



Medicine Stories Podcast

Episode 65 with Rosalee de la Forêt

Wild Remedies: Tending Relationships with
the Land Around Us

April 7, 2020

[0:00:00]

(Excerpt from today's show by Rosalee)

If everyone wildcrafted, if we were all stewards, if we were all visiting these places, protecting them, taking care of them, nurturing them, and spreading that love, I think we're gonna be living in a much different world; a world that's more based in love, more based in sustainability, and a lot more resilient.

(Intro Music: acoustic guitar folk song "Wild Eyes" by Mariee Sioux)

[Intro]

[0:00:21]

Amber: Hello friends! And welcome to the Medicine Stories podcast, where we are remembering what it is to be human upon the earth.

I am your host, Amber Magnolia Hill, and this is Episode 65 with (*spoken in French accent*) Rosalee de la Forêt. That's my attempt at French. I think it was okay. I apologize to a quarter of my ancestors, who are French, and to my maternal grandmother, who spoke French as a child, for not **nailling** the pronunciation. I think Rosalee will forgive me.

Well, here we are again with another episode that was recorded not before coronavirus really hit and changed all of our lives, but at the beginning stages of that, and yet again, amazingly ties in, what we talked about ties into what is happening in the world because I don't know about you, but I am certainly taking a harder look at self-sufficiency, and wild foods, and what I know and what I don't know about really being able to support myself, my family, my community during times like these, knowing that this will happen again.

Another viral pandemic will happen again. Other things will happen. These are unstabilized times, unstabilizing times, and hopefully, as we spoke about in the most recent episode with Ayana Young, this is a big wake up call.

If you haven't read Charles Eisenstein, my guest on Episode 60, his essay, *The Coronation*, I strongly recommend you do so. I'll put it in the show notes, of course. There's so much potential right now, as you know, and that potential comes through on a societal level when we each as individuals step up, step forward, step into our power; empower ourselves and the people around us.

And, of course, food is just fundamental to that; something that we all need. Something that we all need, and there's so much potential for humans to reweave our relationship with the wild, with the land, and with food, and food systems. So, keep that in mind as you listen to this interview today. And it's just so amazingly perfect that Rosalee and her co-author, Emily Hahn, have put this book out at this time; this book all about wild remedies, sustainable wild remedies, sustainable wild crafting, foraging to nourish ourselves and others.

[0:03:15]

Amber: I'm so excited to share this book with you. It really — I'm so deeply impressed with it. It goes above and beyond what I thought it would when I first saw it and heard about it. And you can really get a sense for that in the interview. Just really has got me thinking so much as spring comes on about my relationship with the land and with the plants, and really mindful and conscious foraging. And I'm so excited to talk more about this.

You know, it's a hot topic in herbalism, and there can be this call out culture around it, and there can be this fear of doing it wrong, right? Something that I'm really constantly looking at on this show, trying to gently persuade you all to not get caught up in, how overwhelming it can seem to step onto the plant path and to the insane amount of information out there, but this is important. This is important. This is foundational and central to any practice of coming into relationship with the earth is these talks about wild remedies and respectful, reciprocal relationships.

So, wow. There's a lot to talk about.

[0:04:42]

Amber: I need to tell you about this book, and the amazing bonuses that Rosalee and Emily have made available for people who order the book now at the beginning. This episode is being released the day the book comes out. They both happen to align on a Tuesday, so it was perfect. And you know, in an effort to bump the sales and have a successful launch of the book, Rosalee and Emily have put together just some incredible bonuses for folks who buy it now. Hopefully, you're going to buy it anyway and increase your knowledge on these topics, so might as well do it now and have access to number one — and of course, the link is in the show notes if you're like "How do I get there?" because you don't want to go straight to the bookseller that you buy from online. You want to go to their landing page to make sure you get all the bonuses, and then you can still buy through whoever you like to buy through.

The first bonus is an incredible docuseries. It's numerous, numerous, beautifully shot videos, interviews with many different herbalists, including Rosemary Gladstar, who I'm just mentioning because she has been a past guest, and many other well-known people. They ask many herbalists some important questions like:

- What are the unexpected ways that wild remedies heal?

- What does everyone need to know before harvesting wild plants?
- And will we be able to wildcraft forever?

It gets so deep. There's one with 7Song, who is an amazing herbalist that I've been lucky enough to study with, where he shares 18 important tips for backcountry wildcrafting (hoping to be doing some of that this spring and summer). There's an extra video called *Wild Spring Feast*, where Rosalee and Emily talk about dandelion, chickweed, violet, and nettle. There are separate videos, one each, just on plantain, mullein, and yarrow. And you can also learn about how herbalists, land stewards, and plant admirers can practice the art of wild tending. We talk a bit about that in this interview.

So those are just incredible. I love these offerings. I love when people go above and beyond to really deliver value for people when they are trying to, you know, promote their shit. I think it's awesome. They have this amazing book. It's beautifully done, and then they're giving you all this on top of it, if you buy it now and help them to boost their sales and get on that best seller list.

[0:07:32]

Amber: There are also two giveaways happening, and these are happening, like, right now, this week, I think, even after this podcast comes out. So, check those out.

One is a Wild Remedies Toolkit basket, and one is all sorts of herbal medicines from all sorts of amazing herbalists and brands that I would just love to have. And then there are some bonus downloads, like a wildcrafting checklist to look at before you go out. This is a thing: you really want to be prepared and ready to go gather plant friends from the wild before you go. Don't just jump in your car in the morning (*Amber laughs*) all full of excitement. You know, you need to be mindful and thoughtful about this. And then some blank labels that you can print out for the medicine that you're going to make.

So check those out. If you're uncertain, just check out the website. So, so well done. And there's even more than what I just said, too, in the docuseries. There's like, a lot more than I just listed.

And then, of course, we have the Patreon goodies for you. So these are all at Patreon.com/MedicineStories. There are three things here. Two of them are for patrons at the two-dollar-a-month level, and one is open to everyone.

So for patrons, there is a downloadable PDF of the entire chapter on rose from the book, which we all love rose. Episode 47, maybe, of this podcast on Rose Medicine is still one that people are constantly getting in touch with me about and reposting on Instagram. It's just, I mean, it doesn't get any better than Rose Medicine. So you can see the entire chapter there and see how well done these chapters are, how they're laid out, what kind of information is available for every other herb that's covered in the book as well.

And then there's Rosalee's Chickweed Pesto recipe. Oh my gosh. We have been making a lot of chickweed pesto around here. At the beginning of the quarantine, we had no idea: like, are the groceries going to stay open? What's going to be available? There's certainly some empty shelves at the store still. I just was like, oh, I'm gonna make a ton of pesto. You know, it's spring. There are wild greens everywhere. And if I make a lot of pesto and freeze it, then at least we have these amazing phytonutrients available to us indefinitely, if there are not vegetables and things we can

just go buy at the grocery store. We're also getting a lot more serious about our vegetable garden. We've been focused so much on herbs for so many years, and I'm really interested in a root cellar situation as an aside. (*Amber laughs*) Send me your root cellar porn.

On that note, I've recorded a special, very short, like, three minute outro for this episode, telling you my new pesto freezing technique. I think it's genius. It's not the ice cube tray method. So you can listen until the end and hear that if you'd like to.

And then the Patreon offering that's open to everyone is a giveaway of the book, signed by Rosalee to you, the winner. So head over to Patreon.com/MedicineStories to check that out. I haven't decided on a closing date for that soon, but it will be there, and it will just be in a few weeks probably. If you have not yet taken my plant quiz, *Which Healing Herb is your Spirit Medicine?*, head over to MythicMedicine.love to do so.

[0:11:11]

Amber: And one final note before we get into this interview, I say at the end in conversation with Rosalee, you know, "Don't get caught up in knowing everything about every plant before you get out there to harvest it." And that echoes back to what I was saying a few minutes ago about just really wanting to encourage people to not get tripped up on everything they don't know.

But I feel like, you know, that was not the most responsible thing for me to say, and actually, in this instance, when it comes to ethical wildcrafting, it actually **is** quite important to understand the plant you're working with, how it exists within its ecosystem, and how it reproduces before you get out there and start gathering it. So, you know, you can always do a quick internet search before you go out if you know what you're looking for: how to harvest, how to sustainably harvest, how does it grow. And then, of course, they do give that kind of information.

