
MWSHS Student Newsletter

Winter 2009-10

Student Profile: Terry Nelson

In 2007, Terry Nelson of northern Minnesota embarked on an internet search to find a distance-education school offering herbal studies.

"I was interested to find," he recalls, "that the Midwest School of Herbal Studies offered education in the diverse herbal-healing modalities of Western, Ayurvedic, and Chinese herbalism and that its M.H. Diploma program is set up to teach the integration of those traditions." Terry enrolled as a student that very same year!

Now a senior student in the M.H. Diploma Program, he observes: "I've been happy with how the program is set up in sections, so that you first learn about the history of how herbs have been used; next, you learn about nutrition, vitamins, and supplements. ('Let your food be your medicine!' as Hippocrates taught.) Then, you get into more detail with the uses of the herbs."

As to the workshops periodically offered by MWSHS, Terry recounts: "So far, I've attended one assessment workshop and several of the herb walks. It's been great hearing the presentations of the teachers and getting the hands-on experience, as well as seeing the other students and talking with them. I've especially liked the herb walks, where you get to meet the herbs in their natural habitat and learn to identify them through sight, smell, and their various properties."

How has Terry managed to move so efficiently through the program? He explains here: "My past job as a home-health aide had given me a lot of study time: I worked for an elderly gentleman for eight to ten-hour days, so when I had let-down time I would study a lot—in fact, I usually would get a lesson completed every 2 days! Once I made up my mind to study, I usually didn't have any trouble." In this regard, Terry offers the following encouragement to existing students: "Just don't put your studies off; once you sit down and open the books, they should grab your attention, as they always have mine."

What, though, would Terry say to those interested in learning more about herbs but still trying to decide which School's program to study? Simply this: "MWSHS' M.H. Diploma Program is an awesome program; it's really the best program out there for learning the major healing traditions of mankind!"



Terry Nelson

Assessment-Skills Workshop Mar. 21st

MWSHS' next Holistic Assessment-Skills Workshop has been set for Sunday March 21st in New Brighton, MN. This workshop is designed to teach valuable holistic assessment skills via demonstrations and practice sessions, thus serving as a complement to the textual material on holistic-assessment skills provided in each of our two programs. While, in the past, we have typically held two-day sessions on a once-a-year basis, we are now moving toward holding two or three one-day sessions each year. The March 21st workshop is the first of these one-day sessions and will focus on iris analysis, scleral interpretation, and muscle testing. As only 28 spaces are reserved, however, we urge those interested in attending to register soon, via either the paper Registration form on p. 7 or the printable form on our website.

Our New Address (a Reminder)

As an important reminder, the post office changed our mailing address from P O Box 120845 to P O Box 120096, New Brighton MN 55112 exactly one year ago. Please be sure to make a note of our new address in your records, and *especially in the front of your workbooks for lessons submission*, because our forwarding order is just now expiring and mailings (including any lessons that you send) will be returned to you if you use our old address.

Fourth-quarter 2009 Graduates

Our congratulations are hereby extended to our sole fourth-quarter 2009 graduate of the Master-Herbalist Diploma Program, who worked so very hard to earn her award: *Anne Alex, M.H.*

We look forward to hearing more from Anne and other graduates as they apply their accumulated knowledge as MWSHS alumni.

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Proving Successful as an MWSHS Student despite Distractions

by Matthew Alfs, Director, MWSHS

The ancient Oriental sage Lao Tzu once said: “The journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step.” As a student of herbology, you are on such a long—and sometimes arduous—pathway. That being as it is, it is possible to get discouraged, especially with all of life’s distractions. However, the reward for perseverance is great, namely, *illumination* of one of life’s greatest mysteries: *The secret to health and long life!*

Truly, what wouldn’t a wise person sacrifice for the knowledge of such? Jesus of Nazareth once emphasized the value of sacrifice for something precious by relating a stirring story of an insightful man who found ‘a pearl of great price’ and ‘sold everything he had’ to obtain it, knowing that what he was about to obtain was worth far more than anything else he had already possessed! In this regard, what could be more valuable than the vitality of body, mind, and spirit, and the ability to help others to preserve such in themselves? After all, such *wholism* is the basis, not only of the world’s health-care traditions, but of its great religions and philosophies as well!

