



The CHA Herbal Thymes

Connecticut Herb Association

www.ctherb.org Autumn 2023

CHA Upcoming Events

Many events, road trips etc. are difficult to plan a specific date and time in advance. We will have some "Pop-Up" events posted on Facebook and email. I know they may be last minute, hopefully people can attend. For all events and more details will be posted to website or event notices on Facebook.

If anyone has ideas or places to visit please let Gayle or Terry know so we can post them.



**Logee's Green House
January 21, 2024
Meet up about 9:30 am
Inclement weather date will
change to Jan, 28th
Meet for Lunch later at
The Vanilla Bean Cafe
450 Deerfield Rd, Pomfret, CT**

Spring and Summer event ideas

Mystic Village. Book Bam, Niantic
Garden Party, Afternoon Tea Party
Botanical Garden NY
Litchfield White Memorial
Conservation Center.
Little Pond 1.5-mile boardwalk
Mount Tom Tower Trailhead walk
Paul Cusson mushroom walk Permanent
Culture conference, Westerly RI.

Winter Greetings:

I decided to add a Mid-Winter update on CHA. Here is a short newsletter to give you something to read on cold snowy days.

Snow is upon us; Jack frost is nipping at our noses so what shall we do? I have given some thought as to what the season brings, and how I feel about it. To me it is a time of rest and rejuvenation, but also a time to purge.

Yes, purge! Let go of the things that have little meaning or value to me anymore. Clean closets, dresser drawers, and that overcrowded basement storage area. Donate or recycle all that extra stuff that you saved for a rainy day. "I might need that someday", we all have said that. I get a good feeling of self-accomplishment when I see the progress. YES, fresh and open space, I can breathe. Why wait till spring when we want to be out in the gardens. Dump that idea of *spring cleaning*, do it now in the Dark Time of the year. So, my suggestion to you is to tackle a project around the house, clear out stuff, let it go, and breathe.

Not only purge physical stuff, but the mental stuff. Let go of those old negative feelings, some of the hurts that nag at you, the ones that replay in your head, the ones that keep you awake at night.

All the "I should have said", "I should have done it", "what if I..." all that crap clogging up your mind. Like the song says "*Let it go*"

Meditate on releasing those feelings. Write them down on paper and burn them, watching them go up in flames let yourself feel the release. Then when spring comes you will be free to go play in the garden.

Beat the Winter Blues

By Terri Cusson

We're going around again. Tis the season for the winter blues. After all the festive highs of the holidays season it's no wonder some people get a little low this time of year. Part of it may be due to lack of nature light. You don't have to have SAD (seasonal affected disorder) to chase the sunlight this time of year. Get outside as much as you can. If the weather doesn't permit outside adventuring than at least open the curtains and look outside for a while. Our brains need direct natural light to function at their best. Keep moving.

I tend to spend more time curled up with books and my computer this time of year, but I really need to move more. One of my resolutions is to stretch more to keep limber. For me that means yoga and Tia Chi, but it could just as easily be calisthenic of some kind. Remember that old kiddy song?

"Bend and stretch, reach for the sky. Stand on tippy toes oh so high."

Silly but if you sing it in your head while doing it no one will know.

Finally because I'm a gardener I dream of spring. I get out the garden books, seed catalogs, and create a beautiful garden that I'll never have the space or time to grow. So, if you garden, get your materials ready, order your seeds, prep your containers and growing spaces if you do your own start. If you don't have room for that take a road trip to a greenhouse like Logee's or Woodland Gardens. Love the smell of the soil in the greenhouses this time of year. It will get you out the door and move into the natural light.



Richter's catalog is out!

Make sure you get your copy. What better way than to sit by a fire with a cup of tea and peruse the catalog. Dreaming of spring and planting your gardens. I have my notebook ready to make my list and draw a few diagrams of what I would like to add or change in my gardens.

Richter's has free demonstrations, videos, and Q&A on their website www.richters.com *here is a list of some.*

Seeding in Flats, Directly in Pots, Paper Pots, Hard to Germinate Seeds, Transplanting Seedlings Common Post-germination Problems

There is so much more info and videos on the tab News & Info Take advantage of this awesome information that is **FREE**

Winter jasmine (*Jasminum nudiflorum*) is one of the earliest flowering plants to bloom, often in January. It has none of the characteristic scents of the family, but the cheery, buttery blooms help dispel winter gloom and bring encouragement to the cabin-fevered gardener. This decorative plant is quick to establish and care is a breeze. The plant grows best in USDA Zones 6-10 and blooms mid-winter or early spring. This deciduous shrubs attract butterflies, are pet-friendly. Winter jasmine is a fast-growing and spreads well, making it a good plant to train to grow over a trellis or use as ground cover. For best results, plant winter jasmine in an area with well-drained soil that receives full sun—even in the winter.

