



HFNZ Presidents e-Newsletter-August 2023

Volume 17 Issue 8 - August 2023

Greetings to you,

As I write this part, winter is well and truly, with us; it is cold and wet! My sister visited me in my new home this week and we were lucky enough to catch a couple of non-raining days, in which time we cut out privet, so much. Now, it is almost all chopped up for firewood, stacked away for next winter! Ah, this is my reprisal for the species, which causes me severe allergic reactions when they are in flower! Apart from her fantastic battery powered saws and secateurs, my dear sister brought buckets of cuttings, which have been hastily dug in, to provide some colour texture to this place, which some time ago was a loved garden; when I moved in, was very neglected and overgrown.

We also built a chook house; it is a bit rough, constructed of 'gleanings'. It will be home to some hens, which I hope to get in a week or so. Hmmm, it looks a bit like an old dunny out the back!

Oh, and as per the image to the right, 'guilty as charged, your Honour'!



HFNZ Conference & AGM

Here is the latest update from Shonagh, on behalf of the Stratford Herb Society.

Herb Federation Conference 6-8 November 2023

We are thrilled the registration process is live and people are starting to sign up. You'll have seen the details in the recent special e-newsletter that was emailed out. All the details, including costs and accommodation options as well as the registration forms are available on our HFNZ website www.herbs.org.nz under **Events** or "**Latest News**". Register early to get the Early Bird price - valid until 15 September.

We have 2.5 full days of events for those who wish to attend everything - 2 excellent keynote speakers and a choice of 2 (out of 4) workshops on Monday afternoon; dinner and a film on Monday evening; 2 full-day bus tours on Tuesday to choose from; and 3 in-depth workshops on Wednesday morning. There's plenty to keep you interested. Additionally, it's a wonderful opportunity to mingle and chat to fellow herb-enthusiasts, make new friends, share knowledge and ideas, etc. We hope to see you there.

Note: Conference starts 9.00am Monday 6th November. We have a tight schedule that day so please ensure you arrive in plenty of time. You will also need to register on arrival. This can be done 5.00pm - 6.00pm Sunday 5th, or 7.45am - 8.45am Monday 6th November in the Novotel lobby. Please bring ID. We are trying to make the Conference as sustainable as possible, which means reducing waste. Please help us to do this by bringing your own water-bottle and, if possible, a travel cup for the bus tours.

There will be a few sales tables in the lobby on Monday, selling a variety of items, including plants & seeds. Please support these tables. There will also be a raffle; remember to bring some change.

For those who are flying home after Conference, please allow extra time before your flight to allow for your travel to the airport. This normally takes ~15 minutes (longer at rush-hour). For those leaving on Tuesday afternoon, the bus tours are expected to return to New Plymouth ~4.00pm. Allow extra time in case of any delay with the bus tour travel and for rush-hour traffic. For those leaving on Wednesday, the 2-hr workshops will finish ~11.00 - 11.30am. The 4-hr workshop will finish ~1.00pm. However, each of these workshops will be held in different locations, some ~20 minutes from New Plymouth. You will need to carpool with other attendees. Please plan accordingly.

We look forward to seeing you at Conference. If you have any queries, please contact us at

HerbConf23@gmail.com

- Shonagh

Remits for the AGM

The deadline for submitting remits to be presented at the AGM (held on Monday 6th November) is September 25th.

If you have an remit, could you please email it to Heather Halliday, heatherhalliday@slingshot.co.nz, by this date?



08:21 66%
Garlic Wash Recipe - ...
siennahosta.co.uk



1. Take 2 full bulbs of garlic and add them to approximately 2L of water in a saucepan.
2. Boil until soft and squash with the back of a fork to release as much juice as possible.
3. Sieve out skins and bits so you are left with a cloudy liquid concentrate.
4. Dilute approximately 2 tablespoons to 5L of water in a sprayer or watering can.
5. Spray or water over your plants **once a week** February-October.
6. High dosage and more regular applications may be needed in wet weather.