So, then, dear student, we encourage you to persevere in your studies, not letting mundane matters crowd out your time. After all, “nothing will ever be accomplished,” observed the noted English author Samuel Johnson, “if all possible objections must be first overcome.” Therefore, *set aside time for study*, and barring genuine emergencies, *use this time as planned*.

“But, how can I find that time in the first place,” you might wonder? In asking those students who’ve moved along most efficiently in the program how they’ve accomplished so much, we’ve received some helpful answers, a few of which we’d like to share with you here, directly below....

“I devote half of my hour-long lunch break to study.” “I take a brief nap after work and then have the workbook next to me on my bed, ready to go once I awaken and feel renewed in mind and spirit.” “I study first thing on Sunday morning when I wake up, as I’m not rushed at this time.” “I click on a CD in the morning while getting ready for work or play one while driving to or from work.” “My teen-age daughter reads portions of the Workbook to me, or I listen to the CDs, as I’m washing dishes or folding laundry.” “My husband and I read from the Workbook on Sunday mornings when we’re not rushed.” “I listen to the CDs while I work on my home exercise program.” “I have a headphone and listen to the CDs while I garden or walk

around the park. I keep a pocket notepad with me to take notes.”

Whatever may work for you, dear student, we urge you to find your niche and to work at it wholeheartedly!

However, Lao Tzu, previously quoted, said something else that is worthy of consideration here: “People usually fail when they are on the verge of success. So give as much care to the end as to the beginning. Then there will be no failure.”

Time and time again, we have witnessed the above observation prove true with students: As if they were in a foot race, they start off with a bang, but then burn out and fall to the wayside!

In this regard, please bear in mind that those of us here at MWSHS stand ready to offer you encouragement or suggestions whenever you feel the need for either—or even if you’re stuck somewhere in your studies and need some guidance. Such support is really part of your student package, and we are only an e-mail away! Please rest assured here, too, that *we very much want you to prove successful* in your studies and to move on to graduation. *That is why we are here and do what we do*—not to mention that we love to brag about our graduates and how they go on to live and share the valuable things that they have learned!

Finally, please bear in mind that the student profiles we publish are still another way for you to glean some tips on how to prove successful in your studies, as the students profiled therein have all demonstrated a real stick-to-itiveness in their student paths and have been pleased to share their secrets of success with the rest of the student body by being profiled. As an example, the senior student profiled on page one, Terry Nelson, wisely encouraged his fellow students: “Just don’t put your studies off; once you sit down and open the books, they should grab your attention, as they always have mine.”

We submit the above suggestions as some chief methods by which you may “give as much care to the end as to the beginning” so that “there will be no failure.”



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Building an Herbal Reference Library—Part Three

by Matthew Alfs, Director, MWSHS

Picking up from the previous installment of this series in the *MWSHS Student Newsletter*, I'd like to transition from my coverage of important books produced from the European herbal perspective to that of valuable herbal writings of the early-American medical botanists, Physio-medicalists, Eclectics, and folk practitioners that would make fine additions to any herbal enthusiast's library.

Early-American Medical Botanists

All of the works in this category are long out-of-print and hard to find, but some may be obtainable through interlibrary loan. The most important is the 2-vol. set by Constantine Rafinesque entitled *Medical Flora* (1828-30), which is referred to repeatedly in the MWSHS coursework. Rumor has been that it is slated to be reprinted, but I haven't discovered that to have occurred as yet.

American Physio-medicalism

Probably the most important Physio-medicalist work for modern Western herbalists is *Herbal Medication*, by A. W. Priest and L. R. Priest, publ. in the U.K. in 1982. This magnificent work is designed for clinical application and reflects great knowledge and experience on the part of its authors. Sadly, it has been out-of-print for some years, although rumor has been that it is slated to be reprinted. Unfortunately, it's hard to find on the used-book market, leaving interlibrary loan as the best resource for acquiring it for reading and study.

A more recent work of value is *Herbal Medicine: Keys to Physio-medicalism* by Christopher Menzies-Trull, 2003, also published in the U.K. (since, of course, Physio-medicalism only survives there to any great extent these days). Happily, as of this writing, this book remains readily available on the new-book market.

