

ety of beliefs and practices, the efforts to preserve the ecosystem, to use the plants ethically and to use them to help heal come up again and again.

For Sierralupe, the herbals offer the unhoused and others in need that she works with at Occupy Medical a viable alternative to pharmaceuticals that may be problematic for them. Like Brounstein, she is a proponent of Oregon grape — good for sinus infections, she tells me.

On our summer morning walk we were looking for yarrow, but she notes for next year that we've come to Bristow too late in the season. Yarrow has azulene in it, which is a potent anti-inflammatory compound, she says. The plant is astringent and works great for wounds.

As we wander through the park, she carries her basket with a cloth to cover the plants, pruners and scissors for harvesting and containers for what she picks, among other things. She points to plant after plant, which look ordinary but are extraordinary in their usefulness: oak leaves can be used to make a soothing "snotlike" salve for stings, St. John's wort can be used for those with PTSD, birch can make a footbath to help those with diabetic ulcers, lemon balm helps with anxiety.

She echoes Brounstein's admonishment that wildcrafting is more than just the plant's uses. It's preserving its ecosystem; it's being ethical.

Wildcrafting is stewardship, Brounstein repeats. "It's not a one-night stand."



STEVEN YEAGER OF MOUNTAIN ROSE HERBS AND COLUMBINES SCHOOL OF BOTANICAL STUDIES EXPLAINS HOW TO IDENTIFY PLANTS BY THEIR LEAVES ON THE HARDESTY TRAIL

Kids IN THE Wild

WHOLE EARTH NATURE SCHOOL GOES WILDCRAFTING

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hole Earth Nature School tries to raise awareness by sending people outside for a better connection to the natural world. "Wildcrafting is a piece of what we do," Executive Director Rees Maxwell says.

Part of what the school teaches is primitive skills and homesteading; and part of that, Maxwell points out, is food and medicines.

On a recent excursion, the kids of Whole Earth Nature School harvested and processed blackberries. "In our community, not being a big farming community, we have less of an understanding of where our food comes from," Maxwell says. And he says for some kids, "All they see is food from the fridge, food from the store."

The school takes them out to harvest the berries, understand the ingredients, make jam and bring it home. And in this way, Maxwell says, the kids feel like they contribute to their families.

Engaging kids outside through wildcrafting, if done well, is not only inspiring and encouraging, it also "gives them an idea of how they can help take care of nature spaces around them as well as their family," Maxwell says.

What is motivating, he says, "is getting their hands and tongues and noses involved in the process. It benefits them and the plants and the nature community they are harvesting from." And they learn that, "Even as a kids you can wreck an area and damage it, or make that space better for the whole natural community." — *Camilla Mortensen*

For more on Whole Earth Nature School and its camps and programs, go to wholeearthnatureschool.com.