Heading into Spring...

A quick reminder about 'companion planting' →

Plan your planting to accommodate your plants likes and dislikes, then watch how they flourish...

← Another tip about a spray, which can be very useful in the garden

Gardening for beginners.

Peas don't like too much water.

Potatoes do not like tomatoes.

Potatoes don't like cucumbers.

Potatoes and cabbage are friends.

Do not plant beans with onions or beets.

Beans love carrots.

Beets love onion, cabbage, potatoes.

Tomatoes love carrots, peas.

Cabbage does not like radishes.

Beans and cucumbers do not like each other.

Carrots and onions do well together.



Hear Clear Ear Oil

Ears; the external covering and sound collecting organs to support one of our very valuable senses; caring for them is most important, just as we look after our eyes.

Here is a recipe from Julie; she is a herbalist from Ontario, Canada. Her specialties are; Folk Medicine, Plant Spirit Medicine and Ancestral Wisdom. She teaches, mentors and grows herbs

Julie Gaia copied 8.8.2023

1 tbsp mullein flowers

1 tbsp oregano flowers

1 tbsp monarda flowers

Dry away from the sun.

Put in a small jar and cover in sunflower oil.

Roughly equal parts oil & plants.

Make sure plants are fully covered.

Label & wait 6 weeks.

Strain.

Use in ears as a prevention for ear problems.

I use before and after a cold to soften ear wax and more.

Let oil sit for 2-5 minutes in each ear.

Do not use if you have a serious ear infection.

Thank you to the plants who give us so much.

Join us in 2024!

Location to be announced September 2023.

www.GaiaHive.ca



 *I need your artistic assistance - a creative poster designer*

For the 2024 Herb Awareness Month, I am seeking a creative and artistic volunteer, to design the poster.

If you are interested and able to do this for your HFNZ, then please make contact with me: karina@lavenderhillherbals.com and I can supply you with the details. The pic to the right is a clue to one herb...



The Willow-Catkin Fairy ~ by Cicely Mary Barker

Pussy willow is one of the first signs of spring to be found in the environment, when you get out and look around!

I have some lovely memories of pussy willow as a child; the very soft furry buds in very early spring, and on my bedroom wall was a very sweet picture of kittens in the willow buds. Nostalgia!

The Willow-Catkin Fairy

The people call me Palm, they do;
They call me Pussy-willow too.
And when I'm full in bloom, the bees
Come humming round my yellow trees.

The people trample round about
And spoil the little trees, and shout;
My shiny twigs are thin and brown:
The people pull and break them down.

To keep a Holy Feast, they say,
They take my pretty boughs away.
I should be glad—I should not mind—
If only people weren't unkind.

Oh, you may pick a piece, you may
(So dear and silky, soft and grey);
But if you're rough and greedy, why
You'll make the little fairies cry.



As we are preparing for the planting season, here is a reminder of some of the flowers, which bees love...



And, here is a cartoon to endorse 'bees needs'!

Look, no Cabbage Caterpillars

This image is a great example of ‘*Companion Planting*’! Also, a great reminder when planting out any members of the Cruciferae (cabbage) family, plant out with them, the plants which can repel the ‘bugs’ which predate upon them (here are the African and

no cabbage worms. It makes a huge difference!



French Marigolds – *Tagetes* species) and companions who mutually like each other.

Cruciferae like; coriander, hyssop, southernwood, nasturtiums, sage, hyssop, tansy, oregano, mint, thyme, dill, rosemary, chamomile, onions, potatoes, tomatoes, lettuce, beetroot, celery, beans, broad beans

They dislike; strawberries.

Remember too, that is best to rotate your Cruciferae crops, to avoid the development of club root, which is caused by a soil-borne fungus called *Plasmodiophora brassicae*.

(Image Credit; Rose Marie Bond)



HFNZ Reminders

There is not that much time left to get your entries prepared for the following HFNZ Awards.