A Physio-medicalist work that is not too hard to find on the used-book market, and still one of the best, is R. Swinburne Clymer's *Nature's Healing Agents*, published initially in hardcover in the first half of the 20th century but reprinted in 1997 by Meyerbooks in a softcover edition. (Clymer called himself a "Natura" physician—a term that he even legally protected—, although he was trained as a Physio-medicalist.) Another not-too-difficult one to find is *School of Natural Healing (Secrets of a Master Herbalist)*, by Dr. John Raymond Christopher, first published in 1976. (This book relies heavily on the chief work of one of the author's teachers, Dr. Edward Shook; as it reflects Thomsonian herbal concepts to a large degree, it is categorized under the present heading.)

Unfortunately, though, most of the classic works by the nineteenth-century American Physio-medicalists (those by Thurston, Cook, Lyle, etc.—all quoted often in our Western-Herbalism coursework) are out-of-print and very

hard to find on the used-book market, although some of these are available via internet sites or databases. [For those of you in the M.H. Diploma Program, a number of these are listed in the resource guide that the School has published to help you to construct your Thesis, which is provided to you when you order your Thesis package.]

American Eclecticism

Of the voluminous works produced by the American Eclectics, those that are probably most applicable to the modern herbalist's practice are Finley Ellingwood's *American Materia Medica, Therapeutics, and Pharmacognosy* (1915; reprinted by Eclectic Medical Pubns., in 1983), Felter & Lloyd's revision and expansion of King's *American Dispensatory* (1906; reprinted by Eclectic Medical Pubns., in 1982); John William Fyfe's *Specific Diagnosis and Specific Medicine* (1909, rev. in 1922); Rollah Thomas' *The Eclectic Practice of Medicine* (1907); J. M. Scudder's *Eclectic Materia Medica & Therapeutics* (1898); and Eli Jones' *Definite Medication* (1911, recently reprinted in softcover, however, by Kessinger Publishing Co. of Kila, MT). An especial favorite of mine is the little 'vest-pocket,' paperbound guide to specific medicines compiled by Joseph S. Niederkorn and entitled *A Handy Reference Book* (publ. in Cincinnati in 1905). This is a nice, quick-reference guide to specific indications for herbal remedies arranged by organ-system afflictions. (I can't remember where I acquired my own copy, but it became so frequently used that the cover eventually detached, requiring me to reattach it by invisible tape!)

Most of the abovementioned titles are hard to find on the used-book market, but often obtainable through interlibrary loan. Some, too, are available for consultation via various internet sites or databases. (Again, the M.H. program's thesis guide lists the most pertinent sites.)

American Folk Medicine

Some of the best books in this category are Clarence Meyer's *American Folk Medicine* (Thomas Y. Crowell, 1973), Judith Bolyard's *Medicinal Plants and Home Remedies of Appalachia* (Chas. C. Thomas, 1981), and especially John Crellin & Jane Philpott's detailed study of the herbal practice of Southern-Appalachian herbalist Tommie Bass, (*Herbal Medicine: Past and Present*, 2 vols., Duke Univ. Press, 1990), as well as a more recent work on Bass and his herbalism by Darryl Patton, a student of his, entitled *Mountain Medicine: The Herbal Remedies of Tommie Bass* (2004).

In the next installment in this series, I will review some of the outstanding books on modern Western herbalism by modern (post-1980) herbal practitioners.

Update on Key Nutrients for Immune Function

by Kara Carper, MWSHS Assistant Student Coordinator,
& Matthew Alfs, MWSHS Director

It's that time of year when most people are encountering multiple germs—whether by exercising at health clubs (owing to New Year's resolutions!), by being cooped up with co-workers in closed quarters, or from their kids having been exposed at daycare or at school. This season, however, many people are taking extra precautions to ensure that their families stay healthy: This is not only because of concerns relative to the flu bug with which we are all familiar, but owing to the prevalence of the H1N1 virus.

