

PLANT ALLY ASSIGNMENT

The assignment

For this assignment you will choose one plant species from our Materia Medica list to work with more deeply. You will be studying and building a relationship with your chosen plant ally through the spring and summer season. For the assignment you will be preparing a 'show & tell' style presentation to share with the group.

The 'tell' portion of the presentation is your personal plant ally story to share. This is a short oral presentation approximately 15mins in length. It is an opportunity to share your experiences with your plant that you've had over the several months you've worked with it. You may reflect on how the plant has touched you in body, mind, and spirit; and what you have learned of its medicine, character, or essence. A written version of your experience with your plant is also required.

The 'show' portion of the presentation is a physical creation inspired by the plant. It may be a drawing or painting, a food or preserve, a medicine, a song, or anything else you feel inspired to create with your plant and share with others.

Working with your ally

Once your ally is chosen, and you set the intention to work with your plant, the journey has begun. Plants are connected to us not just in the physical world, but also through the great web of spirit that permeates all of creation. Simply setting the intention in your mind and heart to work with a particular plant will create a bond between you and that plant.

During the first few months of the course you are encouraged to get to know this one plant as much as possible ~ spend time with the plant, harvest it, make medicine with it, dream with it, sit with it, bath in it, smudge with it...observe it and study it...honour it... learn to listen to the plant, commune with it to learn its special powers and uses.

Just like with any friend, forming a relationship and meaningful connection happens through time and experience. Plants move more subtly and slowly than we do, so patience may be needed at first so that we can quiet ourselves enough to listen and begin to learn their language.

Be open to exploring the plants medicine with each of your physical and intuitive senses. The practice of building relationships with plants is both *active* and *passive*. In part you are actively working with the plant in its physical form to learn its medicine and its character, but there also needs to be the openness to receive wisdom directly from the plant itself. The latter requires a state of receptivity and openness, or 'non-doing' that comes from perceiving with the heart rather than the mind.

The Plant Ally Quest

As part of the assignment you will be devoting 4 or more days to working exclusively with your plant ally to initiate a deeper connection. Embarking on a Plant Ally Quest is a devotional practice, a way to honour the plants we use as medicine, and gain wisdom of a plants medicine and spirit. It is also a healing journey with the plant as your guide and shaman.

The natural bloom time of a plant is when they are most outwardly expressive, or communicative. It is great if you can time your Ally Quest for when your plant is in bloom, but also wonderful to sit with the plant at all stages of its growth cycle.

During the Quest you will sit with your plant each day, take its medicine into your body through tea and tincture, and observe dietary and lifestyle restrictions which will enhance your ability to commune with your plant. Consuming bland foods and limiting of stimulation of the senses through activities will enhance your ability to become more sensitive to the plants medicine and its subtle effects in your body, mind, and spirit.

You will find one individual plant to sit with and return to that plant each day. It is best to choose a mature plant, and one that is in its natural habitat. Where the plant grows and who it grows with also speaks of its character and medicine. Your daily sits should be around an hour or more in length. The sits are daily meditations, devoting your love, curiosity and time to being in the presence of your plant. Observing and communing with your plant 'in situ', in place and in person, is essential to witness the spirit of the plant.