Both the closing date for applications is by Sunday 15th October.

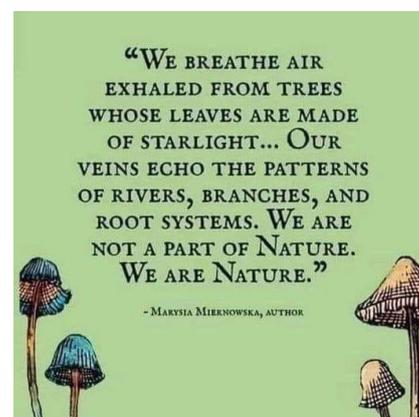
The details are on our website; the links are below:

Herb Certificate Course Scholarships

We have two scholarships available annually. Both allow the successful applicants to study the twelve modules of the HFNZ Certificate course at no cost.

- HFNZ Scholarship is sponsored by the Herb Federation of New Zealand.
- The ‘Heather Young Scholarship has been created in memory of the late Heather Young

“The Scholarship will meet the cost of the fees involved in purchasing the twelve study modules over a maximum three year period. If the course is not complete within this time frame, or they otherwise default on their Scholarship requirements, the recipient must repay fees for all modules received to date, and forfeits the right to reapply for any Scholarship managed by the HFNZ in the future.”



You can apply if you have already started, or want to start the course. If you are an award recipient, then the fees you have already paid will be reimbursed to you.

<https://herbs.org.nz/education/herb-federation-of-new-zealand-certificate-study-scholarships/>

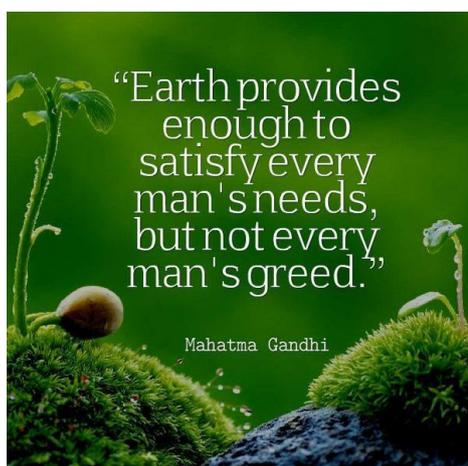
Herb Project Award

The HFNZ Annual Herb Project Award is provided by the Herb Federation of New Zealand (HFNZ) members to encourage community projects that actively promote knowledge about the benefits and usage of herbs to the general public.

<https://herbs.org.nz/education/annual-herb-project-award/>



↓ Here is another reminder; for us to walk 'gently on the Earth'...



In addition, something to remind us to take a look from another perspective →



Dyeing to plant...

Here is an interesting article from a gardener who grows some plants specifically for dyeing. It is from the USA, and I have not changed 'their spelling'. I have included it this month, as you might like to consider planting some of these – it is the right time of year!

Growing Dyes and Dye Gardens: A Walk Through a Temperate Dye Garden

<https://thedruidsgarden.com/2023/07/16/growing-dyes-and-dye-gardens-a-walk-through-a-temperate-dye-garden/> July 16, 2023 copied

17.7.2023





[Dana O'Driscoll](#)



I think it is easy to forget in this day and age that so many of our traditional art forms are directly rooted in the living earth, and reconnecting with those ancient forms can bring us closer to nature. This allows us to be more deeply connected with nature outside of our door and learn how to source more of our basic needs—including supplies for our art and craft purposes—from nature. These practices connect us, inspire us, fill us with joy, and teach us powerful lessons in [resilience](#), [balance](#), and [reciprocation](#). One of my own ongoing commitments as an artist is to continually look to nature to help support my journey.

One of the most inspiring things about my visit to the [John C. Campbell Folk School](#) last month was getting to see their dye garden. While I was not taking a class that was using dye plants, I was extremely impressed by the number of dye plants they were growing and their dedication to preserving this beautiful craft form. Today, I wanted to talk about dye plants and offer a tour of this delightful garden. In doing so, I'll introduce some of the best dye plants and share some of their uses and preparation.

