

HIGH FALLS GARDENS E-LETTER, Summer 2017

Dear Friend of High Falls Gardens,

AT LAST!--We are selling domestically and ecologically grown Chinese herbs! Twenty kinds, with more in the pipeline coming soon, with tens of thousands of perennial plants in the ground and in greenhouses. This past year has seen some major advances toward our goals. A new professional society for practitioners certified in Oriental Medicine and/or Chinese Herbology. More farms – now 50 in Virginia and 45 in New York. New friends, individual donors, and group donors. We are moving ahead, step by step, and now we need our old friends with us more than ever. To reach our goal takes a mass movement....And we're getting there!



A very old *Ziziphus jujuba* with four trunks, six feet in circumference at the base and decorated with a stag skull, was found near the railroad station in Abilene KS.

**** Domestic herbs now available online ****

Yes, true news! After our truncated maiden voyage in 2008 with LocalHerbs.org (too many orders, not enough products), we now have beautiful, aromatic, fresh, ecologically grown local herbs available at <https://appalachianherbgrowers.com>. The Blue Ridge Center for Chinese Medicine in Virginia and their growers, 50 small farms, have introduced about 20 Chinese medicinal herbs, with more in the pipeline. These are sold directly (and only) to licensed Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine practitioners (AOM), also known as Traditional East Asian Medicine (TEAM).

High Falls Foundation has worked closely with the Blue Ridge Center for years, and the two nonprofits have determined that they will share a marketing platform. When the New York Grown Chinese Medicinal Herbs become available (soon) they will be marketed through the existing website, which will be expanded accordingly. The two groups are working on a plan for groups in other states to join us in providing a one-stop shopping platform for domestic herbs.

Would you pay \$5/month to assure a future supply of fresh, clean ecologically grown herbs?

Many AOM/TEAM students use Paypal for automatic monthly donations that add up. Join them!

DONATE!

Your tax-deductible gift to HFF supports NY & VA's grower groups, the Shen Nong Society, and Botanical Studies for AOM.

**** The Shen Nong Society ****

In the spring of 2016 the board of directors of High Falls Foundation accepted Sally Rapoport's proposal to "incubate" the newly founded Shen Nong Society (www.shennongsociety.org). This professional association for East Asian herbal medicine practitioners started out as a program under HFF's nonprofit umbrella, and is likely to go independent once they become well established.

Right away they began to organize, solicit members and schedule their first conference. The conference, with places sold out at the beginning of the year, was held at TriState College of Acupuncture in Manhattan this past March. Domestic production was a topic of discussion, with several principal players present, and a bag of 14 lovely domestic herb samples for each participant. The lectures were videotaped and will become available online. We look forward to another conference next spring.

**** A tree grows in Kansas's Old Abilene Town ****

An irrepressible member of the new Shen Nong Society is Rhonda K Bathurst, L.Ac. One afternoon, a neighbor beckoned Rhonda to identify an old tree in the yard of a 19th century house near the historical railway station in Abilene. Fruit tasting smoky, apple-like, so very familiar...branches weeping with honey locust-like leaves/thorns, it looked like...(could it be?)...yes, *Ziziphus jujuba*, *hóng zǎo*! Perhaps an Asian immigrant railroad worker planted it over a century ago? This tree is certainly the true species, not one of the many cultivars available in the U.S; and the fruit has won high praise from a respected importer. Rhonda has shipped fruit/seed and suckers to New York for our propagation.

To wild-harvest the Chinese herbs, Rhonda enlists KSU botany faculty and Cooperative Extension to confirm plant ID. With family and friends taught to harvest and propagate, she is able to produce *měi guó lǐng xiāo huā*, *jú huā*, *mù zéi*, *jīn yín huā*, *méi guī huā*, *sāng yè*, *sāng zhī*, to name a few. Look for these beauties to become available as samples via <https://appalachianherbgrowers.com>.

*To get on the High Falls Gardens email list, please send an email to hfg@capital.net.
We never sell or rent our list.*

With a degree from ACTCM in San Francisco, Rhonda established the largest private-practice raw herb dispensary in the New York Finger Lakes Region in 2003, soon thereafter returning to her rural childhood Kansas home. Collaborating with the local health system, state-regulators, and national suppliers, Rhonda implemented Kansas's debut integrative hospital-based customized raw Asian herb formula service in 2015 and helped to pass the Kansas Acupuncture Practice Act in 2016; she serves as AAAOM Public Policy Committee Chair.

****** Good news for New York practitioners ******

Last November, Governor Cuomo finally signed long-sought legislation to add herbal medicine to the scope of practice for AOM/TEAM practitioners in New York. This law does not change the way practitioners are certified, but recognizes their extra training in dietary and herbal supplements. (The 1994 Dietary Supplement and Health Education Act covers all forms of herbal practice in the United States, but the individual states pass and enforce practice laws in all health professions.) We congratulate the 3,500 licensed AOM practitioners in New York for this reinforcement of their legal status.

****** Grower groups in planting frenzy ******



Spring 2017: Chinese medicinal herb starts occupy a corner of the greenhouse at one of the New York propagator farms.

Tens of thousands of Chinese herb starts have been germinated this spring in Virginia and New York, then distributed to growers for planting. We learned early on that vegetable farmers cannot easily switch over to propagating perennial plants. The facilities and schedules required do not match. In each state, designated propagators produce flats of seedlings for the whole group. This helps control for correct identification of propagules, appropriate timing, and effective nursery techniques. As one of our growers commented, "I really like not worrying about where to get the seeds...or about marketing! I just do what I like to do best, that is, growing the plants."

This past year High Falls Foundation, in its role of providing start-up coordination and support to the New York grower group, was able to engage Cornell Cooperative Extension to study Chinese herb horticulture. We presented four one-hour training webinars on Cornell's distance learning platform, attended by about 30 extension educators. Several of

these very capable people got excited about the project and started helping out in important ways. They sponsored workshops for prospective growers, advised on recruitment, and even helped in our spring propagation effort. The educators' strongly positive response was a bit of a pleasant surprise, but one of our farmers explained it. "They need new crops and new paths to market," she said. "Farmers' markets near several New York cities are topped out, and new farmers can't get in." Such is the outstanding success of the local food movement, branching out into new agricultural products.

As a result of the extension educators' efforts, our number of farms is up to 45. Thanks to funding from the New York Farm Viability Institute for this first phase of the project, we are well on our way to establishing a cooperative group of farms to build a new agricultural industry.

The Virginia group employs both propagators and processors based at the Blue Ridge Center for Chinese Medicine. They have kept their grower group in a geographically tight area, unlike New York. However, expansion of dispersed production will inevitably require multiple propagation and processing centers. Laws governing processing kitchens are different from state to state, but one welcome trend is the large number of value-added commercial kitchens being set up (at least in New York state) to offer farmers a means to process their material before sale.

****** How YOU can get involved ******

AOM/TEAM practitioners

Under development: a certificate program in Chinese medicinal herb horticulture; farm-based tours and workshops. Both require considerable administrative time, which is in very short supply. That's why we continue to nag you for donations!

Growers

The NY group maintains a waiting list of qualified, experienced growers who are willing to adhere to ecological practices, to cooperate, and to sell exclusively through our marketing platform. The herbs are considered to be add-on crops to an already financially stable operation. Email Jean at the address below if you wish to be on the waiting list. ☒