For example, from the rose chapter, they write:

Roses reproduce by seeds and rhizomes. Leave enough flowers on the plant so it can form hips and seeds. Roses also send out new shoots or suckers from their root stalk which can be dug up and transplanted.

So in this book they are giving those guidelines for the plants that they cover, and it's just, you know, it's something that you'll learn over time. You'll learn it over time as you cultivate a relationship with each of the plants that become important to you and that you are getting to know out there in the wild. So yeah. There we go. I'm really so inspired. There's so many amazing recipes out of this book that I'm going to be making over the next few weeks as the springtime comes on; just perfect timing.

And I hope you all are doing well. I hope that in the midst of whatever hardship you're experiencing — I know it looks so different for all of us right now— that there is some inspiration being gleaned to increase your self-sufficiency and community sufficiency, really, and to tend to your relationships with the medicinal plants growing all around you.

(Transitional Music: acoustic guitar folk song "Wild Eyes" by Mariee Sioux)

[Interview Begins]

[0:13:31]

Amber: Hi Rosalee! Welcome to Medicine Stories. I'm so happy to finally be connecting with you.

Rosalee: Oh, likewise, Amber. Thank you so much for having me.

Amber: Yeah, I've been a fan of your work and just following you for a while. You know, I got tuned into learning herbs, like, over ten years ago.

Rosalee: Oh wow!

Amber: Yeah! When my oldest, who's now 13, was little. And so, you know, I think became aware of your work through them and then of course, got the book, *Alchemy of Herbs*, a few years ago when it came out. And it's so beautiful, beautifully done, and so I'm really excited about your new book, *Wild Remedies*, and I was realizing that I don't think I know your backstory.

So, I'm curious what called you to the plant path? What was your journey? And I always like to ask people: do you see any connecting thread between your child self and what you are now doing in the world?

Rosalee: Yeah, yeah. It's a great question.

Yeah, I — well, actually, one of my earliest memories of being kind of aware of plants in this way is that I grew up in Southern Utah, and my dad and I went on kind of a — it must have been some kind of guided hike. We were in Snow Canyon National Park. I was maybe nine, ten, or something, and I don't have a lot of memories from my childhood. It's pretty — my memory is not great in that regards, but I do distinctly remember this, that we were on this hike, and the tour guide had pointed out what he called "Mormon Tea", a very common plant down there. It is used for tea and closely related to ephedra. And so, he said, "You can break off a little bit and chew on it, and people make tea out of this."

And I just remember being floored. You know, like, which is kind of sad (*Rosalee laughs*) you know? That that was just such an alien concept that you could, like, interact with the plants around you. But it truly was an alien concept to me at that time, and I just remember being totally floored. Like, I could not believe you could do that, and I just thought that was so cool.

And I remember breaking it off and, like, if you just chew — I still remember distinctly how it tastes. It has an astringent taste. I remember that — you know, that really distinct, kind of bitter, not entirely unpleasant — but for a palate of a nine or ten year old, it wasn't candy by any stretch of the imagination. But I remember, even though it didn't taste, like, amazing to me, I just remember I just kept chewing on it for a long time and thinking that was so cool. And I remember, like, later I would point it out to friends and just be like, "Isn't that cool?!"

But that was, you know, that was just kind of it for that younger stage of life.

[0:16:14]

Rosalee: Throughout my teenager years, I was definitely really interested in health. Like, I didn't know any of my friends that were interested in health the way I was. Like, going to the health food store was really fun for me, ever since I was a little kid actually, and I especially love those old school health food stores that have that, like, particular smell to them. I love them.

I remember, like, when I got my driver's license, I was **so** excited because now I could drive myself to the health food store. So (*Rosalee laughs*), I've always had that, but it wasn't until — but it was always just an interest of mine, and it wasn't really a big deal, a big thing.

Then it was after college, actually, I studied anthropology and foreign languages in college, and I had plans to travel the world and teach English as a second language. And then I met this guy, and he was really cool, and he was really into, like, outdoor living. And I didn't really know what that meant, but we just started exploring that together. We went to wilderness school, and I just kind of got sucked into that world. It was just so amazing.

Before I went to wilderness school, I didn't know any plants that grew around me basically. My very first class was on how to make lip balms and salves, and the teacher kept talking about plantain. And I had lived in the Dominican Republic, which is in the Caribbean, where we ate lots of plantains, you know, the banana-like fruit? And so I was like, "Really? Plantain grows here?" (*Rosalee laughs*) I was just so confused. And she was like, "Oh yeah. Everywhere!" and she took me outside into her driveway and showed me plantain.

But that's how much of a beginner I was that first day of class. I couldn't have been more newbie to the whole situation. (*Rosalee laughs*) But I really just did get so totally enveloped into that, and it was such an amazing experience for me to not not know the plants around me, to not be connected to the world around me in that way, and then to have that world opened up to me. And everyday just felt so magical. Going out into the woods, going to a park, or even just looking at what was growing in the cracks in the concrete in Seattle where I lived was just so fascinating to me. And to not only learn the plants and their names, but to be developing these relationships with them, to knowing their many gifts and how they offer those as food, as medicine.

We did everything in that wilderness school. The instructor, Karen Sherwood's an ethnobotanist. So it wasn't just an herbalist-focused; it was really about everything from making debris shelters out of plants to baskets to cordage to just everything you can possibly imagine.

So I just really got enveloped into that world.

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Rosalee: And then it was after I had been studying there for almost a year, I just came down with this really strange illness, and it took — it was very severe. I was at home for a month. I couldn't get out of bed. I had severe pain in my joints. I had this crazy fever. I'd get this fever at night; it would be like 104, and then in the daytime it would go down to 99. And I wouldn't have a fever during the daytime, but every night I had this fever like that.

So anyway, it was very weird. I thought I'd just had the flu, so, you know, I'd just stayed home, but I stayed home for a month, and that was a really big deal, and ended up going to the hospital, and

they had a whole team of specialists. And I'd been at wilderness school, so they were testing me for everything under the sun 'cause I'd been living rough outdoors a lot and stuff.

But it finally, after a couple of weeks, they diagnosed me with a rare autoimmune disease, and the doctors there, they were... they just said, "Good luck!" basically. They said, "We don't really know a lot about this autoimmune disease, and it's very rare," and they literally gave me a brochure, and they said, "Good luck."

They said that my life expectancy would be around 40 years old, and I would have a declining quality of life up until that point, and that was all they had to offer to me, which, in some ways, was a bit of a blessing I think because to have that door shut so firmly, I just kind of did an about face and found other doors that were open to me.

And I started seeing acupuncturists, naturopaths, herbalists. I drank **SO** many disgusting concoctions of Chinese herbs (*Amber laughs*) which I'm so grateful for! (*Rosalee laughs*). I probably shouldn't say bad things about them because I do attribute them to helping me, but man, I would just stand over the sink and take a swig of the Chinese herbs and then take a swig of apple juice or something to chase it down. (*both laugh*) It was so bad.

But after six months of all of that care and doing so many things, I was symptom free. It was at that point I **knew** there were other people out there like me, who had some chronic illness, who were told, "There's just no solutions."

But there are solutions, and that was really a paradigm shift for me because even though I had always been interested in "alternative" health, I thought it was just kind of like something you did for minor things, but not — kind of like, instead of using over the counter drugs, you could use herbs or supplements. But up until that point, I would have never dreamed that something as severe as this rare, terminal, autoimmune disease could be addressed using herbs and everything else I did.

So, that was a real turning moment for me, and that was just when I was like I'm gonna... this is my life now.

[0:22:04]

Rosalee: I went to school, many different schools, spent about 10 years in school, actually, for herbs, and yeah, did all sorts of things kind of on a path to being a clinical herbalist and to helping people.