The Colors of the Land and Traditional Dye Plants

A tour of the dye garden at John. C. Campbell

Before the development of synthetic dye, many traditional cultures' art, clothing, fine crafts, pottery, and



other cultural objects were often defined by the local colors available in their landscape. Often, the other colors that they could trade and get from faraway places were reserved for very special clothing, events, or purposes. These traditional dyes included those found or produced by plants (walnut, indigo, woad madder, turmeric, buckthorn), those produced by various means (lamp black, etc), those found in animals or animal products (bone black, cochineal, carmine), and those found in minerals (red ochre, iron oxide, copper, ultramarine, cobalt). Many of these ancient dyes have been with us for thousands, and in some cases, tens of thousands of years, meaning that these

dye plants in particular have very longstanding relationships with humanity (and that makes for some interesting [plant spirit](#) work!)

Ironwood tree ecoprint from the TreeLore Oracle!

These beautiful dyes have rich cultural traditions that led to unique art forms. For example, the Siberian Ice Maiden Princess Ukok has [incredible tattoos](#) that were likely created from black from charcoal. One of the oldest pigments we have records of is red ochre, which is [found in cave paintings](#) globally and to this day, is beloved of those making natural watercolors and [exploring and foraging for earth-based pigments](#). Even in traditional art forms like [Pysanky](#), the style is tied to the colors available in Europe when this art form was being created: the traditional palate is black, white, red, orange, and yellow—which were natural dyes that were readily available in Slavic countries for centuries and that could be made at home (and once you read through this list, you'll see why!). From these traditional dyes, entire traditions of art, craft, and fine craft were born. By rekindling a relationship with these traditional dyes, we can better connect to our [ancestors of craft](#) and the natural world that produces them.



Today, many artists and craftspeople are reconnecting to their local landscapes by exploring dyes, pigments, and ochres and what they offer, and through this, finding their way back into more traditional methods of adding color to any number of projects. I've been interested in these natural art forms for a long time, through my recently released [TreeLore Oracle](#) (which was an eco-printed project), and as documented in various blog posts such as [foraging for earth-based pigments](#), [making homemade berry inks](#), and [acorn ink](#).

What I have loved about my own long-term exploration into natural dyes and pigments is that you can apply them to so many different art forms: on fabric and yarn, on leather, as a wood stain, on pottery, in traditional paint media (watercolor, oil, gouache, egg tempera), on eggs/pysanka, on paper, and even in natural building. And today, with seeds easy to acquire and a renewed interest in natural dyes and pigments, there are many opportunities to learn and grow. In my own bardic practice, most of my experience using dye plants is through creating watercolor paint, natural inks, working with indigo and other natural dyes for clothing, and doing eco-printing on leather and paper. I'm excited to expand my use of dyes to dye much more of my own clothing, integrate into pysanky, deepen my leatherwork through dye, and maybe some other art areas as I learn more about what pigments I can grow and forage.

A Walk Through a Dyer's Garden

When I was at John C. Campbell, one afternoon we were able to tour their extensive gardens. One of the newest gardens they had was a dye garden, a garden that they had just dedicated some weeks before we came. It was filled with so many different dye plants, plants that were dried and then used in their various classes in eco-printing, natural dye, fiber arts, and more. This garden is not only a great resource for the classes but offers a wonderful teaching tool and introduction to many dye plants that can be grown in temperate climates. We were given a wonderful tour that shared about the work they do in the garden, how they harvest and prepare the plants and the cultivation of these various historical sources of color.

As a fun aside, you can learn a little more about Latin plant names from this list—many of the most major historical dye plants are called “*tinctoria*” (in the same way you often would see “*officinalis*” for herbal plants or “*wort*” listed in common names for healing).



