic botany of nettle

- The parts used, main constituents, main therapeutic actions, methods of preparation and use, cautions and care, and research relating to the plant
- The central role of nettle as a food-like herb in herbal medicine at all stages of life
- Skin, and the role of blood in keeping skin healthy.

By the end of Section 9, you will have:

Shared with your fellow students, your five tasting words of the five plants covered in this unit.

Additional Information

This unit contains Reference and Resources lists as well as the tutor's own tasting notes.

UNIT 7: Human Science 3

Introduction

This unit reviews the changes that occur in healthy tissue when the body is exposed to factors that provoke illness, and investigates how various body systems, organs and tissues combine to mount a healing response.

Overview

In This unit you will

- Be introduced to the senses
- Learn about the nervous system
- Learn about he endocrine system
- Learn about the gentio-urinary system
- Learn about the macro-physiological approach to making an assessment of disease
- Understand the Western herbal medicine approach to helping people who have migraine, or are transitioning through menopause
- Explore the pros and cons of conventional medicine in relation to Western herbal medicine in the treatment of two common conditions.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of Section 1, you will

- Understand what is meant by the term functional condition
- Be introduced to the idea of macro-physiology
- Know that medical herbalists (phytotherapists) value the taking of a detailed case history when seeing a patient and how this is considered part of the treatment itself
    - Be introduced to the idea that there are important concepts of mechanism of action within herbal medicine; these include the herbs themselves as (1) functional and (2) energetic.

By the end of Section 2, you will be able to

- Be introduced to the wonders of the basic structure of the nervous system

By the end of Section 3, you will be able to

- Identify the major components of a nerve cell, and describe the function of myelin sheaths
- Explain what a synapse is, and how it works
- Describe the functions of cerebrospinal fluid
- List the five main nerve plexuses
- Differentiate between the sympathetic and parasympathetic divisions of autonomic nervous system
- Reflect on the interconnectedness of the nervous system.

By the end of Section 4, you will be able to

- Describe the structures and processes underlying the perception of the five senses
- Understand the central integration of sensation within our body
- Consider how important and accurate our senses of touch, taste, smell, hearing and sight are
- Do we have a sixth sense?

By the end of Section 5, you will be able to:

- Explain the origins of the word migraine
- List the major features of migraine
- List the different categories of migraine
- Describe the orthodox approach to treating migraine.

By the end of Section 6, you will be able to describe

- Describe the herbalists approach to the treatment of migraine
- Discuss herbs used for pain relief.

By the end of Section 7, you will be able to describe

- What does the endocrine system consist of?
- How does it work?
- What does it do for us?
- List the major endocrine glands of the body, ie pituitary gland, thyroid gland, adrenal glands and the pancreas
- Differentiate between the anterior and posterior pituitary gland
- Differentiate between the words endocrine and exocrine.

By the end of Section 8, you will be able to describe

- Describe the structures of the female reproductive system
- Consider the hormonal influences upon the female reproductive system
- A word about menopause
- Describe the major structures of the male reproductive system
- Consider the function of the prostate and glands of the male reproductive system and the production of semen
- Be introduced to some of the hormonal influences of this system

By the end of Section 9, you will be able to describe

- Know how conventional medicine views and offers treatment for migraine and menopausal syndrome
- Know how the conventional medical view differs from the Western herbal medicine viewpoint
- Understand the rationale behind common herbal protocols and regimens for the management of migraine and menopausal syndrome
- Be able to discuss why phytotherapy's patient-centred (as opposed to disease centred) approach makes it is difficult to talk about what herb is 'good for' any particular condition
- Have an understanding of the rationale for choosing particular herbs in specific clinical situations.
- Key ways in which a medical herbalist can offer help to relieve menopausal symptoms
- Some simple foods that can be beneficial around the time of the menopause.

Additional Information

This unit contains additional interviews with three consultant medical herbalists: Fi Taylor talking about migraine treatment; Anita Ralph on the menopause; and Aviva Romm, talking about the capacity of the body to heal, and about functional medicine.

UNIT 8: Materia Medica 3

Introduction

This is the third of three Materia Medica Units where we consider the importance and significance of five more medicinal plants, focusing on how and why they are in common use. We also look at some straightforward but effective home remedies including juices, powders, decoctions and syrups.

