

Forest Farming Footnotes



False Unicorn (*Chamaelirium luteum*)
Photo credit: John Munsell

Spring 2019

Happy 2019!

A salutation that includes 2019 seems strange. How could it be 2019? Many of us remember partying *like* it is 1999, and many of us were too young to be part of that anticipation. Some of us lived through the 60s, while others have only read about it. Our range of life experiences is only one aspect of our diverse constitution that makes this coalition special. From sowing to science, and conservation to commerce, we are a broad group. But what does that mean for forest farming? It means we are only getting started. This is not a swan song or flash in the pan, nor are we a monolithic group clinging to a dying trade. We are creating the future. In that regard, it is important to keep in mind that we have a profound responsibility as we steward the legacy of forest farming. Our respect for the past and desire to define the future is embodied in our accomplishments, and this newsletter is a clear reflection. From organizational anniversaries to youth education and regional celebrations, to increasing awareness of our work among elected officials, I cannot think of a better way to process and make sense of 2019. We continue to mark our place in history and set the stage for more good things to come. Best wishes for a wonderful Spring and transformational year of work to promote forest farming!

TAKE THE MEMBER SURVEY!



APPALACHIAN BEGINNING
FOREST FARMER COALITION

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Great learning opportunities are coming up.
Mark your calendars!

United Plant Savers Celebrates 25 Years of Native Medicinal Plant Conservation !

John Stock, Outreach Coordinator



As mentioned in the Summer 2018 edition of the ABFFC newsletter, United Plant Savers (UpS) will be celebrating their 25th Anniversary this fall at the United Plant Savers Botanical Sanctuary in Rutland, OH. It was 1994 when Rosemary Gladstar, Sara Katz, Ed Smith, Paul Strauss, and others manifested their idea to create an organization to conserve the native plants in the face of growing market pressure. Over the past quarter century UpS has been working to protect native medicinal plants and their native habitat while ensuring a renewable supply of medicinal plants for generations to come.

During this time UpS has educated thousands of people about medicinal plants and the threats to their existence, including loss of habitat and over-harvest from the wild. Thousands more have visited the UpS Botanical Sanctuary to see populations of these plants, as well as learn techniques to grow them in their own forests. A network of Botanical Sanctuaries beginning 22 years ago with the UpS Botanical Sanctuary has grown to 116 sanctuaries strong. The UpS developed "At-Risk Tool" is now capable of assigning a score to a plant's ability to withstand ongoing wild harvest, one of the first steps in conserving a species. Nearly 200 interns have completed the UpS Medicinal Plant Conservation Certificate Program and gone on to be voices for the plants in nearly every corner of the U.S and beyond. This is just a sampling of the strategies UpS is using to help conserve our At-Risk native medicinal plants.



The Ups Center for Medicinal Plants under construction

UpS continues to believe that one of the most meaningful approaches to conservation is to encourage intentional forest farming of At-Risk native medicinal plants. By educating and providing technical support to forest farmers while at the same time developing domestic markets for intentionally cultivated plant material, we can enhance opportunities for cultivated sources. To help accomplish this, UpS is working with Rural Action through a USDA Conservation Innovation Grant to publish a Growers Guide and updated forest grown verification guidelines for farmers. In addition, UpS is currently in the fund-raising phase for The Goldenseal Project, an initiative that will research the effects of varying harvest rates on goldenseal populations and also create a source of cultivated goldenseal planting stock for forest farmers.

With the recent construction of the Center for the Conservation of Medicinal Plants at the UpS Botanical Sanctuary, UpS is poised to speak for the plants for the next 25 years and beyond. The center will house a library, herbarium collection, and a collection of artifacts and stories that will help to document the history of herbal medicine in Appalachia. An indoor classroom with a capacity of fifty people along with a commercial kitchen suitable for producing value added herbal products will expand the reach and relevance of UpS and their mission.

For our 25th birthday, we are launching our biggest outreach campaign for the conservation of medicinal plants: CREATE, CONNECT, CONSERVE. See the events page on the ABFFC newsletter for more info on how you can celebrate with us!