The entrance and pollinator hedge

This photo is the opening and signage to the garden, which features signage, some cool wooden art, and also a pollinator hedge. The emphasis on the pollinator hedge here is an important feature—with the massive decline in insect populations, the more we can support pollinators through gardening practices, the better. Thus, I always recommend growing a pollinator hedge!

Woad (*Isatis Tinctoria*)

Our first

plant is Woad. Woad (*Isatis tinctoria*) creates a beautiful blue dye shifting towards the green spectrum. Woad is well known as a dye for those interested in Celtic mythology and druidry because this was a dye that was used extensively by the Ancient Celts. In fact, Woad, which is native to Turkey, has been used throughout the Middle East and Europe since Neolithic times, meaning that humans have had a very long relationship with this plant. Woad was used to dye fabric that Egyptians wrapped mummies in, and most famously, Julius Caesar noted that the Celts tattooed and painted themselves in woad before going into battle. Woad was one of three primary dyes used throughout Europe along with Weld (yellow) and Madder (red), both of which are discussed below. Woad fell out of favor for the bolder and easier-to-use Indigo

blue in the 18th century, but Woad is still a fabulous dye plant!



Weld (*Reseda Luteola*)

Our second plant in the trinity of Middle Ages dye plants is Weld (*Reseda Luteola*). Weld is a plant that produces a beautiful bright yellow dye and was used consistently until the 19th century when synthetic aniline dyes came into production (which were cheaper and easier to produce). This beautiful yellow could be over-died with Woad to produce a green (often called Lincoln green). Weld prefers to grow on sandy, dry soil rather than rich, moist soil (so if you are planting her, keep this in mind). Like some other dye plants, Weld is best harvested before the fruit forms or you will not get as much dye. Weld was in use by at least 10,000 B.C., which is likely earlier than either Woad or Madder. In ancient Rome, Weld was used almost exclusively to dye wedding garments of virgins a beautiful yellow. In other parts of the world, Weld yellow dye was

used much more widely in Europe after the fall of Rome. Weld produces one of the most pure yellow pigments of any plant on earth. I will also note that as you see in this list, many other plants can produce a nice yellow dye, but none do so as well as Weld.



Madder (*Rubia Tinctorium*, *Rubia Peregrina*, *ubia Cordifolia*)

Our third of the trinity of Medieval dyes is Madder, which humans have used as a dye plant for at least 5,000 years. The Madder root produces Rose Madder dye, which is a beautiful red dye specifically created from the roots of older plants. These roots should be at least three years old but ideally five years old. Several plants are called “Madder” and produce the red dye; what is pictured here is *Rubia Tinctorium*. Madder was an important dye plant grown throughout Asia, the Middle East, and Europe and has been used to dye the cloaks of women in Libya, the wrappings of Egyptian mummies, and also used in portrait paintings throughout Europe. Archeologists even found Madder in linen in Tutankhamun’s tomb from 1350 BC and also in the wool found in ancient Norse burial sites. Madder was also used to dye leather; a 4000BC Egyptian quiver for arrows had traces of Madder. Growing Madder requires patience, the roots of the plants cannot be harvested for dye for at least three years, but ideally, five years. Thus, if you want to grow madder, you want multiple plots so you can have a rotational planting and digging cycle. I’ve just made that long-term commitment to growing Madder, so I’ll check back in five years and let you know how it goes!



Indigo (*Indigofera Tinctoria*, *Persicaria Tinctoria*)

No dye garden could be complete without Indigo. Some Indigo, such as *Indigo Tinctoria*, come from the Indigo family of plants, many of which produce dye, but many of which are grown in very hot climates around the equator in places like India. Thus, they are less accessible to people in more temperate climates.

For those of us growing in temperate climates, Japanese Indigo (*Persicaria tinctoria*) (which is featured here) represents a wonderful alternative option—this plant can be grown as a tender annual, and the leaves are harvested before the plant goes into flower, often in several harvests. Once the plant produced flowers, the flowers lessen the quality of the dye—this makes sense because the energy of the plant moves into flower/seed production. You can harvest the leaves at any branching point throughout the season and dry leaves for later use.



