

For further information speak to Nathaniel on 01453 835 029

Short courses: (over 3 days) also available at Hawkwood College under the name 'Plant Spirit' For more information see the Hawkwood website or phone 01453 764 045. I will also be running a three day course on the Isle of Man in July (contact me for more details)

One year course: The one year course is over 8 sets of two days and an evening, starting in February, breaking for the summer and ending in November.

The days are Wednesday early evening, Thursday and Friday. The cost is £850 for the year and can be payed in installments.

I invite all those interested for an interview to check it is suitable for you and so that I can start to design the course around your interests.

'This course is an awe inspiring and joyful adventure into the realm of plants. Nathaniel's profound and empathetic understanding of both the plant and human kingdoms makes him an inspired teacher and companion on this in-depth journey'

Mary (2009 participant)

'The Intuitive Herbal Course has been a special time. I have been able to nurture my intuitions and beliefs, connect with nature and gain valuable experience working side by side with the herbs.'

Sue (2009 participant)



Ruskin Apothecary

Intuitive Herbal Medicine

THE ART AND CRAFT OF HEALING

One year class 2010

www.ruskinapothecary.org.uk

01453 835 029



Nathaniel Hughes

Nathaniel works as a herbalist and healer based at Ruskin Apothecary Stroud, where he runs a busy clinic and teaches a range of courses. Nathaniel trained for four years in medical herbalism following a degree in Chemistry which left him disappointed with the potential for current scientific practice to truly explore the plant-human relationship. His herbal training involved a full orthodox medical understanding of disease alongside traditional and intuitive approaches. He has also been practising Reiki for ten years and trained in other healing disciplines such as Vortex healing and Theta healing. Clinically he uses bodywork and regression/journeying to identify areas needing healing, and the herbs to support the process of healing.

In practice, both in clinic and teaching, the focus is on empowering people in their own understandings of their own body and in how they can use the multitude of gifts provided by the earth (not least plants!) to encourage healing.

- **Beliefs, thoughtforms and the art of manifestation**

Drawing on my training and practice in Theta healing, we look at how core beliefs affect our thinking and how our thoughts create our perceived reality.

- **Introduction to dowsing**

Fun with the dowsing rods! Practice looking for water and experiencing the energy field of plants.

- **How to evaluate the research and safety of herbs**

Using the internet to find up to date information on research, safety and drug interactions.

- **Working with different medical models such as the chakra system and the meridians**

Briefly touching on models of medicine from around the world and they can greatly enrich our perspective when thinking about health.

- **Unlocking skills and abilities we may have forgotten or repressed**

This is a key part of the course, since my observation over six years of teaching all the above is that none of the topics discussed is actually 'foreign' or really difficult for anyone - we simply have not been encouraged and supported in accessing those parts of ourselves which allow us to tap into a deeper knowing and a deeper sense of being connected to other people and the world. With a little gentle support, we can help these undiscovered seeds germinate and grow into healthy and enriching experiences.

Though that might seem a lot, we weaved these concepts into our study of herbs and health throughout the year, such that learning is an effortless and joyful experience. Many of the topics have potential for a life time's worth of learning, so I hope to lay good foundations for future discoveries!

- **Illnesses, and the emotional and spiritual patterns that lie beyond them**

There is inevitably a personal story behind every illness; in fact the illness can be a key part of the narrative that allows people into greater understanding of themselves and better health.

- **The different between healing and medicine**

What symptomatic and holistic actually mean in practice - how holism is a fundamentally different paradigm from the more familiar model of disease/diagnosis/treatment that most of us are familiar with.

- **Techniques of shamanic journeying**

The drum journey, use of intention, the structure of the journey, the middle world, lower world and upper world and their different characteristics. We allow time for substantial practice at journeying and developing your own style of journey.

- **Using our different senses to experience**

Working with touch, taste, smell and sound as well as vision.

- **Creating sacred space and ceremony**

Implicit in the journeying work are aspects of creating a clear space for doing this work. We touch on space clearing, smudging, the use of fire, salt, incense and intention.