Featured Article

"Plant the Seed" The Next Generation of Forest Farmers

Focus on the Future - engaging youth with forest farming

Ed Daniels - Shady Grove Botanicals

February 2019

I grew up in the Appalachian Mountains of West Virginia and was raised to appreciate the outdoors. My passion has always been hunting, fishing, digging roots, and picking mushrooms. As a young man, my father and grandfather taught me the value of money by doing chores, helping others, and working odd jobs. It is truthful when I say I was someone who saved his money to buy shoes and clothes for school when I was young. Indeed, at the age of 15 I bought my first car with hard-earned money from digging and selling ginseng – a Volkswagen Beetle with pictures to prove it!

After graduating from high school, I moved to Virginia where my love for the outdoors was put on the back burner. After nearly a decade, I realized it wasn't "home" and not where I wanted to raise my infant daughter, so my family and I packed up and moved back to West Virginia.

Realizing that the outdoors was going to be a life-long passion, I enrolled in the West Virginia Master Naturalist Program to learn more. Finding it enjoyable to share my knowledge with others and seeing an opportunity to create an enterprise based on my experience, my wife Carole and I formed a business called Shady Grove Botanicals on our twenty-acre farm. Together, we forest farm native and at-risk medicinal plants and are working to create a seed bank that we hope the State will recognize and source from in the future.

While planting seeds and transplanting rootlets for our business, I noticed that our young grandson was fascinated by watching what we sowed grow from seed to plant. It was at that moment I realized that this was a calling – I then committed myself to teaching youth to "plant the seed".

In the fall of 2018, I was invited by Margaret Worth, a middle school teacher at Marlinton Middle School in Pocahontas, West Virginia, to make a presentation to her students on forest farming. I spoke of the importance of being responsible stewards of forest plants and fungi, practicing ethical harvesting techniques, and needing to ensure the sustainability of these woodland species for future generations. I talked about plants such as American ginseng, black cohosh, ramps, and goldenseal and even donated ginseng and black cohosh seeds and goldenseal rhizomes to the class so that they could begin a school forest farming project. I also left each of the students, as well as several faculty members, with packets of ginseng seeds to grow at home. In the days that followed, the students planted patches of ginseng, goldenseal, and black cohosh on the school campus as a combined Science and West Virginia History project. I was most touched by the wonder among the students and faculty, and their immense gratitude for my time and contribution of seed and rootstock.

After leaving that afternoon, I felt a deep connection to those students and was grateful for the impact I had made, knowing that the seeds they planted at their school and home will contribute to our shared goal of woodland plant stewardship, and perhaps even earn them some money that will help support their goals and the needs of their families and educators. I look forward to making future presentations to area schools, youth groups, and organizations.



Forest farming presentation before the students at Marlinton Middle School

If you have an idea or request for a presentation for another school or group, feel free to contact me at

contact@shadygrovebotanicals.com

Virginia Coalition Members Inform Senator Mark Warner of Virginia about Forest Farming in Southwest Virginia and Beyond



John Munsell, Virginia Tech

The Chillin' and Grillin' Festival was underway in Wise, Virginia, and Senator Mark Warner (D-VA) was in town. His first stop: The Inn at Wise to hear from Virginians working with specialty forest crops. Kathlyn Terry, Executive Director of Appalachian Sustainable Development (ASD) and ABFFC member, led the panel. ABFFC members John Munsell of Virginia Tech, Katie Commender from ASD, and UVA-Wise faculty member and forest farmer Ryan Huish spoke about farming Virginia's non-timber forest products, along with Richard Nicholas of the Appalachian College of Pharmacy and local businessperson Justin Dick. Catherine Van Noy of Mill Creek Creative, also an ABFFC member, coordinated the event.

The panel was attended by members of Senator Warner's agricultural staff and a mixture of local officials and interested citizens, as well as professionals working in natural resources and agricultural fields. After the presentation, Senator Warner led a 45-minute discussion and ABFFC was a key topic. The coalition's large membership and its focus on cultivation were shared to demonstrate the substantial momentum for forest farming in Southwest Virginia and beyond.

Economic benefits for forest farmers and the region were among topics covered, and ABFFC members Katie Commender of ASD and Ryan Huish, a forest farmer in Duffield, Virginia, provided personal testimony about market growth. The role of ASD's Herb Hub and stories from Katie and Ryan inspired discussion about how to improve investments in the cultivation and propagation of woodland crops. They bore witness to the importance and impact of the Appalachian Regional Commission's investment in ASD's Herb Hub and the market leadership of companies such as Mountain Rose Herbs in Eugene, Oregon, and regional herbalists like Red Moon Herbs and herbal educators like HERBalachia.