Indigo has been in use by humans for dye for at least 6000 years, with a rich tradition originating in South-East Asia and Mesoamerica and spreading through the world. A Babylonian cuneiform tablet (stone tablet) shares the recipe for how to dye wool cloth with Indigo. Indigo was used by many ancient civilizations such as Egypt, Mesopotamia, West Africa, Iran, Peru, Egypt, and India. Because *Indigo Tinctoria* cannot be grown in temperate climates, in Europe, Indigo was considered a luxury item (and until the more modern era, Woad was the traditional blue dye). The Romans used Indigo primarily for pigment painting, garments, and cosmetics—but Indigo was always imported to Rome and Greece, making the plant dye quite expensive. Everyone knows the color of Indigo, as that is the color of blue denim jeans. Indigo dyeing as a fine craft has been also experiencing a resurgence of interest globally, and it is a very easy and accessible plant dye to work with.

This changed when a new sea-based trade route was discovered in the late 15th century, which made it easier to import Indigo by sea rather than by land routes.

Here's where things get troublesome. As Woad—which anyone could grow and use—declined in Europe and Indigo grew into favor as the blue dye, colonialization, and industrialization reared their ugly heads. This always seems the case—mass production and demand, when taken out of the hands of everyday people, allow for exploitation. Unfortunately, Indigo became one of the larger crops that were grown and processed using slave labor from Central and South America to address the demand in the old world. Enslaved Black and Indigenous peoples were forced to work these Indigo plantations under terrible conditions due to the high demand for Indigo in Europe.

While Indigo is no longer produced in this fashion, this history is a good reminder of why it is critical with any naturally-derived things to ensure either you are growing and/or ethically harvesting yourself or ensuring you are getting your plant matter from ethical, regenerative sources. Bringing ourselves back into healthy balance with the plant kingdom by working to grow our own allows us to know every step of the process. To process indigo from leaves is fairly complex, [involved process that is described here](#). I'm using these leaves fresh or dried for ecoprinting, meaning that I can use them right from the plant.

I have been experimenting with using indigo leaves in my ecoprints, including new experiments on paper, leather, and fabric!



Dyer's Chamomile (Cota Tinctoria)

As far as I can tell, Dyer's Chamomile does not have the rich history of the earlier plants on the list above but is still a very good dye plant that is used to produce yellow, gold, buff, and golden-orange dyes primarily for fabric. The flowers produce the dye—you can use them fresh or harvest and store them for later use for dyeing wool and fabric with beautiful golden and orange hues. Most of the sources I read suggest this plant may be biennial or perennial in certain climates, but most dyers will start new seeds each year to ensure a good harvest. Using the flowers in ecoprinting and leather ecoprinting has yielded rich yellows as one would expect.

Dyers Chamomile, being in the Chamomile family, also is a great medicinal plant for insect stings and functions as an antispasmodic, emetic, vesicant, and diaphoretic in tea, tincture, or fresh compress form. Thus, there are many reasons to include Dyer's Chamomile in the garden!



Holly Hock (Alcea Rosea)

Hollyhocks are perennial flowering plant that has flowers used for dye. Holly Hock with black flowers produces lavender and purple shades; if you change the PH of the dye bath (by adding iron, vinegar, etc), you may also be able to obtain blues and greens. The blossoms are gathered from mid to late summer and either used fresh or dried for later use. Fresh is typically a 2:1 ratio of blossom weight to fiber, while dried use a 1:10 ratio of blossom weight to fiber and an alum mordant. These delightful plants also can grow up to 6-8 feet tall (we currently have a Hollyhock in our garden that is well above our heads and blooming beautifully!)

Coreopsis (*Coreopsis Tinctoria*)

Coreopsis is another delightful plant found in many dye gardens. This is a North American plant that is annual in nature that is quite easy to grow and regularly self-seeds. Coreopsis prefers to grow in full sun and, once they are flowering, each plant produces hundreds of flowers which are used for dye. Coreopsis yields a range of orange to brown dyes, particularly on wool and silk (Coreopsis is not as great for dyeing cotton or other vegetable fibers; I haven't tried the dye on leather yet!)