Amber: Yeah, as you said that, that is **so** many people's stories! Of how they came to heal themselves, and then become either an herbalist or someone in a like "alternative" health and wellness space. And I just find it so bizarre that (*Amber laughs*) modern medicine — it's such a limited paradigm. Even, like, I've heard those exact words from so many people like, "There's nothing we can do. Good luck! Here's a brochure." (*Amber laughs*)

Rosalee: Yeah, I actually went back to my doctor, and this is like — this kind of makes me giggle because I'm in my early 20s at this stage, you know, where I know "everything" obviously (*Rosalee laughs*)! But I had just gotten better, you know? And so I went to her 'cause I thought she would

probably want to know. Like, last time she saw me, I was given a death sentence, and now I'm better, so of course she wants to know.

And so I went back, and I had this, like, presentation (*both laugh*), basically, just all the different ways that I could think that contributed to my getting better. I think I just have these kind of very idealistic things. I just thought she would want to run with that information (*Rosalee laughs*). But her response was — I think she just kind of zeroed on one of the things I just mentioned — but she just said, “There is no scientific evidence that diet can heal autoimmune disease.”

(*Amber laughs*)

And at that point, she was probably very correct. You know? There hadn't been a study looking at people with this particular autoimmune disease and had half the people do a regular diet, half the people do... You know? She was technically correct, but just the, like, non-interest. From her perspective, I could just see, like, this young woman comes in and just being like, “I've cured this rare disease!” (*Rosalee laughs*)

But yeah, she just had zero interest.

[0:24:18]

Rosalee: And you know, back then, this is like the early 2000s, back then things, in terms of autoimmunity, there was not a widespread understanding or appreciation within the medical world about intestinal permeability and leaky gut like the way there is now. I don't think that would be as brushed aside as much now... with those things linking up.

But back then, even vitamin D, and I mentioned vitamin D to her, and she was just like, “No, no, no.” But we have a lot of clear evidence now linking vitamin D and the immune system so it was just kind of a different world back then, too.

Amber: Yeah. It was!

But okay, maybe there's no clinical trials, but it just — you're living proof! You know? So, it's like the medical paradigm is so limited because the mindset of the people within it are so limited because the medical paradigm is... it's just like this feedback loop that feeds into itself. And that's why, of course, there's just such a gigantic explosion and interest in “alternative”, again, forms of healing. And I say that in quotes because these aren't alternatives at all; these are how humans have been healing themselves and each other for millenia. It's really modern medicine that's the anomaly in the history of humanity.

So it's awesome for surgery and emergency care, but we are just, as the tagline for this podcast, “remembering what it is to be human upon the earth,” and plants are such an important part of that.

[0:25:50]

Amber: Something I recently talked about with Sajah Popham on this podcast is just how many ways there are to be an herbalist.

I think when people who are feeling called, but they're really new, and they might only think there's only one or two ways to do it, but there's as many ways to be an herbalist as there are herbalists out there.

An herbalist is just someone who works with plants.

So, what do you see? What has been the main focus of your work as an herbalist? What role do you see yourself occupying in that space?

Rosalee: *(Rosalee laughs)* That's such a great question because I often wonder, like, "I wonder what kind of herbalist I'm going to be when I grow up?" because I really don't know. *(Amber laughs)*

I have done so many different aspects of herbalism. I sold my herbal wares at the farmer's market. I was what I call a "clinical herbalist" just as a means of describing I worked one-on-one with people who had chronic health issues. I did that for many years. So yeah, I've written lots of articles, lots of e-books, shared a lot that way. I teach online courses. I've taught in-person courses. I've done longer intensives. So I've done it in so many ways, and I do wonder, like, *(Rosalee laughs)*, I have that question. I do pose that question often.

But ultimately, I love to teach, and I love to share what I've learned, and I love to share not only my experience and my passion, but also I love taking what could be a complex topic, or something that has multiple layers, and I like distilling it down to make it really simple and easy to get. I love to hear from my students that they "got it." And that they not only got it, but they brought it into their lives.

And so I teach by not only sharing my experience by distilling that information in a way that I hope is helpful for people to really get, but also by really encouraging people to try herbs; whether that's just by trying a simple herb, tasting it, touching it, feeling it in their bodies or recipes. And I teach a lot via recipes, because I truly do want to be able to share with people, "Here's the gifts of the plant as I understand it. Here's my experience that I understand it."

But really, the ultimate goal is that people bring that into their own lives, bring it into their kitchens, start using the herbs, and so they can really experience it for themselves because, like you said — which, I listened to that podcast with Sajah, it was a wonderful podcast — that not only is there so many ways of being an herbalist, but we all have our own ways of being, and seeing the plants, and interacting with the plants, and understanding them. And we all have something unique and beautiful to bring to the world of herbalism.

And so I want people to be tasting them so they can say, "Oh, here's what I learned from Rosalee about violets, and now I'm going to use violets. And I can take that understanding and bring it five steps further as I work with this plant, myself."

Amber: Yeah.

Rosalee: I don't know if that... Basically, to answer your question, I've done a lot of different things! But ultimately I see myself as a teacher, and maybe just like a facilitator of helping people get plants into their lives.

Amber: Yeah, you absolutely are, and of course, your writing is a part of that teaching, and your writing is beautiful.

You know, as you were talking, I was like, “Oh, if she doesn’t mention the recipes, I’m gonna bring it up.” (*both laugh*) because that’s really helpful for so many people. And your recipes are so good and so straight forward, and you really do make it accessible. You simplify what is so easy for the human mind to make complicated, and get caught up in, and trip over.

Even through, like, the presentation in your books, they’re just simple and beautiful. And it’s like you immediately understand what to do, what’s going on, the concepts, and then these recipes are right there to bring it home and give you that, like, sensation of using the plant into your body.

[0:30:02]

Amber: So, on that note, please tell us about your new book, *Wild Remedies*. I know a little bit about what it’s about, but what inspired you to create a book based on this idea, and how did you connect with your coauthor, Emily Han?

Rosalee: It’s definitely, like, multiple layers to that.

I actually got the exact idea to write this book from a conversation I had with Tori Amos, a musician, composer, songwriter.

So I’d written my first book, and as soon as the first book was published, people were like, “When’s your second book?” And I was like, Ugh, you hadn’t even read the first book.” (*both laugh*) I really had... I didn’t know, like, the deal for my first book, *Alchemy of Herbs*, just kind of landed in my lap, and I never really saw myself as being an author of a book. But I decided I knew it was an amazing opportunity so I went for it. But I never ... by the time it was coming out, just so much work. I mean, I put **years** of work into these books, and after that one came out I was like, “I don’t think I’m going to write another book.” Like, that was enough for me.

But in the book I’d acknowledged Tori Amos, because she’s been a really big part of my life. And if you guys don’t know, Tori has very obsessive fans of which I’m obviously one of them.

Amber: Mhmm. I have some friends...

Rosalee: So I took the opportunity to go to Ireland and meet her and give her a copy of my book.

Amber: Wow.

Rosalee: Which just seemed like the entirely sane thing to do! (*Rosalee laughs*)

So I went, and I met with her, and she was just so present, and so kind, and so grounded. And I was obviously like, “Ahhh!” But then she asked me a question. So I gave her a book, and we took a picture together, and she actually grabbed the book. She’s like, “Oh, we should take a picture with your book.” And that was really cool that we have that picture because I didn’t do that.

And then she asked me — she said, “What is the **best** way to take herbal medicine?”

And I know that she was asking: Do you take it as a tincture or a tea? You know? I'm guessing that's kind of what she meant. Even in that moment, I took it in a different direction, and I told her something, which I hope was coherent about, "Really, the best way is to bring plants into your life, whether that's spending time with them or using them as food." And so I kind of said something mumbly bumbly about that, I'm sure.

Then it was days later, just a couple days later, actually, and I'm kind of mulling over that conversation in my head, just going round and round because that was a pretty amazing experience for me to be able to meet her, and I just had this really clear... it just felt like I was really hit with that sentence, of just, like, **THAT'S** what you'll write a book about: is how to bring herbs into your life and how to connect with nature.

And then seconds after that, I was like, "And I will write that book with Emily Han."

And so I knew — I've known Emily for many years, and we've been friends, and we've been working together for almost a decade. And we've had many conversations about foraging and wildcrafting and kind of, like, our joy of it, and then our worries and fears about it, in terms of repercussions of mindless foraging or wildcrafting. So we'd had a lot of those conversations.