Richard Nicholas, faculty at the Appalachian College of Pharmacy, is a pharmacist and pharmacognosy practitioner. He extolled the therapeutic benefits of Appalachian medicinal plants and noted that their use in modern-day treatment is increasing. He also shared stories of personal use and emphasized the value of holistic medicine that includes woodland species. Justin Dick shared specialty-crop business success stories in Southwest Virginia that inspire a way forward for non-timber forest product economic development.

ABFFC's mission has long been forest farming education and outreach. Yet the Coalition is so much more. From the work of Rural Action and United Plant Savers to expand opportunities for value added verification in Ohio and West Virginia, to production and sustainability research at Penn State, North Carolina State, and the US Forest Service, the Coalition encompasses all that is needed to support forest farming's growth. Industry partners, many of whom are ABFFC members, also have played a pivotal role. Most important, however, are the ABFFC farmers that share their wisdom and experience with other members, while also advocating on the front lines for support and thoughtful recognition of forest farming. Indeed, the first hand endorsements at the panel presentation for Senator Warner in Wise, Virginia, most powerfully set the stage for the fruitful and lively discussion that followed, and increased meaningful awareness of our efforts among local leaders, general citizens, and national change-makers. Such steps only are possible when we work together and the more we do so, the more we positively affect our future.

Herbal Education is Blossoming in East Tennessee



Michelle Bouton with herbal enthusiasts

“My Papaw used to take me out in the woods and tell me what all the plants were used for, but since I was just a kid I didn’t pay attention. Now I sure wish I had.” Stories like this have become more common in our area.

Born out of concern that much of the traditional herbal wisdom of southern Appalachia was being lost, HERBalachia opened in 2016 as the first herbalist training school in east Tennessee.

HERBalachia beginner’s Herbalist Lifestyle Program focuses on preserving and sharing this knowledge with the wider community. The 47 students who have graduated from this program participated in classes such as plant ID walks and hands-on medicine making classes, teaching students to create their own home apothecary of tinctures, teas, salves, lotions, and syrups. Herbal Energetics classes further enhance students’ skills by helping them match herbal remedies with the needs of friends and family.

For 2019, HERBalachia is expanding their offering in two areas: Advanced Classes that balance traditional herbal formulas with modern evidence-based scientific protocols, and the Sassafras Moon Herbal Festival, to be held in September (details below).

Advanced Classes focus on helping community herbalists develop technical proficiency to bridge the gap with the medical community, while maintaining respect and appreciation for Appalachia folk ways and botanicals. Boosting interest in herbs in the medical field, HERBalachia is coordinating Continuing Education Credits for nursing professionals through the ETSU College of Nursing.

At a time when many people are choosing to cut back on pharmaceuticals and seeking more natural and preventive approaches to health care, interest in herbal education is rising. I appreciate the nostalgia that folks in our area have for herbs; it’s not ‘New Age’ at all, because we are really just returning to our roots, the familiar medicines our grandparents grew and relied on for good health. It is exciting to teach people that remedies for common issues may be growing in their back yard.

The Sassafras Moon Herb Festival, to be held Saturday September 7, 2019 in downtown Erwin, Tennessee was given a boost through a small grant provided by the Central Appalachian Network, in coordination with Appalachian Sustainable Development. The festival goals are:

- EDUCATE about local natural resources and assets, especially medicinal herbs
- ENCOURAGE conservation and stewardship of local at-risk botanical species
- CELEBRATE Unicoi County’s unique herbal heritage and history
- CONNECT residents with economic opportunities in herbal propagation, product-making, and agritourism

The festival is free to the public and includes three educational tracks: Propagation, Medicinal Herbs, and Appalachian Herbal Folk Medicine. Sponsorships and Vendor applications are currently being accepted. Learn more about the festival on Facebook page: Sassafras Moon Herb Festival, or contact Michelle Bouton a Michelle@HERBalachia.com.

Contact: Michelle Bouton, HERBalachia Director at michelle@HERBalachia.com

The logo features a stylized red and orange leaf inside a yellow circle, with the text 'Sassafras Moon HERBAL FESTIVAL' below it.

