

HIGH FALLS GARDENS E-LETTER, AUTUMN '07

Dear Friend of High Falls Gardens,

As heirs of industrial society we've cherished the garden as a peaceful refuge, an additional layer of insulation from life-and-death struggles. Yes, we're aware of the realities, but only at a distance – the hawks circling above, the microcosmic battles beneath our feet. Nothing that truly threatens us.

But now the ice is melting more rapidly than expected. Lyme disease is in the garden. We remember that every balance has a pivot point. Now the garden is becoming much more than consolation: it's the source of our health, even our survival. One by one we wake from our 500-year delusion of separation.

In HFG's neighborhood – and in countless other fragments of the hologram -- people are beginning to ask life's essential questions. For example: If we now know enough to avoid destabilizing our soils with synthetic chemicals, why should we ingest food additives, artificial vitamins and pharmaceutical drugs?



Chinese medicinal herb garden at New York Chiropractic College in Seneca Falls, soon after planting in June.

**** **Garden Dedication in Seneca Falls** ****

On July 13th New York Chiropractic College (NYCC) dedicated its splendid new Chinese medicinal herb garden as a prelude to its annual Unity Day and Homecoming Weekend celebration. Students had braved heat and humidity only three weeks earlier to plant over 50 species donated by High Falls Gardens and purchased from commercial sources. The College used seed money from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation via the High Falls Gardens Fund to great effect, securing a substantial grant from local company Seneca Meadows, Inc. to endow the garden. Jason Wright, assistant professor in NYCC's Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine program, serves as coordinator for this well-designed, constructed and supported garden program. He and others are preparing a set of signage templates to be offered to all the garden programs in HFG's Botanical Studies for Oriental Medicine. Garden coordinators will be notified as soon as the templates are ready.

**** **HFG Internship Program Certifies 23 Students** ****

Our first one-week field intensive for masters students of Oriental Medicine was held during the August break. Students stayed at the Hawthorne Valley Farm's Main House for visiting students. This particular attempt to squeeze botany, ecology, conservation and agriculture into an overcrowded masters curriculum was instigated by John Pirog of

Northwestern Health Sciences University. The Twin Cities colleges sent the largest contingent of students, supplemented by those from Bastyr and SIOM, Midwest, NESA and the New York colleges. Jean Giblette and Joe Hollis provided the basic instruction for the week.

Cool but sunny weather graced our time together. We started with a tour of the local area, referring to the history of the European colonists and their farming practices still in evidence. The new High Falls Conservation Area was open, but its large stands of wild ginger and blue cohosh had already withdrawn in this very dry season. Hawthorne Valley head farmers Rachel and Steffen Schneider contributed a farm tour and a lecture on Biodynamics. Popular instructor Dr. Cheng Chi at American Academy of AOM in Saint Paul flew out for the weekend to lecture, harvest and process several herbs. Andy Ellis drove over from the Amherst MA area and visited the HFG garden for the first time.

In between sod busting, plant liberation and other garden tasks, we also visited that small piece of paradise called The Healing Plant at Camphill Copake. ("More time, more time!" cried the students.) Finally, courtesy of Bob Beyfuss of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Greene County, we mounted an expedition to see xī yáng shēn (that's American ginseng) fruiting in the wild. Wow! Intense and exhausting but with many rewards, say the students.



Dr. Chi cooked up a storm in the HV dining hall kitchen. Clockwise from upper right are: sōng xiāng (pine resin) in grain alcohol, dry-fried huáng bǎi, salt-fried zhī mǔ, hé shǒu wū steamed in black bean juice, wine-fried huáng qín, and charred jīng jiè.

To receive the High Falls Gardens newsletter, please send us an email at hfg@capital.net! It's only twice per year, and we never sell or rent our list.

