

HIGH FALLS GARDENS E-LETTER, WINTER 2012

Dear Friend of High Falls Gardens,

We could say 2011 was a bad year – garden flooded by Tropical Storm Irene, fire partially destroyed the house, rejection of grant proposals continued, crop losses and big shortfall in filling orders for herbs – but instead, we're celebrating! Several indicators show us we're on the right track. Despite our difficulties, the work is proceeding forward and more people are being called to it. We now can boast of the accomplishments of sixty intern alumni who have completed our intensive programs. These are the people who are creating a future we can live with, and I'm proud to know them.

**** **HFG Interns Make Waves** ****

The August internship marked its fifth year in present format, seven years total, with 60 intern alumni out there doing great things. This program is for Oriental Medicine graduate students who usually go on to complete their master's degree and set up a practice or otherwise get creative.

In late 2010, I was thrilled to visit the clinic started by Jason Redinbo, our class of '05, in Floyd County, Virginia. The Blue Ridge Center for Chinese Medicine (<http://www.brccm.org/>) is organized as a nonprofit and encompasses a clinic, a Tuina school and a martial arts school, with a big herb garden out back. Even though it was late fall I could see their plants look great. The Blue Ridge Center has become one of High Falls Foundation's supporting organizations, and we hope to do more joint projects with them.



HFG interns class of '11. Photo is a refrigerator magnet!

Then there's Eric Buckley, class of '07, who graduated Southwest Acupuncture College and was hired as staff DOM at St. Vincent's Hospital in Santa Fe, charged with setting up a herbal dispensary within the hospital. More recently, Eric also became president of the New Mexico OM practitioner's association. He's interested in organizing a National Herbal Medicine Week, to include practitioners, growers and product makers alike. See the Facebook page of that name.

Mary Burke-Pitts, also '07, interned with Joe Hollis at Mountain Gardens and with us, then went on to enroll at Daoist Traditions College of Chinese Medical Arts in Asheville. She's their garden coordinator, also involved in the exciting developments around Chinese herb production in western North Carolina. Mary is one of the behind-the-scenes people who will make domestic production happen.

Amanda Kriess, class of '09, considered the domestic cultivation concept so important that she founded a new dispensary in Chicago, Inner Ecology (<https://innerecology.com/home.html>). Later she hired Thom Heil, Jr., class of '10, to be part of the team. They just submitted their first order to Local Herbs in October. Chicagoans and other Midwesterners: Inner Ecology is convenient for you and will be a vehicle for developing locally-grown herbs in that part of the country. They deserve your support!

Also class of '09, Dana Carruth graduated from Finger Lakes School of A&OM and, while busy establishing a private practice in the Ithaca area, has taken on a part-time job coordinating the garden program at FLSAOM. Dana, Mary, and the other garden coordinators are increasingly important to our work as we're more dependent on them for seed and plant exchange, and for assisting growers and community members who want to get involved. Not all schools have garden programs, but those that do have a natural vehicle for outreach.

Laura Flowers, class of '10, was with the group of interns who built the biodynamic compost pile under the tutelage of Marc Blachere of The Healing Plant. She immediately went back to her parents' farm in upstate New York and built her own pile, ordering the BD preps from the Josephine Porter Institute. After graduating, doing a fairly rigorous trip to China, and setting up a practice, she then organized a herb study group at PCOM

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New York, creating her own flash cards for the students. But here's the icing on the cake: she's encouraging everyone in the group to take advantage of the student rate and become members of High Falls Foundation!

Yes, I could fill another whole page bragging about our interns, but on to the other good news.

****** Peg Schafer's book is out! ******

If you haven't seen it yet, read about it on the Chelsea Green website but buy it directly from Peg's farm: http://www.chinesemedicinalherbfarm.com/book_about.html. This is one beautiful and hefty reference book, with fabulous photos and detailed cultivation instructions for 79 Chinese herbs. Peg is stirring the pot, and I'm already getting calls from growers who have read it and are ready to dive in.

And now a message from your sponsor: Peg, Joe Hollis and I are the three senior teachers of Chinese herb cultivation in the U.S., each of us teaching while keeping our farms going. We need to clone ourselves, and soon, to meet the rising demand for organic, domestically grown herbs. That means beefing up our support so we can spend more time teaching.

In 2011, High Falls Foundation received the most donations ever from individuals and organizations. The profession of Oriental Medicine is responding whole-heartedly, with several of the colleges now pledged for annual contributions. This is the kind of profession-wide support we need, to show other funders that a new industry is taking root. Thank you, members, for doing your part!

****** Ginseng Planting Workshop a Success ******

Over the years we've gradually become more confident about planting American ginseng, a notoriously persnickety crop if you want it unsprayed and wild-cultivated. In late 2008 local intern Felix Lufkin and I



planted a 15-foot bed of stratified seed on a slope on the north side of the house. That next spring several plants came up, and some are still with us today. The seed came from ginseng expert Bob Beyfuss, recently retired from Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Other people have been interested in doing the same, so last September I asked Bob to come over and demonstrate ginseng planting. We had about a dozen local people come to an information session at the library and the workshop. Bob brought more stratified seed along with wild roots freshly – and legally – dug from one of his secret spots. He explained how he likes to plant test plots of 50 seeds

each in an area about 5 feet in diameter. We created ten such spots. The rate of germination will indicate where on our property ginseng most “likes” to grow. He buried a fresh root on a shallow, slanted angle in the middle of each spot – which will be much more likely than the seeds to come up next spring. He recommends covering each spot with chicken wire to discourage squirrels, then wait with eagle eyes for the little three-leaved seedlings to emerge. Thanks, Bob. Now there's another reason to anticipate spring in this Year of the Dragon! ☒