Full or partial sun is needed, so plant winter jasmine in an area that receives two to six (or more) hours of direct sunlight. Enjoy researching this shrub. I already added it to my list.



According to Richter's and the International Herb Association the "Herb of the Year" is Yarrow. What a great herb. I will be looking for any articles from all of you for the CHA newsletter Spring Issue. Send me anything you have on how you use yarrow, materia medica, medicinal uses, and in cooking. This issue of the newsletter will be dedicated to this little but powerful herb.

Achillea millefolium, Yarrow

Gaule Nagas

How wonderful to have a bonus mid-winter CHA newsletter. What has Jeanie been up to? Well, I decided that in 2024 one of my resolutions is to finish those dam classes I paid for and delete subscriptions I no longer use. Getting away from the "I'll get to it some day" I think it's a form of decluttering. Though you can't see the mess and confusion on the outside, it's perhaps another hidden stress or commitment on the inside. One of the classes I am finishing, which I started in 2020, is the Certificate for Natural Skincare Formulation. Hope it's not too late: It was a 1-year course!! I have now finished all the modules, passed all the tests and this week. Next, I am creating the 5 formulations to hand in. Those are easy words, but the process is time-consuming as I need to know exactly what I am making and for whom or for what reason. As you know, my company Blessed Creek is as close to natural as I can reasonably get a skincare and cleaning company. I am reformulating 6 products, including a body butter that I can have on my table in the summer, the foaming facial wash, the lavender toner, body scrub (I am making it dryer and more scrubby). Last but not least, the hair conditioner bar rethinking the bar I have and adding one for curly hair. The oil cleanser; making it more a milk/oil cleanser. I am deleting products that do not sell well, giving me some extra time and space. Classes are expected to begin again in February. Starting with all popular soap class on the 9th. I have scheduled the popular Chocolate Festival on Super Bowl Sunday, February 11th from 10-3:30. We will make 5 items, chocolate lip balm, body butter, scrub, lotion bar, and bath melts. It also includes 2 kinds of soup, crusty bread, and of course chocolate cake. *Jeanie Wild*

A Breath in The Winter Sun

Awakening this morning, my joints stiff from sleep. I look out my bedroom window and clear a small circle on the glass with my warm hand pushing away the feathered ice pattern formations created by the indoor heat and cold for a better view of the outdoors weather. The sky is gray with pink and orange streaks in the distance. I arise and remember today is the first day of the new year. My dog comes over and places her cold nose in my hand telling me it's time to start my day. I smell fresh coffee coming from the kitchen. I shuffle to the kitchen to pour my first cup of morning coffee. I see a sticky note that I placed on the refrigerator door the day before stating: 2024. Happiness can be found in exercise. It releases endorphins. I say to myself. "Okay lady. This is the year you're going to follow through." Begrudgingly I zip up my parka and push myself out the front door. Within minutes the end of my nose is quite cold. I move along the wood line marking a fresh path in the new fallen snow. The clouds are floating by, some silver gray, some white puffs with a hint of the sun winking back at times. The snowfall is bright and shiny. It's quite mesmerizing for a time. I smile to myself, watching my breath steam into the air and the only sound I hear is the whisper of the soft breeze and the occasional snap/crackle of the snow and ice beneath my footsteps breaking the calm silence. I continue on my short journey, losing track of time. I wake from my trance when a red tailed hawk from above screeches at me. Annoyed that I disturbed a small squirrel in a large oak tree that it was stalking for his meal. I continue on, humming to myself a merry tune my grandfather used to sing when I was a child. My winter blues and aches washed away. I realize I have hiked quite a distance, so I turn, and I retrace my path back home. No longer cold and unhappy I pour myself a cup of hot peppermint tea, sit down in my favorite chair and pull out some needlepoint. I fall asleep for a short nap in my content state. Thankful Mother Nature has gifted me another perfect day. *Catherine Sherwood*

Reflections on Thyme

Debra Hultgren

Mid-winter in Connecticut should find most perennial plants in their annual slumber. Yet, as I walked my gardens on a cool day, I found one of my Thyme plants looking as fresh as if it were summer. In this case, *Thymus vulgaris*, apparently an evergreen, is my culinary go-to plant. I was craving a cup of Thyme tea and was delighted at the fresh aroma that is half the experience. I frequently use essential oil of Thyme in my diffuser for both the wonderful smell and the antimicrobial effect it will have on my closed-in home.