- Thyme, Thymus vulgaris L.
- Marshmallow, Althaea officinalis L.
- Yarrow, Achillea millefolium L.
- Cleavers, Galium aparine L.
- Dandelion, Taraxacum officinale L.

Overview

For each of the five plants, we review research into the compounds they contain and consider how knowledge of the effects of whole plant extracts informs and confirms traditional use in Western herbal medicine.

We also:

- Describe why the lymphatic system is given greater emphasis in traditional Western herbal medicine than other medical systems
- Consider the treatment of infection in a holistic and dynamic way

- Describe the concept of expectorant, and discuss traditional systems of medicine that value increased elimination of waste products
- Describe the ‘heroic’ approach to treatment
- Describe herbs that have a capacity for action at specific organ sites.

There will be opportunities for you to expand your sensory exploration of the subtleties of each of these medicinal plants, and thus build a more complex and nuanced understanding and relationship with each plant.

You will also continue to explore simple home recipes and practical pharmacy techniques, and learn how to transform a plant into something pleasant and remedial to use.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of Section 1, you will have an understanding of

- The structure of this Unit, and some central concepts underpinning Western herbal medicine.

By the end of Section 2, you will have an understanding of

- The Lamiaceae family and thyme
- The parts used, main constituents, main therapeutic actions, methods of preparation and use, cautions and care, and research relating to the plant
- The function of the immune system
- The use of this well-known culinary herb as an heroic medicine.
- How to prepare a herb vinegar and oxymel.

By the end of Section 3, you will have an understanding of

- The basic botany of yarrow
- The parts used, main constituents, main therapeutic actions, methods of preparation and use, cautions and care, and research relating to the plant
- Research relating to yarrow - ‘the herbalist’s herb’ - an ancient ‘cure-all’ used in the management of both acute and chronic conditions
- Drying herbs for later use.

By the end of Section 4, you will have an understanding of

- The basic botany of dandelion
- The parts used, main constituents, main therapeutic actions, methods of preparation and use, cautions and care, and research relating to the plant
- Cleansing the blood using alteratives and depruatives
- How to prepare a decoction
- The medicinal use of dandelion – three remedies in one.

By the end of Section 5, you will have an understanding of

- The malvaceae family including marshmallow
- The parts used, main constituents, main therapeutic actions, methods of preparation and use, cautions and care, and research relating to the plant

- How to make a marshmallow syrup
- Mucilaginous herbs and their uses
- The treatment of infection with herbs.

By the end of Section 6, you will have an understanding of

- The basic botany of cleavers
- The parts used, main constituents, main therapeutic actions, methods of preparation and use, cautions and care, and research relating to the plant
- The importance of lymph and the lymphatic system in herbal medicine.

By the end of Section 6, you will have an understanding of:

Conducting your own mini-research project in to the medicinal properties of a spice using research skills, writing skills and use of scientific naming of plants.

Additional Information

This unit contains Reference and Resources lists as well as the tutor's own tasting notes.

UNIT 9: Herbal Approaches to Common Conditions 1

Introduction

This is the first of three units in which we take an in-depth look at conditions commonly seen by medical herbalists and other primary care health workers.

Overview

- An introduction to broad concepts of conventional pathophysiology relating to upper respiratory tract infection, sinusitis, and gastro-oesophageal reflux.
- An analysis of how the approach of the phytotherapist differs from the conventional doctor in the management of these conditions, emphasising that herbal medicines are not prescribed as if they were 'natural' versions of conventional drugs
- Discussion of some of the drugs and treatments that may be offered by conventional doctors in the treatment of these conditions
- Deepening understanding of the use of self-help techniques relating to diet and lifestyle
- Examination of the role domestic medicine can play in helping to treat commonly experienced conditions.
- A review of our understanding of the actions of the herbs we have studied during this course to date.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of Section 1, you will understand the scope of This unit which

- Discusses the concept of red flags in clinical medicine, including how to recognise them and how to refer appropriately for emergency care
- Discusses the macro-physiological approach of the medical herbalist and the importance of working alongside the patient in a constructive manner
- Lists some of the strategies the medical herbalist can use to ‘optimise’ the patient’s own healing responses
- Describes some of the key functional foods and phytochemicals that may be introduced into the diet safely whilst undergoing other treatments
- Explains the rationale for the use of complex mixtures of plants and phytochemicals
- Describes how herbal medicine works alongside conventional medicine in the management of illness.