Yeah, so I presented the idea to her, and luckily, she was on board because I really would not have written this book without her. And writing it with her was such a joy. It was amazing to us how much we were on the same page. Like, we finished each other's sentences. We came up with the same idea at the same time. So that all ran really smoothly. And so, we had so much similarity, and we really were just of one mind in terms of writing it.

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But then we also come from very different backgrounds and very different perspectives in a variety of different ways. So I think we were able to bring different strengths to the book.

Like, Emily is very detail-oriented. She is just so amazing. She did lots of editing for the book. She orchestrated a lot of the botanical illustrations, which took a lot of very precise explanations of what we wanted those to be, in terms of working with a botanical illustrator, herself. Anyway, it was just an amazing collaboration and it was just really fun, and it was just an honor to work with her. And then to be able to create something like this.

I got the idea for the book in September of 2017, and so it took almost three years before we see this into fruition, and we'd been working on it that whole time. A lot goes into it.

Amber: Yeah, it does. Yeah, because it's not just the recipes.

Your "Part One" I absolutely loved. It's kind of like theory and grounding in these ideas. Actually, I'm going to read the seven chapter names:

1. *The Power of Plant Medicine*
2. *Getting to Know Where You Live*
3. *Wildcrafting Principles*
4. *Wildcrafting Practice*

5. *Botany Basics*
6. *Plants in the Kitchen*
7. *The Joy of Reconnection: Living Deeply with the Seasons*

[0:35:20]

Amber: So let's talk a little bit about that last piece there:

So much of what keeps people feeling disconnected is that they just don't have a relationship with the place they're in. Living in a city or a high-rise apartment, you're literally just not grounded, and maybe not even feeling super safe being outdoors, or maybe there aren't those places nearby.

But how can people learn to belong to the place they're in by rooting themselves in the seasons of the year?

Rosalee: I think rooting ourselves in the seasons is one of the easiest and also the biggest steps we can take for that rooting experience. And it is weird that in so many places in our culture we're not taught... We're almost, not only **not** taught about the seasons, but almost, like, removed from where we are.

An example of that is when I was writing the book, I kept thinking about when I was in elementary school, again, in Southern Utah, where it's the desert, and it does not snow. And the teachers every December/January, you had those kind of cartoonish calendar things put up on the bulletin board, and they were always like "Snow in!" and snow and snowflakes and stuff. And it's just like, that's weird that we're just taught... I think in so many places we're taught this idea of this four season world (*Amber laughs*), but no matter where you live, though, that is just weird. (*Rosalee laughs*)

And then we also have this idea, too, of so many of us have moved. Maybe we didn't grow up — where we live now is maybe not where we grew up, or maybe it was, but in any case, being aware of the seasons and really immersing ourselves in them is so important.

And again, another thing I'd want to bring up is how easy that it is to ignore the seasons because we have things like air conditioning or heating inside our buildings, and so we don't have to necessarily experience weather as it is except for, like, getting into from our car to the building. We have things like grocery stores that are stocked with fresh foods all year round, so you can in December get a fresh tomato in the grocery store — even though it might taste like cardboard and be mush (*Rosalee laughs*) — but we can still get them. And that's, again, kind of a strange thing.

So by being aware of the seasons, it just is such a powerful thing because it — that sense of passing of time, being able to enjoy something in that sweet moment before it keeps moving on forward I think is what can bring some of our most intense joys.

[0:38:16]

And I think of some things, like, you know how there's this craze for pumpkin spice in the fall? (*Amber laughs*) I mean, it's just like unreal. It makes the **headlines** of when pumpkin spice becomes available.

And I think that that's a sign of so many people in our culture craving that seasonal aspect of something and loving it so deeply, but that's kind of like this funny thing because it's added to every latte made from coast-to-coast, to North and South, during that specialized time. But there's so many things we can do, looking around, seeing what our local farmers or our own gardens are producing at different times of the year, really eating seasonally, and of course, that also means the plants and being able to watch them grow through the whole growing season. To watch how they shift and change, to see how they react to the weather, to the growing days, shortening days, all of that has been, for me, one of the most powerful ways to feel rooted, and like "I am here."

When you first begin, or when I first began to do that, it was just eye-opening back in those early days when I didn't know any plants, and I was getting to know them, and it was just so fascinating. Everywhere I looked there was just new plants. But then that's just a forever cycle that's continually deepening.

Even this year I chose a plant I don't know very well, and I've already been following it, watching how the buds have changed from January, and then through February- March, and spending more time with it. So there's always so much more to learn and see and appreciate. And the more that happens, the more when I go out into the forest, which is where I live, I just feel like I'm at home because I see things that have become so familiar to me, and I see the plants that have become my friends, and I know the squirrels (*Rosalee laughs*), and where they're at on their corners.

I recognize. I'm beginning to recognize and see myself as a part of it, not as separate from it.

[0:40:27]

Amber: What's the new plant that you're working with?

Rosalee: Ceanothus: it's our local red root, and I've long loved it, but I only tend to notice it when it's in bloom. When it's in bloom, the smell is just incredible; these big white flowers, and the pollinators love them.

And I just kind of notice it here and there. I always notice it when we walk by because the smell of it is just so incredible. It's like this vanilla, resin, amber kind of smell. Yes, I think it's one of my most favorite smells.

So yeah, this year I thought, "Oh, I just really want to get to notice it. Notice who visits. Notice who eats it."

One thing I noticed is that when it's really cold, the leaves curl up and protect themselves, and it was interesting to be able to tell how severe the temperature — obviously, I'm aware of what the temperature is — but to see that reflected in Ceanothus in my walks. So where I live it's below freezing, lots of snow every winter, but some days are warmer than others. And to be able to see, "Oh look, the Ceanothus is opened up a little bit, and it is about 10 degrees warmer today," or, "Oh look how closed up it is, and it is a really cold day today."

Anyway, that's my thoughts (*Rosalee laughs*).

Amber: Wow, that is so neat!

Rosalee: So I just like to see them.

Amber: Yeah, we actually have a couple on our property and tons growing around us; different varieties, too, so now I'm going to notice.

I also never noticed the scent. I'm gonna pay attention to that when they start blooming, but I can see how you haven't paid much attention before because it's such a nondescript shrub when it's not in bloom. And it's sometimes those, like, "not-so-sexy" plants that have so much medicine and healing and things to teach us once we pay attention. That plant also came up in my very first episode with Sajah. I think Episode 17.

Something that I really love: I lived in San Diego for a year when I was 19 and 20, and it's like basically one season down there, which is why Southern California has the "perfect weather." And then living in Lake Tahoe it's basically winter and summer. You might get a little spring or fall, but where I live now, in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada, it's really like four seasons, and I love it so much! (*Amber laughs*) And it really has, now that I'm thinking about it, really helped ground me as an herbalist.

[0:43:03]

Amber: So what can stewardship of the land, tending to the land, how can that enhance our connections within our communities and even healing within communities?

Rosalee: Yeah, so something Emily and I talk about a lot in *Wild Remedies* is being stewards of the land and tending, and that mindset really being the first step to foraging and wildcrafting.

When I first started foraging, the very first thing I foraged intentionally was blackberries, and my friends and I were at a park in Seattle, and it was probably in August/September when the blackberries are just everywhere, and there's so many of them, so we just found a big patch, and we just picked them, and threw them in a bag. And we came home and we immediately made blackberry cobbler with them. And through that whole experience — it was such a fun experience, being with friends, and then, of course, eating lots of blackberries — I remember just thinking, "Wow, all this free food. It's just sitting there! All this free food!" I just kept thinking about that. I just thought that was so cool.

It's a very easy way, mental space, to be in, when we got there, and you just start seeing the abundance of nature, but it's a problematic one if we only approach the plants as free medicine or free food. And it's kind of a misnomer, too, because it's definitely not free. Obviously it's not free to the plant, which is definitely paying for that, but also for us, I mean it takes a lot of time and energy as well. So free, there's no monetary exchange often in foraging but it's definitely not free, and then that mentality can be very harmful.

So instead we think the first step is to be able to visit a space and ask, "How can I be of service here?" And that's the first step. And there's no really one way to do that. It really is showing up consistently and showing up with curiosity, and showing up with this heart-centered desire for reciprocity and asking:

- How can I be of service?

- How can I help here?