Thyme is a member of the mint family and has over 300-400 different varieties. Originally from the Mediterranean parts of the world, Thyme grows quite happily here in the US in zones 2-10 depending on the variety. Most are hardy to zone 5 with some winter protection. Thyme prefers well drained and part-sand soil. It loves the full sun and loathes wet feet. However, I find it will tolerate some shade. Many of us have creeping Thyme varieties and they appear to find part sun adequate.

Back to the tea! Personally, I love the taste of a plain Thyme tea with a tiny amount of raw honey. It is wonderful for the upper respiratory system as an antiviral, antibacterial, antifungal, and antiseptic. It is being researched for its ability to disrupt biofilms (PubMed), making it useful in Covid and other viruses that create immune avoidant biofilms. I find it can help with coughs and congestion (often with other mint family members). Thyme is known to have antioxidant effects and is anti-inflammatory. Thymol and carvacrol are two of the compounds known to combat inflammation. These compounds help to inhibit inflammatory cytokines. In Vitro studies have looked at Thyme's anti-cancer activity (Journal of Essential Oil-Bearing Plants). Along with Oregano, Thyme essential oil has been studied for its effect on mood (PubMed) and digestion (also linked to mood). It makes a good addition to a GI tea formula and adds a pleasant flavor alongside ginger and other herbs. Among the anti-microbial studies, it was found to be effective (In Vitro) against drug resistant *Candida albicans* (MDPI). In a journal of Entomology, Thyme essential oil was found to deter the *Anopheles arabiensis*, (Malaria carrying) mosquito (Hindawi). I put it in my homemade insect repellents. These are just some of the potential uses of Thyme and there is a large body of research past and current to which we can refer.

Adding Thyme essential oil to salves can help speed up the healing of minor wounds, bites, rashes, and burns. Aroma therapists use it in massage due to its antispasmodic properties. Thyme is listed as Safety Class 2b in the Botanical Safety Handbook (caution in pregnancy) but is generally considered safe. Excess consumption of anything should be cautioned and use of essential oils requires some experience (never consume an essential oil). There is so much more info out there, so I encourage you to do your own research.

On a simple level, grab dried thyme from your culinary herb shelf, make a cup with a level teaspoon of dried thyme. With so many benefits, why not? I made a pot with my freshly gathered stems this week, cooled it, and used it with some Pinot Grigio as a delicious cocktail. I could see it as a mocktail with some seltzer, flavored or not. I believe it would make a lovely, iced tea and next summer I will experiment with adding it to my lemon balm for a sun infused tea. Of course, cook with Thyme! It is often added to meat recipes and is a standard part of Italian seasonings.

Grow it, harvest it, and dry Thyme for winter use. I find it dries reasonably well by hanging bunches if it is not too humid. It dries extremely well in a dehydrator and stores long term in a glass jar with a tight lid and as with other herbs, in a dark, cool area. It is a cut and comes again plant and will serve you all summer if you trim it before it fully flowers. However, the flowers make lovely vinegars and flavored honey as well as a stunning tasting glycerite. I plan to make it all in the next year and am currently planning a "garden of Thyme" to include every variety I can get my hands on. Most local nurseries carry a few types so I may have to travel to find more or mail order. Thyme can be grown from seed of course (not a great skill for me).

I say, "**make time for Thyme**". It loves us and wants to grow here in Connecticut.

A spiritual project to do with the first snowfall of the year.

Collect a bucket of snow, preferably clean snow. Bring it in so it can melt. When melted pour into a plastic bottle so you can freeze the snow water. You will be surprised how little water there is when it melts. In the spring defrost the snow water and use it to water your new plants or seedlings. I bless the snow and the water and thank them for their energy for my new plants.

This idea is great for a Spring ritual.



Hello and How Are You Enjoying Our First Snow this Winter?

While messy, it sure is pretty to look at and admire while resting in front of the wood fire enjoying a warm blanket and a cup of tea.

What do you do to enjoy the winter day?