With all of these threats around us, what can we do to keep our immune systems healthy? As always, good nutrition—which means avoiding fake foods and focusing on eating more nutrient-dense foods—is most helpful. As to the former, it's important to avoid foods that will shut off the natural immune process: In this regard, sugar has been shown to practically paralyze the immune system! A twelve-ounce can of soda, for example, can suppress the immune system for up to five hours! Immune suppression can also occur from other non-traditional foods such as concentrated fruit juice, cookies, candy, muffins, scones, cereal, bagels, and chips. These foods (if they can even be called such!) contain either a lot of added sugar or are so starchy that they convert rapidly to sugar in our bodies.

Another important item on the list of "foods" to avoid is trans fat, which makes us more vulnerable to catching bugs. Trans fats, otherwise known as hydrogenated oils, lead to unhealthy cells that do not detoxify waste products efficiently. Over time, consumption of these fats can lead to inflammation in the body and susceptibility to illness.

As to foods that help optimize immune function, fresh fruits and vegetables are loaded with immune-enhancing antioxidants and other phytonutrients. Be sure to get enough protein, too, which also supports immune function (if in doubt, supplementation with a high-quality protein shake might be worthy of consideration; whey protein, especially, bolsters immunity). Beneficial fats—such as those contained in olive oil, butter, coconut oil, nuts, and avocados—also enhance immunity. Omega-3 fatty acids are, in addition, anti-inflammatory. These can be found in wild salmon, sardines, anchovies, mackerel, tuna, and herring. Those persons who lack such foods in their diet (for whatever reason) can consider supplementation in the form of fish oil (typically best dosed at 1000 mg of combined EPA/DHA per day or higher).

There are two other, key factors, however, that have increasingly been shown of late to support immunity in ways far greater than we'd ever imagined in times past, and it is on these that we will now focus....

The first of these is vitamin D (actually more of a pro-hormone than a vitamin), which has recently been demonstrated to exercise a powerful modulating effect on immunity. Not surprisingly, then, deficiencies have been shown to increase the risk for contracting a virus as well as for developing cancer (especially of the breast, prostate, colon, and ovaries). On the other end of the spectrum, low levels have been shown to maximize the chances of acquiring an autoimmune disease (especially multiple sclerosis and type-1 diabetes, but most likely others, including lupus; asthma is also suspect).

Wide-ranging laboratory research, however, has revealed that 85% of Americans are deficient in vitamin D (in particular, 95% of senior citizens and 70% of children). Here, a simple lab test at a physician's office can determine if one is deficient. (Some labs, too, offer vitamin-D tests directly to the public, such as ZRT Laboratories [www.zrtlab.com]). Be aware here, however, that some lab's parameters are too wide on the low end of the range; current research suggests that levels of vitamin D should be at least 40ng/ml [=100nmol/L] or higher.)

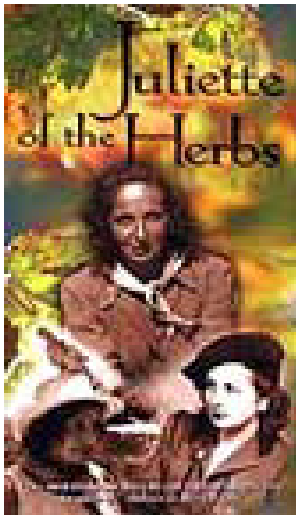
How, then, can we optimize our levels of vitamin D? In food, vitamin D is found in salmon, mackerel, sardines, tuna, and egg yolks. It is doubtful, however, that most people eat enough of these foods regularly to get sufficient amounts of this vital substance. (Note: Vitamin-D fortified milk, which is often touted as a good source, may actually only prove to be such if the fat content has *not* been reduced, since vitamin D is *fat soluble*. Thus, "vitamin-D fortified orange juice," another touted source, most likely does not allow for bioavailability of its vitamin-D content. Cod-liver oil, however, is a particularly good source, although it is not as widely utilized nowadays as in times past.) This leaves regular exposure to the sun's ultraviolet rays as the greatest potential for vitamin-D activity in the body.