And that's also something we talk a lot about in the book because it's just so important.

[0:45:23]

Rosalee: And I know for some, probably not your listeners Amber, but some people might think that's weird to have reciprocity with a plant. But really, forming relationships with plants is not unlike forming relationships with people. And when we have relationships with people that are just one-sided, where one person gives, and the other person just takes, and there's no reciprocity, those are really brittle relationships that are going to be toxic in one way or another and probably won't ultimately last.

So we don't want those kinds of relationships with the plants. We want these deep, reciprocal relationships. And the way we do that is by not just taking, not just showing up, and saying, "What is here for me?" but showing up and saying, "How can I give back?"

And those can be such simple things, like picking up trash. It could be things like clearing away plants that might be choking out other plants. It could be pruning plants in such a way that it brings more health. For example, elder trees or shrubs are a plant that they tend to have a lot of dead growth on them. So they really do well with plant and human interaction. For us to go in and help prune away that dead, old growth, and help them to grow stronger and bring forth new growth.

There can be ways that we can harvest from plants that can help grow them. It can be as simple as gathering seeds and spreading them. It can be uprooting, even roots. Root medicine is necessary. By even the process of digging up roots can actually aerate the soil, allow space for new seeds to grow, but it all comes down to doing so with awareness and attention and being able to use our critical thinking skills to say, "Okay, what is needed here, and how can I support further growth of this plant? How can I help this plant to grow more strong and be an interactive participant in the area?"

And I believe so strongly in that because the more that we have a hands-off attitude toward nature, this idea where... Well, I'll just back up a bit. We have so many instances and circumstances where humans have played a really negative role in our green spaces, and I think it's really easy for us to jump to it and say, "Humans should stay away from nature because obviously they ruin it." But there's so many flawed nuances of that.

Like, one, even this idea that we are separate from nature, I think, is a theme that can be very harmful just within our entire culture. And then two, to buy into that "We only have, humans only have negative effects out there." We need to be writing a different story, and I think that comes from participating and showing the plants, showing our communities, showing ourselves how we can create really positive changes and positive growth; not only in the plants and their ecosystems, but within ourselves as well.

[0:48:46]

Rosalee: Another simple way (and this is maybe my, I think, one of my favorite ways) and because it's so simple and attainable is that the more people who learn how amazing dandelion leaf pesto is and how beautiful and fun those flowers are to eat, the more we can enjoy that and then share

that with our neighbors. And then the love of dandelions just being spread around, the less we can see Roundup being sprayed.

Billions of dollars are spent every year buying incredible amounts of this poison that is basically used on lawns by our neighbors and poisoning their lawns, poisoning ours, poisoning waterways...

Amber: — Poisoning everyone.

Rosalee: Poisoning everyone, exactly. And it's really just a symptom, though, right? Buying Roundup is a symptom of a lack of connection to the plants. It's a symptom of this strange desire for this weird lawn (*Rosalee laughs*), a perfect lawn, but it's just a symptom.

So getting to the root of it, learning to love dandelions, if that one thing happened, if just we were able to spread that love far and wide, that would be a **huge**, huge contribution to the world around us just by a lack of Roundup that would then be spread so ubiquitously in our neighborhoods.

Amber: (*Amber laughs*) Yeah! It makes me think about, I think a lot of people have this false idea that the peoples native to the Americas were just living so simply off the land, just taking whatever they could find, just foraging and hunting, but what we know now is that — and I know most about this in the California tribes because there's a beautiful book about it, *Tending the Wild* — that the Native Americans were intimately and actively involved in changing the landscapes they lived in managing the plants and the animals. They were basically farming; they were wild farming.

And of course, like, all of the out of control wildfires here in California now are partially due to the fact that we don't do controlled burns that they knew how to do. So it kind of just speaking to this false idea that some people might have that we should just completely leave nature alone. Like, it's never been like that! You know?

People have always been actively involved in managing the land, too. And when they are doing it correctly, which I'm assuming all of our ancestors did, basically, at least during the Paleolithic, then they were doing it in a way that benefitted all the species, all the beings, all the living things around them. Which is just something a lot of us are trying to learn to recreate, and I think your book is definitely an important step toward that.

[0:51:39]

Amber: So I have written here in my notes:

The gifts of specific plants guides to ethical foraging and a look at their ecological connections.

So obviously that's not really a question, but what it's making me think about is — of course, there are certain foundational guidelines for ethical wildcrafting which you cover in your book — but also each plant is different and have their different needs in how they can best be approached and best practices for foraging. And of course, we don't need to trip ourselves up, like, memorizing a list of how to forage each plant out there, but yeah, I'm curious, like...

Okay, let's talk about violets (*both laugh*). Let's talk about violets!

We just had the most incredible violet bloom I've ever seen, ever. It was my whole county. People were all over were posting about it. My friends were texting me, like, "Oh my God, look at my violet

patch!” And it’s the first time I ever really remember, like, as soon as we stepped outside, we could just smell them. It was just hitting us from the side yard! And I’d never seen them that big, and it was just incredible.

So I’m, right now, riding high on a violet wave, and was so happy to see you include this plant in your book. Of course you did. So yeah, just anything you want to share about your relationship with violets, wildcrafting them, working with them, and of course, you’ve got all these amazing recipes in the book, too.

[0:53:07]

Rosalee: Yeah, so I’m actually... That is probably one of my favorite herbs in the book. Although they’re all my favorites (*both laugh*), but definitely violet.

And I think part of it is because I’m kind of newer to violets, myself. I live in a very dry, arid climate that are not really known for violets. Like, there’s so many violets; the dog violets and *Violet odorata* that will grow kind of like weeds everywhere. We have a lot of native violets, but we didn’t have that kind of ubiquitous kind. And so, it’s something I’ve used in the past 20 years, but it was last year that I found out a farm near me had planted violets in their farm a couple decades ago. And now, the violets there are just **AMAZING!** They are just covering this huge area.

So they invited me there to harvest, and I just harvested basketfuls and made so many things out of them. And oh, just the whole experience, you know? They say, “Violet gladdens the heart,” and absolutely, that is true. Just spending time harvesting them, which, like, the whole experience was so incredibly joyful: birdsong, the feel of the sun on my face, and being out there in these early spring days, gathering these beautiful, beautiful flowers. And they make such beautiful medicine. Oh my gosh! (*Rosalee laughs*)

Those flowers, the purple flowers, you can make them into syrups. You can add a little bit of acid and change the colors of them so they can be anywhere from pink to purple. And then you can make so many delicious drinks out of them. You can make mocktails or alcohol cocktails. Just the syrup, itself, is so soothing and wonderful, using that as a gentle lymphatic when there’s swollen lymph, or to soothe a sore throat. So those are two main ways I use it.

But violet is also really amazing for coughs, especially dry, spasmodic coughs. Violet just goes in there, gently, but surely, and helps relieve that tension and dryness that might be causing the cough to bring relief. And those dry spasmodic coughs can be so painful. And to have this beautiful medicine be harvested yourself, and brought joy during the harvest, and then can bring such relief for that type of cough is just so important.

In clinical practice, I recommended violets a lot as a really strong tea. Used in that way, it modulates inflammation really well. So I often used it for people who had signs, especially, of skin inflammation, like rashes that might have been diagnosed as eczema. That can be a really powerful way to just quell inflammation. They also have a lot of nutrients, too, that have been shown to really strengthen the heart and blood vessels. So it’s one of those. I just love them because they can grow like a weed. They can be so ubiquitous. They’re so beautiful. They’re so fun to harvest. And then, just bringing them into your life has so many benefits that there’s not just one thing to do with them. There’s so many things.

And you can use them intentionally as medicine, or again, just bring them into your life as a way to experience the seasons.

[0:56:36]

Rosalee: Medicine made from the violets that you had this year, that will probably... I love that kind of stuff when there's a big bloom like that because it can be like just the memory, "Oh, the spring 2020 violet blooming," and it will be talked about for years to come. *(both laugh)* And for a while you can have medicine from those, but eventually that medicine will run out.