By the end of Section 2, you will understand

- Hiatus-hernia and gastro-oesophageal reflux disease (GORD)
- The role of bitters and anxiolytics

By the end of Section 3, you will have

- Explored ‘red flag’ symptoms which may signal a more serious underlying condition, and which should be looked at more closely or referred to a healthcare professional/GP .

At the end of Section 4, you will have

- Devised a compound remedy comprising a bitter, at least one aromatic, and one other herb studied during the Course.

Additional Information

There is a further reading and research links list.

- An Overview of upper respiratory tract infections
- Learned how to make a mustard foot bath as part of kitchen pharmacy and domestic medicine
- Understood the impact of sinusitis and the medicinal use of herbs in its treatment

UNIT 10: Herbal Approaches to Common Conditions 2

Introduction

This is the second of three units in which we take an in-depth look at conditions commonly seen by medical herbalists and other primary care health workers.

Overview

- Investigate the pathophysiology of insomnia and osteoarthritis
- Understand insomnia and osteoarthritis from a Western herbal viewpoint, with particular emphasis on how the approach of the phytotherapist differs from that of conventional

medicine
- Review some of the drugs and treatments that are used in conventional medical management of sleep disorders and osteoarthritis
- Explore the effect of diet and lifestyle on these two conditions, and examine the role of domestic medicine in helping people suffering from them.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of Section 1, you will understand the scope of This unit which

- Describes important clinical red flags that may require urgent help or investigation
- Discusses the macro-physiological approach of the medical herbalist, and the need to work alongside the patient in a positive and constructive setting
- Describes some of the strategies that the medical herbalist may employ to ‘optimise’ the patient’s own healing responses
- Names some of the key functional foods/phytochemicals that can be introduced into the diet safely whilst undergoing treatment for osteoarthritis or insomnia.
- Reflects on the capacity of herbal medicine to work alongside conventional medicine.

By the end of Section 2, you will be able to:

- Describe herbal treatment strategies for sleep disturbances and insomnia
- Describe how to encourage relaxation and sleep using herbs
- Identify ‘red flags’ requiring referral.

By the end of Section 3, you will

- Describe herbal treatment strategies for sleep disturbances and insomnia
- Describe how to encourage relaxation and sleep using herbs
- Identify ‘red flags’ requiring referral.
- Have an overview of osteoarthritis and other diseases of the joints
- Be able to describe the difference between conventional and herbal approaches to the management of osteoarthritis
- Understand herbal strategies for the management of acute joint and muscle complaints
- Have critiqued a research paper on valerian
- Have made a fresh poultice for one of the major joints.

UNIT 11: Herbal Approaches to Common Conditions 3 and to Men's Health

Introduction

This is the third of three units in which we take an in-depth look at two more conditions commonly seen by medical herbalists and other primary care health workers. We also have a section specifically on men's health.

Overview

- Consider the patho-physiology of irritable bowel syndrome, and of some commonly encountered skin conditions including eczema and psoriasis
- Review each condition from a Western herbal viewpoint, with particular emphasis on how the approach of the phytotherapist differs from that of conventional medicine
- Investigate some of the conventional drugs and treatments that may be offered in the conventional management of these conditions
- Explore the use of self-help, diet and lifestyle changes in the management of IBS and common skin conditions.
- Identify key health issues that relate to men's health around physical, mental and sexual well-being.
- Reduce the stigma around discussing men's health issues.
- Reflect on the complexity of men's health conditions.
- Examine how certain plants, foods and lifestyle changes may improve men's health.
- Demonstrate how Damiana (Turnera diffusa) is especially relevant to men's health.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of Section 1, you will understand the scope of This unit which

- Describes important clinical red flags relating to Irritable Bowel Syndrome and common skin conditions that may require urgent help or investigation
- Discusses the macro-physiological approach of the medical herbalist, and the need to work alongside the patient in a positive and constructive setting
- Describes some of the strategies that the medical herbalist may employ to ‘optimize’ the patient's own healing responses
- Names some of the key functional foods and phytochemicals that can be introduced into the diet safely in the treatment of Irritable Bowel Syndrome and common skin conditions
- Reflects on the capacity of herbal medicine to work alongside conventional medicine.