Make sure that you keep up your immunity-covid keeps raising its scary head. Also, remember other energy, self-help, regular energy healing sessions (hands-on and remotely).

Keep the energy moving freely and regular. We work on whatever needs clearing thru zoom classes to feel well and at peace.

There are various ways to support your wellbeing:

Participate in an online Energy Healing session The next Energy Healing classes will be on January 22 at 1:00. We'll be working on healing in body, mind and spirit. We will continue to strengthen your immunity, heal depression, anxiety and illness with an hour long zoom class in the comfort and safety of your home. The group is open, and with caring, relaxed friendly participants.

If you'd like support for body, mind and spirit make an appointment for a personal, intuitively lead session.

Openings for Individual sessions:

Jan-11 at 11:30 and 1:00

Jan-15 at 11:00, 1:00, 2:00 and 3:00

Jan-16 at 11:30, 1:00, 2:00 and 3:00

Other times and evening sessions may be available by appointment

If interested contact Hannelore Devlin 215-622-7622

hannelore.devlin@gmail.com www.hannelorehealing.com

Complementary Medicine Therapies,

Energy Healing Therapies • Herbal Healing Support

Free Class hosted by Jeanie Wild
Date: The Next Snow Storm
FREE snow shoveling class in my driveway.
Come and join the class and learn about the proper ways to shovel. Reviewed techniques will include the scoop and throw method, the down and push method (AKA the plow technique), as well as the upside down scraping technique. Don't miss out on this amazing opportunity to enhance your snow lifting techniques without throwing your back out! I will provide the driveway to ensure your training is conducted in the most life-like situation, you only need to provide your own shovel (Ergonomically designs suggested) . You can send me a PM for additional details and times. Space is limited and handled on a first come first served basis. Vax or unvaccinated, proof of insurance required!
Come enjoy the fun! Love you all Jeanie ♥

Robin's Status Update

Hi all! Wishing you a Merry Christmas, Happy Hannukah, Kwanza, Solstices, Happy New, and happy any holidays I may have missed. I hope this newsletter finds you all healthy and that you've gotten to enjoy the little bit of winter that we've had so far. I've been a bit out of touch lately, so when Gayle suggested that I write a status update, I jumped on the idea. Here goes.

Many of you know that I have had quite a few health challenges since the spring of 2021. It started with a diagnosis of breast cancer that May, which led to medication and a mastectomy in February 2022, and radiation which ended at the end of April. I had a bit of a break, and then needed two pacemaker surgeries this past March and May. After a few months off, I had my first hip replacement at the end of August, and my second hip replacement on December 13. I bounced back fairly quickly and well from the first four surgeries. This last one has been a bit harder. It's going well, just more slowly than the others. My body is telling me that I need more rest than I am used to needing, and that I need to be doing less and moving more slowly. That is the opposite of my usual way of functioning, so it's been a bit of a challenge. Through all of it there have been multiple blessings for each challenge, and many, many lessons learned. Here are a few of them:

1. There is nothing more important than my getting and staying healthy. I can't take care of anyone else without taking care of myself first.
 2. Just because I can, doesn't mean I should. (I really struggle with this one).
 3. I have to be okay with baby steps in everything. Instead of walking an additional driveway a day, I am walking an additional 10 or 20 steps. Being on my feet for a half hour or so needs to be followed by an equal amount of time resting. I know this will change, and it's okay if the change is slow.
 4. I need to prioritize everything else and really stick to what's most important.
 5. It's okay if some things need to be put on hold. I've had to put teaching tai chi on hold until I'm physically able to do it again (most likely in another few weeks), and I will start scheduling more classes once my energy has improved a bit more after that.
 6. The nuts and bolts of running Red Phoenix Healing Arts LLC, like updating my website, marketing my crafts and jewelry, etc., will have to wait for a bit. It's a priority, but not until I've done everything I need to do to get and stay healthy.
- I am optimistic that, if I do all the things that I need to do, I'll be up and running by spring, maybe a bit earlier. With my new hips, I'll be hitting the ground running for the coming planting/gardening season. My seed inventory and orders are on the to-do list. Stay tuned for a list of all the seeds and plants that I'll have to share with you. Also stay tuned for my new classes. I'm hoping to find sites for in-person classes in addition to my virtual ones.

Wishing all of you a restful, peaceful winter. I'm hoping to see you soon.

Love and blessings, Robin Henrie