The herbs that we make into medicine don't last forever. So it's kind of like... think about it like a fine wine, when they talk about like, "Oh yeah, the cabernet from 1971 was amazing," *(Amber laughs)* that becomes our medicine, too! You know? Like, "Oh yeah, that syrup that I made from the 2020 harvest is just so incredible!" *(Rosalee laughs)*

Amber: Yeah *(Amber laughs)*. Something I like to do, too, when I've made my medicine, and I've bottled it, and I put this label on it, and I'm writing, "Violets in apple cider vinegar" and then the date. And then I'll write like, "One of the first warm days of spring. Nixie learned how to write her name," or just whatever else was going on around me at the time. Because whenever I'm taking it I'll remember, "Oh that was the day or the week or the month that that happened," just kind of bringing that story medicine into it.

So, yeah, you're right. Whenever I take the medicine we made this year, I'm going to remember, like, "That was the violet superbloom of 2020!" *(both laugh)*

Rosalee: I love that you're bringing in those other stories, too, because that's really... When Tori asked me that question, "How's it best to take herbs?" There's such a qualitative difference between, like, doling out some herbal capsules in your hand and swallowing them down, and then there's between the difference of pulling out this lovingly-made syrup that has these beautiful memories wrapped up into it. To have that for yourself and to share that with your loved ones, "This was the day that that happened," it's just a major qualitative difference, and I just never think that those capsules gonna have that same sense.

And, you know, I use herbal capsules. I'm not entirely opposed to them, but the more we can incorporate our experiences into our medicines, into our foods, and just into the world around us, the more meaningful and joyful life is.

Amber: Yeah, yeah, and that one is such a delight to the senses. Just obviously, the scent, but also the taste of the flowers.

I've seen my three-year-old, Nixie, she'll just eat, like, 20 in a row! *(both laugh)* And the leaves are just so different from the flowers, and I love how when you chew them, they're so mucilaginous. You can feel that moistening property to it.

And when you put them in, when you make a tea out of them, I had violet leaf tea in my water bottle last week, and my oldest, who's 13, Mycelia, Mycelia Violet, actually. She thought it was water, and she drank it, and she was like, "Wow! That just tastes like just green. That's like the essence of green!" And I was like, "Oh my God, that's what I always think when I drink violet leaf tea is just the taste of green right there." *(Amber laughs)*

So, you know, obviously, that's a special plant for me to share with my kids, and it's a plant kids love. It's a plant everyone loves. Kind of like you, no one is not stoked on violets as long as they've been introduced and got to spend the time.

If I remember correctly, you did not cover violets in *Alchemy of Herbs*?

Rosalee: No. I did not.

Amber: And I remember being like, "Ugh, I want to know what Rosalee has to say about violets." So I'm really happy that you got 'em in this book. *(both laugh)*

[1:00:03]

Amber: Let's just look at one other plant, and then I'm going to ask you about another one that's just exploding all over around us right now, and that my kids love and I love, and that's chickweed.

Rosalee: Mmm...

Amber: Yeah! So how do you like to interact with chickweed?

Rosalee: Oh, chickweed. Well, it's such a fun one to find growing, and just experience. It's so like violets, how you can just eat the flowers of violets as you're picking, same with chickweed. You can just be snipping off little bits and eating them right out of the garden or right out of the soil that they're coming from, but I love that because it doesn't get fresher than this. Straight, right in!

Amber: There's all this evidence now that, literally, within five minutes of picking I think tomato was what I saw studied, it loses a good amount of its nutrients! Literally within **minutes**.

Yeah, so if you can eat a plant like seconds after it comes out of the soil, I've even heard Dr. Zach Bush, who's a genius and one of my favorite people to follow, say that he'll eat the tomato on the vine. *(Amber laughs)* You know? Just to get the **ultimate** nutrients.

So that's just such a good idea to be nibbling as you're foraging.

Rosalee: Mhmm. Yeah, and that — I'll go back to chickweed — but that makes me think of how important it is to have wild foods, different foods in our lives from this perspective of getting a variety of phytonutrients into our lives.

In the world we live in, it's so easy to eat the same five vegetables or fruits, day in and day out. And in fact, many people in the United States do. They eat, like, ketchup and iceberg lettuce and just these few things, but they just have these limited phytonutrients within them.

Wild foods are so nutrient dense. They haven't had their phytonutrients bred out of them and they're growing in wild soils that have, that are rich in nutrients. So it's a great way to just get this burst of nutrition and goodness into our lives just by expanding what we eat.

Amber: Yeah, and so easy.

Rosalee: It's wonderful. Yeah, so easy.

Yeah, and chickweed is such a wonderful way to do that. When chickweed is in season here, we eat so much of it. I love it as a salad. I love it as a garnish for practically... When it's in season, we have it chopped up and pretty much on everything. Kind of like microgreens or something, but chopped up and just on everything.

Probably my most favorite way is as a pesto, and I've been making that for so many years. Actually, one of my first dates with my now-husband, I have this great... Chickweed was in bloom, so I was like, "Oh, let's go gather chickweed and we'll make pesto out of it." And I went to the store, and I got pine nuts to make the pesto with, and they were still shelled, so we spent, like, HOURS, unshelling pine nuts together. *(both laugh)* And the whole time I think he was just like, "Whoa." *(both laugh)* That was one of our first dates: unshelling pine nuts so we could make this pesto.

But the pesto was just so bright tasting and so delicious, and we will make up, now, quarts and quarts and quarts of it and freeze it. In the wintertime, we'll pull out all these quarts of pesto. We'll use it as a base on our homemade pizza, or use it with pasta, or just use it to dip our carrots into it. Whatever, however you want to eat it. It is just so delicious and it's such a fun way to take the abundance of the spring greens and then enjoy them throughout the winter, so we're getting those fresh, semi-fresh, I guess, tastes that aren't always available in the winter.

So that's another lovely way because it does have so many nutrients, I love making vinegar out of it. You mentioned violet vinegar, which also is just heavenly, and chickweed vinegar - so easy. You harvest the fresh chickweed, chop it up, put it in a jar, fill up the jar with apple cider vinegar, put a glass or a plastic lid on it. You don't want a metal lid. And shake that up. Let it sit for a little while, and then that vinegar just excels at getting the nutrients, especially minerals, out of plants. So it's pulling all those minerals out and then we use that as a basis for our salad dressings that spring and summer. So that's another favorite way.

Amber: So smart to freeze it for when it's gone.

Rosalee: Yeah, oh, when I bring that over to friends' houses, everyone is just like, "Oooohhh!"

I live in a very rural place, and a lot of us just eat the vegetables that only come from here. So in the winter time, there's lot of carrots, lots of potatoes, cabbage, beets, all of our storage root crops are available, but that fresh green chickweed obviously is not available. And it becomes so precious and so special and so fun to enjoy that.

[1:05:28]

Amber: Yeah, another interesting thing I was thinking of with the phytonutrients is even if you are eating a lot of vegetables, like, all the cruciferous vegetables are basically giving you the same nutrients as one another. Like, you might have broccoli and brussel sprouts and bok choy on your plate, and be like, "Look at me with my three vegetables!" but they're in the same family, the Brassicas, and they're all really similar to each other, nutrient-wise.

So it's just hard for us modern humans, if we're getting all our food from the grocery store, to really be diversifying our nutrient intake, and it's so easy when you're outside, especially if you're

outside at this time of year to just grab what's there and really get some very different and much-needed nutrients into your body.

So thank you for bringing that up. It's something I think about when I'm outside here on the land. I'll be like, "When was the last time I ate something that wasn't just the same old stuff that came from the grocery store? Oh my gosh." So I'll just get down and find all the chickweed and the miner's lettuce and the violets, and whatever else is coming up, dandelions, which are just starting to.

[1:06:36]

Amber: So I'm just looking at your chickweed chapter, and I thought I would just give folks a very brief overview of how each of these plants are presented in the book, because you really give so much good information that goes beyond what you normally find in books that go plant-by-plant.

So you have:

- *Medicinal Properties and Energetics*
- *Plant Gifts* and this is where you're talking about the healing properties. Like, here for chickweed you have: "provides nutrient-dense food, quells coughs, soothes the eyes, heals skin conditions and infections, and moves the lymph."
- And then *How to Identify*, and then, of course, there's gorgeous pictures, throughout.
- *Ecological Connections*: So kind of what we were talking about just a few minutes ago in the non-question question. And I love that. I can't wait to read the ecological connections for each and every plant in here.
- *How to Harvest*
- And then these beautiful botanical illustrations that you talked about.