Yarrow (*Achillea Millefolium*)

Yarrow is an incredible herb with a wide range of medicinal uses, including my favorite—stopping blood from flowing from open wounds (which is how she earned the name “woundwort.” But beyond her medicinal action, Yarrow is also an excellent dye plant. In eco-printing, she prints a beautiful yellow-gold, and on fabrics and yarn, Yarrow offers a range of choices: yellow and with the addition of iron as a mordant, you can also get olive green shades. The flowering tops of the plant are what are used to create dye; you can keep harvesting them if you cut them at least 6” from the soil, so the Yarrow can grow back again. She is a perennial plant and is quite drought-tolerant.



Tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*)

Most people who use Tansy gather her wild because she is often considered invasive and is therefore easy to find. But she's not really wild in all parts of the world, so some people cultivate her in the dye garden. Her lovely button-like yellow flowers produce a beautiful golden-yellow dye. While there are a lot of plants (including many on this list) that produce a yellow dye, she has a very high-quality dye that has lasting effects, with similar chemical constituents to Weld, including offering a higher lightfastness in her dye. She also can produce bronzes, greens, and beautiful greens with Iron (ferrous sulfate) (shifting to bronze/earthy green) or alkaline treatment with vinegar or baking soda (orange). She also works well with Indigo, so you can get lovely greens with an overdye, dyeing the tansy and then later dyeing Indigo. I like to use a rust garden with Tansy, which can be created by putting iron objects in vinegar and keeping them stored in something all plastic—I've had a rust garden going since 2019 and it is great for using for ecoprinting and natural dye.



I will also mention that Tansy is another plant that has a history of traditional medicinal uses (including being an abortifacient and dealing with internal parasites). However, she is typically not used medicinally as much these days because she also has alpha-thujone, which is toxic.

Iris / Bearded Iris (*Iris Germanica*)

Our final plant to showcase today in the Dye Garden is the Bearded Iris, German Flag, or German Iris, which is the “mother” plant of many other Iris cultivars today.



Irises are easy to find in many old-time gardens; my own big patch of Irises came from my grandmother's garden, and my mother passed them on to me when we moved in here. I've been enjoying eco-printing on paper and leather with the flower Iris—she has a beautiful blue color she leaves on plants. But traditionally, her roots are also used to create blues and grays in dye. Often her petals will traditionally offer a green dye, but she's not very lightfast. The roots produce darker grays and gray-blue hues.

Conclusion

Plants for my garden- Indigo and Madder!



Given this abundance of plants, some of which I already grow, I was excited to expand my dye opportunities and learn some new plants to grow. Lucky for me, I didn't have to wait till next year: John C. Campbell had plant starts available both of the Madder and Japanese Indigo

and thus, I was able to lovingly prepare space for them and plant them at the Druid's Garden homestead. I've already begun experimenting with leaves for dye from the Indigo. The Indigo will be harvested this year, and I'll cultivate a long relationship with the Madder and maybe in about 4-5 years, you'll hear about how it went. In the meantime I will continue to enjoy and work with many of these other plants that we already grow—Holly Hock, Chamomile, and Yarrow—and hopefully add some new ones in the next growing season.



Dana O'Driscoll

Dana O'Driscoll has been an animist druid for almost 20 years, and currently serves as Grand Archdruid in the Ancient Order of Druids in America. She is a druid-grade member of the Order of Bards, Ovates, and Druids and is the OBOD's 2018 Mount Haemus Scholar. She is the author of *Sacred Actions: Living the Wheel of the Year through Earth-Centered Spiritual Practice* (RedFeather, 2021), the *Sacred Actions Journal* (RedFeather, 2022), and is the author/illustrator of the *Tarot of Trees*, *Plant Spirit Oracle*, and *Treelore Oracle*. Dana is a certified permaculture designer and permaculture teacher who teaches sustainable living courses and wild food foraging. Dana lives at a 5-acre homestead in rural western Pennsylvania with her partner and a host of feathered and furred friends. She writes at the *Druids Garden* blog and is on Instagram as @druidsgardenart.