By the end of Section 2, you will be able to:

- Describe Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)
- Describe the herbal medicine and domestic medicine approaches to IBS
- Discuss a case history, and research the use of peppermint oil in the treatment of IBS
- Identify red flags for IBS symptoms.

By the end of Section 3, you will

- Describe Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)
- Describe the herbal medicine and domestic medicine approaches to IBS
- Discuss a case history, and research the use of peppermint oil in the treatment of IBS
- Identify red flags for IBS symptoms.
- Have an understanding of a variety of skin conditions and their ‘red flags”
- Be able to discuss herbal approaches to skin complaints
- Be able to make an oatmeal compress or bath.

By the end of Section 4, you will

- Describe how mental health conditions may present in men
- Summarise key aspects of the gut-brain connection and possible impacts on mental

health
- Justify herbal and nutritional interventions to support men's mental health
- Describe possible mechanisms that contribute to benigh prostate enlargement, low libido, erectile dysfunction, premature ejaculation and low fertility and suggest dietary, herbal and lifestyle approaches to their management
- Explain the potential benefits of Damiana in supporting men's health

UNIT 12: Bringing in the Harvest

Introduction

In this final Unit, we draw together ideas and concepts from previous Units.

Overview

- To take a closer look at your chosen plant project, and explore how this plant may be of help, not just in terms of its medicinal actions but also in terms of its energetics
- To consider the ways in which our long relationship with plants has affected our genome, and why this makes herbal medicine safe for most people
- To reflect on our anatomy and physiology as a complex interrelated whole
- To consider how symptoms of disease can give clues to the inter-relatedness of all body systems, and which herbal combinations may be best suited to particular health problems
- To understand how the anatomy and physiology of the human body allows it to function as a complex ecosystem, and how herbal medicines can enhance the operation of this ecosystem.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of Section 1, you will understand the scope of This unit which

- Reflects on the use of the senses in the understanding of what may be taking place in the body in health and in disease
- Discusses the importance of the senses as a means to enquire into, and to more deeply understand, medicinal plants
- Discusses traditions of folk medicine around the world, illustrating the value of ‘pre-scientific’ knowledge
- Identifies resources of good quality research relating to herbal medicine
- Describes the nature and actions of cytochromes, and how co-evolution with plants has led to changes in human genetics that make plant medicines more likely to be tolerated with few side-effects
- Considers how treatment with a medical herbalist is person-centred rather than disease-centred
- Reflects on the fact that herbal medicine is much more than an array of health supplements, and that the use of whole plant medicines and plant mixtures involves synergy
- Explains how some of the gentlest of plant medicines and functional foods can be the most powerful healers

- Describes the work of the medical herbalist
- Discusses plant medicines that can work well alongside conventional drugs
- Outlines ways in which balance within the complex ecosystem of the body can be enhanced by the use of herbal medicines
- Explains how the healthy functioning of the gastro-intestinal system is essential to good health.

By the end of Section 2, you will be able to

- List seven universal themes described by Sharman Apt Russell
- Discuss what herbalism means to you.

By the end of Section 3, you will have

- Formulated a view on the effectiveness of herbal medicine
- Become aware of a broad evolutionary kinship - we are animals and part of the natural world
- Become more aware of the significance of cell receptor sites
- Understood the links between Western herbal medicine and other forms of traditional medicine, such as Unani Tibb.

By the end of Section 4, you will

- Have completed various extra monograph activities involving examining the leaf pattern and flower detail of your chosen plant; completing a drawing (with eyes closed) of your plant; and tasting your plant to identify your 5 key words
- Have written 300 words summarising what you feel is important about your chosen plant
- Have completed your monograph. You have 6 weeks after the release of Unit 12 to complete all units and submit your final assignment - the herb monograph.

Additional Information

There is a reference and further reading list.

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