- **Opening the heart field**

In Buddhist practice, one practice is to train the mind to be servant to the heart. Often in the west we learn to live the other way round. In the course we get lots of practice at noticing the difference and learning to choose how we centre our consciousness.

- **Healing as expansion of consciousness**

Illness can be a calling for us to expand our understanding of ourselves and the world. We discuss many examples of how as this understanding grows, illnesses no longer need to exist. (For example if you are unaware that you keep on hitting your thumb with a hammer (metaphorically), the healing of your thumb may come as a surprise when you stop hitting it!)



Intuitive Herbal Medicine

In this intensive one year class, a small group (maximum 5) will be lead through a heartfelt meeting with a number of the herbs growing around us. Each journey is a personal meeting with the plants; all knowledge gained comes from each of our individual experiences with the plants, very little from books or 'received knowledge'.

We start the course learning and developing our intuitive abilities (and don't worry if you think you're no good at this - I'm yet to meet anyone who can't, they simply have not been given the right opportunities!). To facilitate this we work with a number of forms such as drum journeys, and meditation.

As the group develops we go deeper in the meetings with individual herbs, and start to find the particular gifts each participant brings and thus begin to mould the classes around **your** gifts and abilities (rather than my concept of 'teaching'). Participant's experience of this is that it is very empowering and confirming, giving them the space to develop more confidence in their own inner knowing.

Drawing on my experience in healing, we bring in many strands such as working with spirit allies, drawing on undeveloped skills and releasing our own fear's such that we can develop greater empathy and understanding of others.

As the course develops we each create a portfolio of our journey including information, photographs, pressed herbs, poems and stories. Each session starts on a Wednesday early evening, when the group collects to meet and join for a short meditation after a month apart. We then use Thursday and Friday to work with anywhere between two and five herbs, both in meeting them and practical medicine making.

Course content

As described above, the course fits to adjust the participants. However, to give you an idea of the likely content I'll outline those areas we explored in 2009:

Herbal knowledge (*Materia medica*)

The core of herbal knowledge is knowing the plants. We spend time outside learning to identify the plant, learning how and when to harvest it, and which parts to harvest. We will then generally prepare the plant (e.g. tea/decoction/tincture/poultice) and journey to find the teachings it has for us.

In 2009, we studied around thirty plants over the year, some in more depth than others:

Betony, Calendula, Cleavers, Comfrey, Cornsilk, Chelidonium, Dandelion, Echinacea, Elderflower, Elderberry, Wild Garlic, Ginger, Hawthorn, Horsetail, Lady's Mantle, Lungwort, Meadowsweet, Mint, Mugwort, Nettle, Rosemary, Scullcap, St. John's Wort, Pilewort, Primrose, Valarian, White archangel, Yarrow and Yew.

We also touched on many other herbs as they came into the discussion of the herbs we had in front of us. Many of these herbs were growing wild, some were cultivated at either Stroud Slad Farm or Ruskin Mill.

Practical herbal medicine (*Pharmacy*)

Over the year we made a variety of preparations including infused oil, ointments, creams, poultices and lozenges. We had lots of opportunities to handle and become familiar with the plants, and also respond to the requests and interests in the group.

As part of practical herbal medicine, we also became familiar with using different base oils, beeswax, cocoa butter, essential oils etc.

Principles of healing (*Therapeutics*)

We touched on an immense array of interesting topics to do with healing, medicine and healthcare over the year. Generally we will start the day studying a plant, and discussion will move into the area's on interest specific to that plant. (For instance, when studying garlic, we explored the different approaches in naturopathy and orthodox medicine to infection. whilst also touching on many other herbs used for infection).

Area's discussed include:

- **Traditional medical models - Elements and constitutions.**

Working with the elements (earth, water, air, fire and ether). Working with constitutions (Vata, Pitta, Kapha / Choleric, Phlegmatic, Sanguine, Melancholic)

- **The effect of tastes**

How different tastes, e.g. bitter, sweet, sour, salty, astringent, pungent, can affect us both in food and medicine. How taste can direct us to the likely actions of a herb

- **Working with spirit**

Throughout the whole course we acknowledge, respect and work with spirit. Both the plant spirit that we are introducing ourselves to, and the guides and teachers that support us in our learning and development