I can't wait, actually, to spend more time with this one on chickweed. These flowers are just so interesting.

Rosalee: That was our first botanical illustration that we did. It was so exciting.

Amber: It's so beautiful!

Rosalee: When we first started talking about them, doing botanical illustrations, somehow I thought we were just going to do, like, line drawings or something, but as it evolved that we were going to work with Donna, actually, a botanical illustrator who lives in the Ukraine, and have these beautiful watercolor illustrations. It was just so exciting!

Amber: Yeah. And then you even have the wasp or a moth on it that pollinates it. (*Amber laughs*)

Rosalee: Yeah, that was a really fun to decide to do that. Emily is a naturalist, and she loves bugs, and she actually has really inspired the love of bugs in me and that *Ecological Connection* section has really inspired me. Emily really brought that in, and that's been one of my favorite parts of the book.

And so we had all the botanical illustrations, and it was one of the last things we decided. We were like, "Oh, we HAVE to. This is a book about showing ecological connections and trying to root

ourselves in it all and not just be about plants and humans, then we need to show these beautiful creatures that co-exist.”

[1:08:52]

Rosalee: And that was fun choosing them because all of the bugs or reptiles or whatever creature that we have with the plant were specifically chosen because they have a connection.

Like, in the violet illustration, which is maybe one of my favorites of the whole book, we have the fritillaria butterfly, which the fritillaria only lay their larvae on violets kind of similar to monarchs and milkweed. Even that beautiful moth on the chickweed. Yeah, those are really a very exciting part of the book.

Amber: Oh my gosh! I love it. Talk about going beyond what’s in your usual herb book.

And then you have:

- *Harvesting Cautions*
- *Gardening Tips*
- *Using Chickweed in your Life*

And then the recipes, Chickweed Vinegar and your pesto recipe is in here, of course. It looks amazing.

Rosalee: Yeah. You know, we wanted — that reminds me— we wanted to do gardening tips in there.

We actually went to a gardening expert for that, Sue Kush, and she helped us write those gardening tip section for each one because the book is ultimately about nature connection. That’s for us. The book is about strengthening your connection to nature, and that does **not** have to include foraging. That might not be of interest to someone maybe because of where they live or because of physical capabilities or just their interest. But nature connection is always possible.

So we give ways in the book people can bring plants into their life whether or not they decide to forage. They can garden, and that can be not only in their garden but in a friend’s garden or a community garden. But it can also be about getting fresh, local plants from your local herb farmer. Or so many vegetable farmers now are bringing their weeds to the market, which I love to see, like these big dandelion leaves and chickweed even, and nettle. So there’s so many ways to bring the joy of these plants into your life, and we definitely advocate for participating in the joy foraging can bring, but it doesn’t have to be... Nature connection isn’t beholden to your ability or desire to do that.

Amber: Yeah, I’m glad you brought that up. Thank you.

[1:11:07]

Amber: Oh I was just gonna say, briefly, the next recipe is Chickweed Salve, and that is something that I’ve been making usually with plantain for 13 years, since my oldest was a baby, and it is just our go to. There’s so many good salves out there. I always say it’s hard to make a bad salve. If you

know your ingredients, know how to make a salve well, there's so many helpful salves that we have in our house, but we just go to this chickweed all the time because... Like, anytime they had a diaper rash, cuts and scrapes, it's so immediately effective for those kind of skin conditions.

So I recommend people make this chickweed salve.

Rosalee: Yeah, I'll make it, and I made it several years ago for a newsletter. I was doing an article so I made it, and so I could take all the photos and stuff, and I had extra, like, I made eight tins or whatever and I don't... you know, I just need one tin for me. So I put it out there to people who lived around here, like, "Who wants some chickweed salve?" And oh man, those just disappeared.

And for months later would hear those stories, you know, about especially diaper rash and all sorts of dry irritation skin things. It just clears them right up, and I love that so much. That something that I just harvested fresh from the earth, used all these local ingredients, and made it into medicine, and how much cooler that is than going to the drugstore and buying this thing that was made far away in a factory in ways that we don't really understand or support, and was shipped from there to here. It's just, like, the ability to use really effective and safe medicines that grow outside our door has so many benefits for our hearts, our own joy, as well as just the world we want to live in in being a more sustainable society.

Amber: For me, it was when I was first studying herbalism, and my teacher, Kami McBride, who's been on the podcast three times, and I know is a friend of yours, she had just taught me how to make salve, and I got home and was all, "Oh I got all this chickweed and plantain." So it was one of those early experiences of "Oh! Herbs work!" (*both laugh*) And that's always a nice experience to have and to give to other people.

[1:13:30]

Amber: So I was so intrigued that you have an afterword entitled *What If Everyone Wildcrafted?* And I was really curious what you guys had to say about this because it's something I've definitely thought about before. Like, should I even talk about wildcrafting on instagram or on my podcast?

But I absolutely love what you have to say about this, so can you answer that question for us?

What if everyone wildcrafted?

Rosalee: Yeah, I love that, too, because obviously, that's a question that can have a lot of fear around it, and rightfully so because we have examples of people who have gone and wildcrafted plants and decimated their populations or destroyed that local habitat.

So there is a fear there, but we asked that question with hope because we're asking it from a point of view, that mindset that I was talking about earlier with reciprocity and showing up to these spaces as stewards. If more and more of us show up to tend these spaces, to be stewards, the more we become invested into that relationship, the more beautiful of a world we'll live in.

In some ways, probably the people listening to this podcast, I might be preaching to the choir somewhat because we do love the world around us, and we're wanting the best for it and wanting to connect there. But imagining that spreading because that is actually not the world we live in

right now. The majority of people aren't showing up to green spaces and saying, "How can I be of service here?" But what if they did?

That would be a really amazing transformation if people were connected to nature because we wouldn't be pouring billions of dollars worth of poisons into our lawns and waterways every year the way we are now.

I think we would be living our lives very differently and joyfully. That's one thing in the face of all of the climate crisis that we're facing today and how incredibly scary that can be and fearful. I think strengthening our connection to nature doesn't have to be fear-based. It can be love-based and the joy that we get there.

So if we're spreading that joy, spreading that empowerment that we've been talking about of harvesting these local weeds, making effective medicine out of them, we would be so much stronger and healthier in our communities. And not just our human communities, but when we spray those poisons, we're affecting so many beings out there: our pollinators, our microbes in the soil, the birds, and on and on and on. There's nothing that's not being affected by that.

So if we are coming from this place of stewardship, coming from a place of service, we're going to be making much stronger communities and it will just be a natural step we're taking better care of this world.

[1:16:28]

Rosalee: Because so many, I think, my personal belief is that so much of the environmental destruction that we see right now, it's a symptom. And we need to fight, absolutely, to protect those spaces when they're under threat. That's absolutely important. And also think of the root cause of that destruction. And the root cause, for me, keeps coming back to this nature connection situation. When we see ourselves apart from nature, when we see the green world around us as a resource that can be taken, then that's the root of the problem.

The best way to fix that symptom and that root problem, in order to fix the symptom is by increasing that nature connection in ourselves and then spreading that joyfully to all those people around us.

And people want it. I can't tell you how many times my face has been flushed with the joy of wildcrafting, or I'm sharing something that I made from something I harvested, and people see that. They connect that, and they want that in their lives as well. And it becomes a joy to spread.

So if everyone wildcrafted, if we were all stewards, if we were all visiting these places, protecting them, taking care of them, nurturing them, and spreading that love, I think we're going to be living in a much different world; a world that's more based in love, more based in sustainability, and a lot more resilient.

Amber: Yes! It's so beautiful, thank you. I love how you just reframed that question for me, and your answer was beautiful, but I highly recommend people read that in your book, too. It's just a page, but it's so, so well written. It really moved me when I read it. So thank you.