← A novel garden!

And, more of about the sound of trees—I love this sound, and feel that many of our readers will too.



Dandelion Capers

[Brigit Anna McNeill](#) copied 15.8.2023

I can no longer suppress the feelings held in my body due to being scared of disappointing people.

For many years, voicing my feelings might have meant violence, abuse, shaming or even death.

The sexual and the physical abuse I have experienced were terrible and have left deep scars, but it is the mental abuse that most often colours my days with its murky paintbrush.

My mind was trained to believe that my feelings, my voice, my heart are all liars, dangerous & faulty.

To be safe, I took on those stories as my own beliefs, for the training was clever & it bore down deep into the channels of my mind.

And although the danger, those people, those environments are no longer, still the programming is there, lying in the shadows of my psyche.

Yet I know this is nothing to be ashamed of, it is nothing to berate or belittle myself for.

As it is how I kept myself safe for all those years, it is how I learnt to get by and remain alive.

Nowadays I try to shine the compassionate light of awareness onto these damaging beliefs, so I can let them guide me to be more loving, strong & soft with myself. For these stories held within, are not trying to punish me, they are just a frightened part of me, desperate to survive & I need to show them, the war is over and there are other ways to be safe now.

I learnt that to live better, I needed to listen & honour the feelings within, to remember that there is great love & wisdom capable of sowing seeds of medicine into my life. This may sound simple, but to me & many others, this is a brave act of rebellion & defiance so beautiful & healing, it is just like the golden dandelion growing in the concrete.

- WORDS [Brigit Anna McNeill](#) •
- ART Alexandra Bochkareva •

More of sowing seeds, this one is a bit of joke at the expense of us older gardeners.

Time sign off, as I have to get ready to go away for a memorial service in Tauranga and the weekend is the best time to get Jan to email these out, so a few days early.

Enjoy the spring blossom as it bursts forth, and I hope that conditions improve over the next month for gardening...

Wellness wishes,

Karina

Executive National Committee

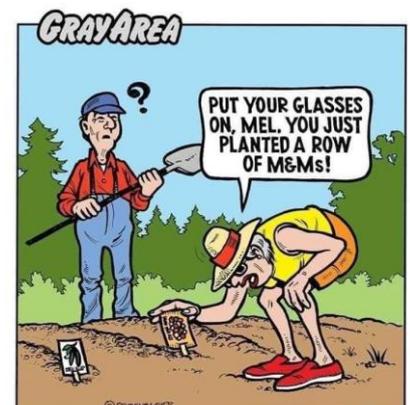
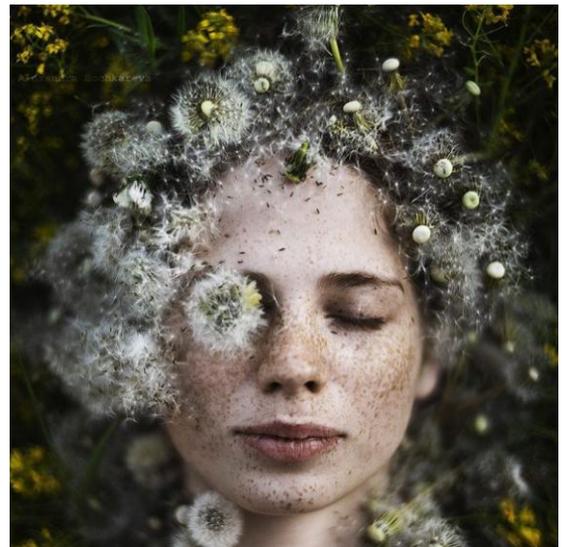
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