****** New Websites! ******

Peggy Schafer, our premier grower in California, has two new websites – one for her farm in Petaluma at <http://chinesemedicinalherbfarm.com>, and one for her cooperative venture with OM practitioner Sean Fannin at <http://futianherbs.com>. In addition to popular internships at her farm, Peggy's teaching gigs are expanding from Sonoma (including Quarryhill Botanical Garden) through the Bay Area to Santa Cruz and beyond. She will be interviewed again on KPFA's "Herbal Highway" radio show, November 29, 1:00-2:00 PM Pacific Time (<http://www.kpfa.org>).

****** New Mexico Panel Discussion on DVD ******

Seeking to repeat last year's successful Herb Expo held at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center in Albuquerque, the NM Herb Growers Association and collaborators upped attendance by 25% on June 24. As it happened, the next day's Federal Register published the FDA's final Rule on GMPs (Good Manufacturing Practices) for dietary supplements. The Rule's final draft in hand, Expo organizers assembled a panel including John Scott of Golden Flower, Mitch Coven of Vitality Works (and member of the AHPA committee that advised the FDA on the Rule), Selah Chamberlain D.O.M., Z'ev Rosenberg L.Ac. and others. The discussion was filmed for public access television by entrepreneur Leonie Rosenstiel D.O.M., who has produced a show called "Healers, Health and Healing" for two seasons. DVDs of the discussion and other shows may be ordered at <http://shop.dayspringresources.org/category.sc?categoryId=3>.

****** Order Backlog: Herb Growers Need Contracts ******

The Sample Pack has worked all too well as a marketing tool. Remember this colorful boxed assortment of three dozen packages of fresh dried Chinese medicinal herbs, domestically and ecologically grown by the Medicinal Herb Consortium (MHC)? The Sample Pack wins raves and generates orders for herbs – in small quantities, as yet, but from leading edge herbalists in Oriental Medicine who can't wait to start working with all that beautiful Qi.

Thanks to all of you who have submitted orders! The MHC is trying to fill them, being acutely aware that "not enough product" is hard to explain. The fact is, growers need capital to set up a planned order fulfillment system, pay for management and quality control, but most of all to underwrite contracts. The MHC had hoped to raise a big chunk of this money from the USDA but did not win the grant and must try again next year.

Specialty crops (as distinct from commodity crops) in the U.S. and Canada, especially slow-to-mature crops, are usually grown to contract. Why would a farmer, who must calculate effort and return for each piece of land, deliberately incur more risk? Also, farmers depend upon the agricultural research system for new crop development work and production data (such as calculations of yield per acre). In the case of Chinese medicinal herbs, much of this work (or the translation thereof) has not yet been done and the farmers must proceed without those numbers. So they need a contracted price.

To produce the wide range of species Oriental Medicine needs to make formulas, different regions of the country complement each other and are stronger in cooperation. OM should lead this initiative, but with greater awareness of agriculture's present realities. The OM market and the growers together – the marriage made in heaven and earth – can "bootstrap" the venture. Nourish Yin, build Blood, and...

STAY TUNED: We will announce a capital campaign for the MHC at Pacific Symposium in November, launch a new website, then raise funds from the private sector. Our sheaf of orders helps with major donors and will strengthen our case to the USDA. Qi in the form of money will get the plants in the ground -- and return to us later, in abundance.

****** Growers: Medicinal Herb Workshop in January ******

The Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York will hold a full-day workshop on medicinal herbs on Friday, January 25, 2008, the day before the annual winter conference. The sessions feature Eric Burkhart of Spicebush Gardens and Pennsylvania Mountain Ginseng on ginseng and other woodland medicinals, David Demarest of Green Mountain Mycosystems on wild-crafted and cultivated medicinal mushrooms, Jean Giblette on Chinese medicinal botanicals, and Jean-David Derreumaux of The Healing Plant at Camphill Copake, and now the Healing Gardens at the Center for Discovery in Monticello, on design and operations. NOFA-NY has outgrown its old conference location and will be in Saratoga Springs this year. This should be a good workshop. ☒