[1:18:15]

Amber: And I also just want to quickly add that, you talked about this nature disconnection is causing the climate crisis and ecological crises on the planet, but you also, in your introduction, really tie in this disconnection from nature and nature deficit disorder to our lack of health in individuals, as humans. And you even in this intro (*Amber laughs*) I'm just gonna read this first paragraph:

Do you ever feel overwhelmed by the idea of healthy living, specialty drinks, herbal powders, high powered blenders, superfood smoothies, CrossFit, earthing, bio-hacking, microdosing, Bulletproof Coffee, spoonful of coconut oil (or was that apple cider vinegar?), green tea, vegan diet, paleo diet, keto diet, breatharianism?

(both laugh)

And something I've talked about on this show quite a bit is food confusion and diet confusion. And I certainly have been there and am still there in some ways, and just reading that intro I was just like, "Oh my gosh, like, they're right."

If I was just outside in nature — First of all, we know that has so many health benefits just being in nature, just being on the earth — and was getting more of my food and my medicine that way, then I wouldn't have to be reading books on like yeah, "biohacking", keto... to figure out what's wrong with me and how to feel better in my life. So I really loved that, too.

Rosalee: That was definitely a fun thing to write. *(both laugh)* Just, yeah, just one of those things, looking out it's just there is so much confusion, and I don't think we can solely buy ourselves into wellness. Again, that's kind of that symptom-root cause situation. For me, the health... I'm not opposed to any kind of help that people get. So even when I mentioned all those things, it's kind of tongue-in-cheek, but those different things bring benefits to people, so that's great.

But if we miss nature connection, then we're missing a huge part of joy and holistic healing because we simply cannot exist without it, and it's missing from so many of our lives, that we just need to be constantly bringing ourselves back to that.

Amber: Yeah, we are not separate from nature. We are nature. We evolved being in direct communion and presence with the natural world, and, of course, that's going to have extremely healing effects on all of us who were born into this very interesting time in human history where that has really been taken from us by the culture.

So thank you for those reminders, and your new book, *Wild Remedies*, is released today. I love that I always release these podcasts almost always on a Tuesday, and that your book comes out on a Tuesday. So I'm gonna align those release dates.

[1:21:17]

Amber: And if people want to check out the book through the link that I'll have on the show notes, and if they feel called to buy it, which, of course I highly recommend, you're giving away as part of Learning Herbs, this incredible packet of bonuses.

So what are these bonuses? What can people get if they buy the book through that link? I'm assuming there's some kind of time limit, perhaps?

Rosalee: Yeah, so there is. Buying it this week is definitely really important, and we have this wonderful docuseries that Emily and I, we flew to Boston and we interviewed 12 herbalists, and we asked them questions like, “Can we wildcraft forever?” and “What are unexpected ways that wild remedies heal?” And so it’s really fun to see all these different herbalists give their take on that and answer the question in that way. So those were really beautifully produced and edited, too. Those are available, and a lot of other little goodies that will help people get the most out of the book, so they’re meant to be companions for the book.

So, yeah. We wanted to... books are great and they can also be limiting in that they’re just this paper, physical product, so we wanted to be able to add things like video and other ways that people can experience the concepts in the book.

Amber: Yeah, I’m always talking about how, if I really want to take a subject in deeply, I want to read about it. I want to see videos. I want to hear podcasts. (*Amber laughs*). Like, all the different ways I can get it in really help.

And I have written here, too, that part of it, you have herb and recipe labels, and there’ll be a gift basket drawing giveaway, and then some more things, too. So yeah, people can read all about how that’s gonna go at that link.

And tell people where they can find you.

Rosalee: The best place to find me is at herbswithrosalee.com and I send out a weekly newsletter and that’s the best way to stay in touch with me. When people sign up on the newsletter, I have a course, an herbal jumpstart course, on how to choose the best herb for you, and then I send out weekly newsletters with all my updates and herbal monographs recipes, and other fun things.

Amber: Awesome. Okay, Rosalee, I’m so happy, like I said, that we finally connected, and loving the book. Perfect time of year to release it, too. You know?

Rosalee: Yeah! I’m glad it worked out that way.

Amber: When everyone’s... the sap is moving through the trees and the blood is moving through our bodies. We want to be outdoors connecting, so just very, very grateful for your work, and so glad we got to talk today.

Rosalee: Likewise, thanks for having me, Amber.

[1:24:01]

[Interview Ends]

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[Outro]

Amber: Okay, real quick, a very simple and superior way to freeze pesto is to make your pesto, and then get out your baking tray, like you put cookies on. And I have one of those silpat, silicone things that you can lay down on it, but really, I think it would be fine with nothing, because it's pesto and it's super oily, and you're not baking it anyways, so I don't know what it matters that it's non-stick. But the oil will help it be non-stick for once you bring it out of the freezer anyway.

So get out my baking tray, put my silpat on top of it (or not, if you don't have one, but they're very convenient for baking all sorts of things). Then you spread out the pesto in about a quarter inch thick layer around the tray. Then you press wax paper on top of it. And then you stick it in the freezer. ANd like, our freezer is small, and full of elderberries, and bone broth, and ginger juice, and other things, and so, literally, there's like an inch of room on top sometimes. And this will fit in there, still, which is great.

So then it only takes a few minutes. I mean, a few hours to freeze. It's very quick. And then you pull it out, and I use the sharp end of a spatula to break it up into various size chunks. And then those go into a ziploc and store it in the freezer that way.

And the point of doing it in various sizes is that you can pull out exactly the amount you need in the future when you're cooking. And this is what makes it superior to the icecube tray method that so many folks are enamored of. With that one, first of all, it can be hard to pop those suckers out! (*Amber laughs*) If you've ever tried that before. Then secondly, they're all the same size. So I really like this because you can see exactly what size you need for what you're making.

And then also, like, I very quickly learned what size I like them to be and so then they can fit in my jar later when I take them out to defrost. Like, I take four or five of my little rectangles out, put them in the size jar I like, and they defrost very quickly on the counter. Sometimes I put them near the heater vent or the stove, if we've got stuff cooking to help defrost more quickly.

But certainly, if you take them out at night time, it will be defrosted by the morning, because again, that olive oil just makes it defrost more quickly. Comes in handy in many ways when it comes to pesto making and freezing and defrosting.

And then it's there! I love it with breakfast. Love it with eggs. Basically put it on everything. It's just so so yummy. And if you need a visual for this, I have some slides up in my Instagram highlights. So I'm MythicMedicine on Instagram. If you're not on there, you can find it on the internet at [instagram.com/mythicmedicine](https://www.instagram.com/mythicmedicine), and I have a highlight called Herbal Food, and that shows exactly how I froze my pesto.

I'll put that exact link in the show notes as well. So... Happy pesto-making and freezing and defrosting and eating, and happy spring!

(Exit Music: acoustic guitar folk song "Wild Eyes" by Mariee Sioux)

[Closing]

[1:27:43]

Amber: Thank you for taking these Medicine Stories in. I hope they inspire you to keep walking the mythic path of your own unfolding self. I love sharing information and will always put any relevant links in the show notes. You can find past episodes, my blog, handmade herbal medicines, and a lot more at [MythicMedicine.love](https://www.mythicmedicine.com). We've got reishi, lion's mane, elderberry, mugwort, yarrow, redwood, body oils, an amazing sleep medicine, heart medicine, earth essences, so much more. More than I can list there. [MythicMedicine.love](https://www.mythicmedicine.com).

While you're there, check out my quiz "[Which Healing Herb is your Spirit Medicine?](#)" It's a fun and lighthearted quiz, but the results are really in-depth and designed to bring you into closer alignment with the medicine you are in need of and the medicine that you already carry that you can bring to others.

If you love this show, please consider supporting my work at [Patreon.com/MedicineStories](https://www.patreon.com/MedicineStories). It is so worth your while. There are dozens and dozens of killer rewards there, and I've been told by many folks that it's the best Patreon out there. We've got e-books, downloadable PDFs, bonus interviews, guided meditations, giveaways, resource guides, links to online learning, and behind-the-scenes stuff and just so much more. The best of it is available at the two-dollar a month level. Thank you.

And please subscribe in whatever app you use, just click that little subscribe button and review on iTunes. It's so helpful, and if you do that you just may be featured in a listener spotlight in the future.

The music that opens and closes the show is Mariee Sioux. It's from her beautiful song "Wild Eyes." Thank you, Mariee.

And thanks to you all. I look forward to next time!