

# Plant Friends

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Every plant is a living thing that has life force, or energy flowing through it. In one season its energy remains in the roots or seeds, while in other seasons it sprouts and matures to its full potential.

As a child I would dissect seed pods with my fingers to look at what was inside. I loved plants and the earth. When I began Dr. Christopher's courses, I learned about medicinal plants and they started to become my friends. Just as my human friends have names, families, qualities and abilities that make them who they are, so do our plant friends. As I go on walks or take a hike, the plants, in their own way, say hello to me and invite me to learn of them.

This summer has been a delight as I have had plants "whisper" to me to come and see them. Licorice root, Valerian, Chaparral, and even homeopathic flowers such as Mimulus have called my attention in my home state of Utah.

Recently I took a trip to the eastern United States. Everywhere I went I found plant friends figuratively calling me to come see them. It was a marvelous experience. Moments upon arriving in Massachusetts, I saw a pond in the distance and wanted to check it out. To my absolute surprise I found White Pond Lily, a medicinal plant found in Dr. Christopher's 100 herb list. I would take walks in the lush forests and the Sassafras tree would say hello and bring me a smile. Wild Lettuce would tower over me, unlike the knee-high variety found in Utah. Red Clover blossoms nodded their purplish heads to me, American Mandrake showed off its round fruit and large leaves, Black Cohosh waved to me with its feathery white floral stalk. The elegant umbel flowered Queen Anne's Lace, Hops with its aromatic strobiles, Poke with its sepals on long racemes, and so many more would, in a sense, whisper to me, "You know me, come look at me, sample me." Oh, the delight that would come as I would open my plant field guide books, properly identify the leaves, flowers, and structures of the plant and know of a surety who they were. These plants are our friends, gifts given to increase our knowledge and understanding, to help us heal, to bring us delight, and to fill our hearts with gratitude.

To help you hear these plants "whisper" to you, I recommend field guides or herb manuals that can offer you pictures, detailed descriptions of what the flowers, leaves, stems, and roots look like, and their medicinal properties. As you look over these books and come to know the plants, they will become more familiar to you. I even recommend herb walks when they are available. Then as you are out hiking or taking a walk downtown, plants will start becoming familiar to you and become your friends too!

Here are a few books, among many, I recommend:

- Peterson Field Guides
  - Western Medicinal Plants and Herbs, by Steven Foster and Christopher Hobbs
  - Eastern/Central Medicinal Plants and Herbs, by Steven Foster and James Duke

- Herb Syllabus, by Dr. John R. Christopher
- Medicinal Plants of the Desert and Canyon West, by Michael Moore
- Botany in a Day, by Thomas J. Elpel
- Foraging & Feasting: A Field Guide and Wild Food Cookbook, by Dina Falconi
- Edible and Medicinal Plants of the West, by Gregory Tilford
- The Herb Walk, by Leartha Moulton

***Kelly Pomeroy** is a Master Herbalist, Foot Zoner/Instructor and Student Adviser for The School of Natural Healing. She has a passion for life, for natural healing, plants, and helping others. She lives in Utah with her four awesome kids.*