During winter, however, it is often difficult to get enough vitamin D from the sun, especially in the northern USA. Most experts, then, advise taking about 2,000 IU of supplemental vitamin D per day during the winter months (esp. if dwelling in the northern USA or Canada) and at least 800 IU otherwise. (Vitamin D is available on the market in the D₃ form, which mostly comes from an irradiation of the cholesterol in sheep lanolin, and in the D₂ form, which derives from an irradiation of yeast. Despite claims by the media and a consequent understanding by the public that D₃ is the superior form, scientific research has not as yet confirmed that. *(Continued on page seven.)*

Juliette de Bairacli Levy: *In Memoriam*

By Matthew Alfs, MWSHS Director

For many years, the books I've owned by herbalist Juliette de Bairacli Levy have proven to be a veritable goldmine of information for me. I've also treasured the beautiful documentary of her life and teachings, entitled *Juliette of the Herbs*, that was produced in 1999 and released as a VHS edition in 2001. Since acquiring this video, I have many times viewed it before retiring at night, on which occasions I've found it to be so very enriching to my soul as I witnessed Juliette revel in her love of nature from the Greek island of Kythera, where she lived for some time.

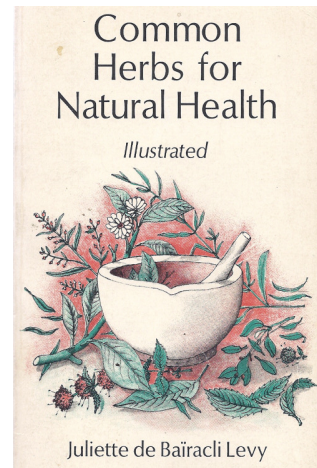


It is with great sadness, then, that I must report that, since the last issue of the *MWSHS Student Newsletter* was published, Juliette passed away, at the age of 96.

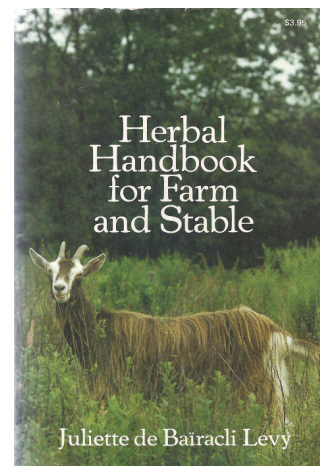
Her life story, however, is a testament both to her indomitable spirit and to her love for all of earth's children: humans, animals, and plants.

Born in Manchester, England of Turkish parents on November 11, 1912, Juliette found herself enraptured with nature from a very tender age. Owing to her love of animals, she went on to study veterinary medicine at the universities of Manchester and Liverpool, but was frustrated by the evident lack of understanding that instructors at these venerated institutions had for the psyche of animals, and so she ceased her studies after just a couple of years. From that time onward (her early 20s), she began an odyssey into nature that found her successively dwelling in almost a dozen different countries, where she progressively learned how to use nature's medicines to truly heal mind, body, and spirit! Along the way, she lived for a length of time with Gypsies, to whom she gave the most

credit for educating her about the healing powers of plants.



In her lifetime, Juliette wrote almost two dozen books—most of them about veterinary herbal medicine, although she also wrote a few about herbal remedies for people. (The book pictured above, *Common Herbs for Natural Health*, was her chief book about herbal healing for people in general, while *Natural Rearing of Children* [published in the USA as *Nature's Children*] was her best-known book detailing herbal remedies for youngsters.)

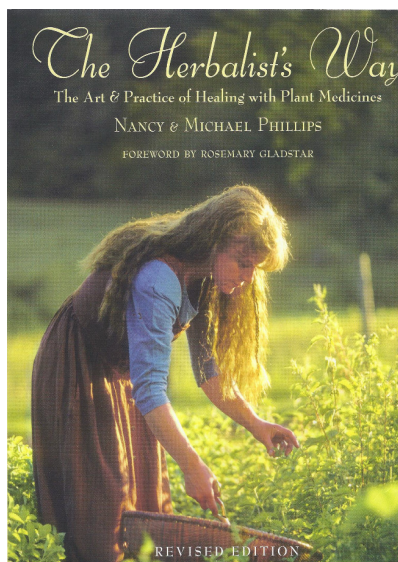


The great value in Juliette's published works lies in the fact that the herbal gems found within their pages came directly from her own, rich life experience in managing the health of her family, pets, and clients (both human and animal) with herbs for scores of years! Truly, Juliette *lived* what she preached, and earth's human and animal guests have found themselves *so* very blessed as a result!