**Saturday, September 7, 2019
in Downtown Erwin, Tennessee!**

Celebrating our amazing outdoor resources
and the healing power of herbs!

Three educational tracks:
Herbal Propagation
Medicinal Herbs, and
Appalachian Folk Herbal Medicine

Vendor information at
Michelle@HERBalachia.com

Learn more at
Sassafras Moon Herb Festival
on Facebook!

Appalachian Harvest Herb Hub

Income Opportunities from the Forest Understory

Our Vision

Appalachian Sustainable Development envisions a thriving and sustainable herbal economy in Central Appalachia, where plant conservation is achieved through cultivation. The Appalachian Harvest Herb Hub, in Duffield, VA, is a shared-use facility that helps medicinal herb farmers sustainably grow, harvest, process and sell forest botanicals (i.e. ginseng) and field grown herbs to premium markets.

How We Can Help You

Trainings

Workshops on propagation, processing, certifications and more to guide you from seed to sale.

Cost-Share

Limited cost-share funding available for planting stock and certifications that offer premium market access.

Processing

Commercial washing, drying, resizing equipment available to reduce costs and increase efficiencies.

Marketing

Aggregation and marketing services available to meet volume minimums and connect with premium markets.

Get Involved

APPALACHIAN
sustainable
DEVELOPMENT



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www.asdevelop.org



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Free Membership:

www.appalachianforest
farmers.org/register-3/

APPALACHIAN HARVEST HERB HUB



FOREST FARMED BOTANICALS

AVERAGE PRICE/DRY LB*

BLACK COHOSH, ROOT....	\$30-60
BLUE COHOSH, ROOT.....	\$30-60
SOLOMONS SEAL, ROOT..\$40
GOLDENSEAL, ROOT.....	\$80
GINSENG, LEAF.....	\$350-700
GINSENG ROOT.....	TBD
BLOODROOT.....	TBD
WILD YAM.....	TBD

*Based on historic pricing for sustainably **forest farmed** botanicals. Prices may vary based on certifications & form required by buyers
FREE site visits will be conducted prior to harvest activities.

How We Help Forest Farmers

Training Cost-Share Processing Marketing

Contact Us Today:
Erin Fitz
Duffield, VA
276-623-1121
efitz@asdevelop.org

APPALACHIAN
sustainable
DEVELOPMENT
LIVING BETTER. LOCALLY

Join the Herb Hub:
ALL our forest botanicals MUST be legally & sustainably grown & harvested.

Mark Your Calendars!

Mountain Music & Medicinals

May 13, 6:00-7:30 PM [Mountain Music & Medicinals, Buchanan County Public Library, Grundy, VA](#)

May 21, 6:00-7:30 PM [Mountain Music & Medicinals, Appalachian Arts Center, Cedar Bluff, VA](#)

Come together for an evening of community and live music. We'll be learning about forest farming and income opportunities right under your forest canopy. Our **forest farming presentation** will highlight available training, funding, processing equipment, and premium market access.

Live old-time music performed by Tyler Hughes will be accompanied by light refreshments featuring a variety of forest botanicals. We'll also be distributing **Free Black Cohosh Seeds**.

This event is FREE and open to the public. For more info, contact Erin Fitz at (276) 623-1121 or efitz@asdevelop.org.



Forest Farming Workshop

Join us for this Lee County Extension Diversity Series on **Thursday, May 30th, 6 - 7:30 pm**. The Appalachian Harvest Herb Hub will highlight forest farming and income opportunities under your forest canopy. Learn about services, funding, and premium markets available to get you started. Light refreshments will feature a variety of forest botanicals and free black cohosh seeds will be available. This event is free but please register by May 29th to reserve a spot. **Contact Amy Fannon at afannon@vt.edu or (276) 546 - 2057 to register and learn more.**



Planting the Future

June 15, 2019 | Williams, Oregon

Sara Katz and Ed Smith co-founders of Herb Pharm are also both founders of United Plant Savers. Our west coast celebration will be a day filled with local teachers of the region and United Plant Savers board members. Topics to

include the herbalist path to sustainability, endangered plants in essential oils, a tribute to Jim Duke, disease and diseases of native medicinals, and plant walks. Stay tuned for classes, activities and a list of vendors. Tickets can be purchased [HERE](#).



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