BOOK REVIEWS

Phillips, Nancy and Michael. *The Herbalist's Way: The Art & Practice of Healing with Plant Medicines*. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publ. Co., 2005, 334pp., beautifully illustrated

If there is one book "out there" that I would've loved to have signed my own name to, this is it! Written instead by a husband-and-wife team from New Hampshire who own Heartsong Farm Healing Herbs, this masterpiece is one of the most all-encompassing books on modern-day herbalism to date, not to mention that the writing itself simply oozes appeal! Even the cover is gorgeous, showing Nancy harvesting herbs from her farm with a straw basket in hand. (See for yourself, below....)



Formerly entitled *The Village Herbalist* (I like that title even better!) and published in 2001, this precious book contains chapters on herbal history, the variety of choices available in herbal education, and especially the various paths that an herbalist can take (including the enviable one of herb farming, which the authors are privileged to enjoy), and is even peppered with profiles and interviews of a number of American herbalists. As if that was not enough, it also provides a list, and accompanying photos, of *children's books* on herbal healing that are bound to appeal to the budding herbalist in one's household! Last but not least, the Appendices in the back are chock full of useful addresses on everything from herbal seed companies to professional herbal journals and associations. O, but I love this book! I believe you will, too!

-- Reviewed by Matthew Alfs

"I Read Each and Every *MWSHS Student Newsletter* Straight Through!"

That's what one of our students told us, adding: "Reading the *MWSHS Student Newsletter* reminds me that I'm part of a large family of students and educators, which increases my zest to master my studies! It's also a powerful reminder of how hard the MWSHS staff works on my behalf to keep me informed on current research and events in the herbal realm! Thank you so very much for this valuable resource!"

Do you also take time, dear student, to read through the entire *MWSHS Student Newsletter*? As the official organ of communication between the School and its student body, the Newsletter's announcements and articles can prove most helpful to your academic success. For example, the current issue offers a series of suggestions on how to make time to study your lessons so as to progress ably toward graduation and also provides a student profile of a senior student who is proving successful in this regard. In addition, it contains in-depth articles on the importance of key nutrients to immune function and how to sort through the vast array of books on herbal therapy that have been published in order to choose the very best ones for your library. All of this invaluable information is provided for you in one issue, and at no extra cost to you—being one of several valuable "perks" of your student membership.

We hope, then, that you will agree with the student quoted above and always take time to read through each and every issue! Finally, in that the *MWSHS Student Newsletter* is published *for you*, the MWSHS student, we welcome *your* input and help in assembling the very best possible vehicle for you!

Key Nutrients for Immune Function (Cont. from p. 4)

The second, key immune factor is the beneficial bacteria in our gut (where 60% of our immune system is located). Much scientific research has shown these bacteria to greatly fortify immune strength, as long as a strong colony is steadily maintained. Yet, one's beneficial intestinal bacteria can be compromised by many hazards in modern society, including antibiotics, other drugs, and environmental chemicals that can enter the gut along with food. In this regard, clinical experience (including the use of laboratory stool analyses) has revealed that most persons do indeed have less-than-optimal levels (or, *dysbiosis*), so that supplementation with a high-quality *probiotic* ("life-promoting" bacteria such as those under discussion, including *Lactobacillus* spp. and/or *Bifidus* spp.) should be considered.

In conclusion, most persons in modern society would appear to be deficient in both vitamin D and beneficial intestinal bacteria, suggesting that supplementation of both of these vital immune factors be seriously considered.

PRE-REGISTRATION FORM FOR MWSHS WORKSHOP

Student Name:..... Student I.D. #.....
Workshop Title..... Date(s).....
Hours.....
Total Cost Payment Enclosed: (Check).....(M.O.)(C.C)

If paying by Credit Card, you must supply ALL of the following information in order for us to process.

Note: Will clear as "Midwest Herbs & Healing."

Credit Card Number..... Expir. Date.....
CDC Code (last group of 3- or 4 digits in series of numbers on reverse of card *near signature strip*)
Digits of Mailing Address to which Credit Card Bill goes to:.....
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** More Student Profiles*

** Student Articles*

** Book Reviews*

**Building an Herbal Reference Library: Pt 4!*

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