

# SageWoman

*Celebrating the Goddess in Every Woman*



## *Herbal Goddess*

**Celtic Traditional Plant Magic · A Sisterhood of Healers  
Meet the Nordic Healing Goddess "Eir" · A Passion for Plants  
Seduced by the Greenwood · Moon-Centered Herbalism**



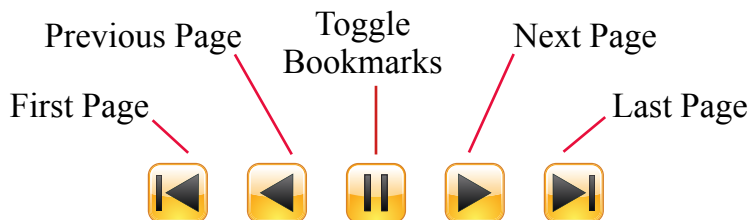


*Magazines that feed your soul and liven your spirits.*



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# a *Passion* for *Plants*

## Herbalism Embedded in Community

**F**or the last few years, I have spent my life in community at East Wind Farm in Missouri. I live intertwined with the land and people like the mass of tangled honeysuckle that greets visitors on the meandering dirt road to the farm. Since moving to these vast hills in southern Missouri, these wild woods, sweet gardens, and diverse group of people have taught me so much about myself and the art of working with medicinal plants. Let me take you for a walk through the dappled light into some of the magickal places around our home.

Let us start under the *Southern Red Oak* that stands watch over the garden that we have created here. The sun casts silhouettes through the leaves and over the fragrant peppermint and majestic hyssop, the shadowed light angular against the curving

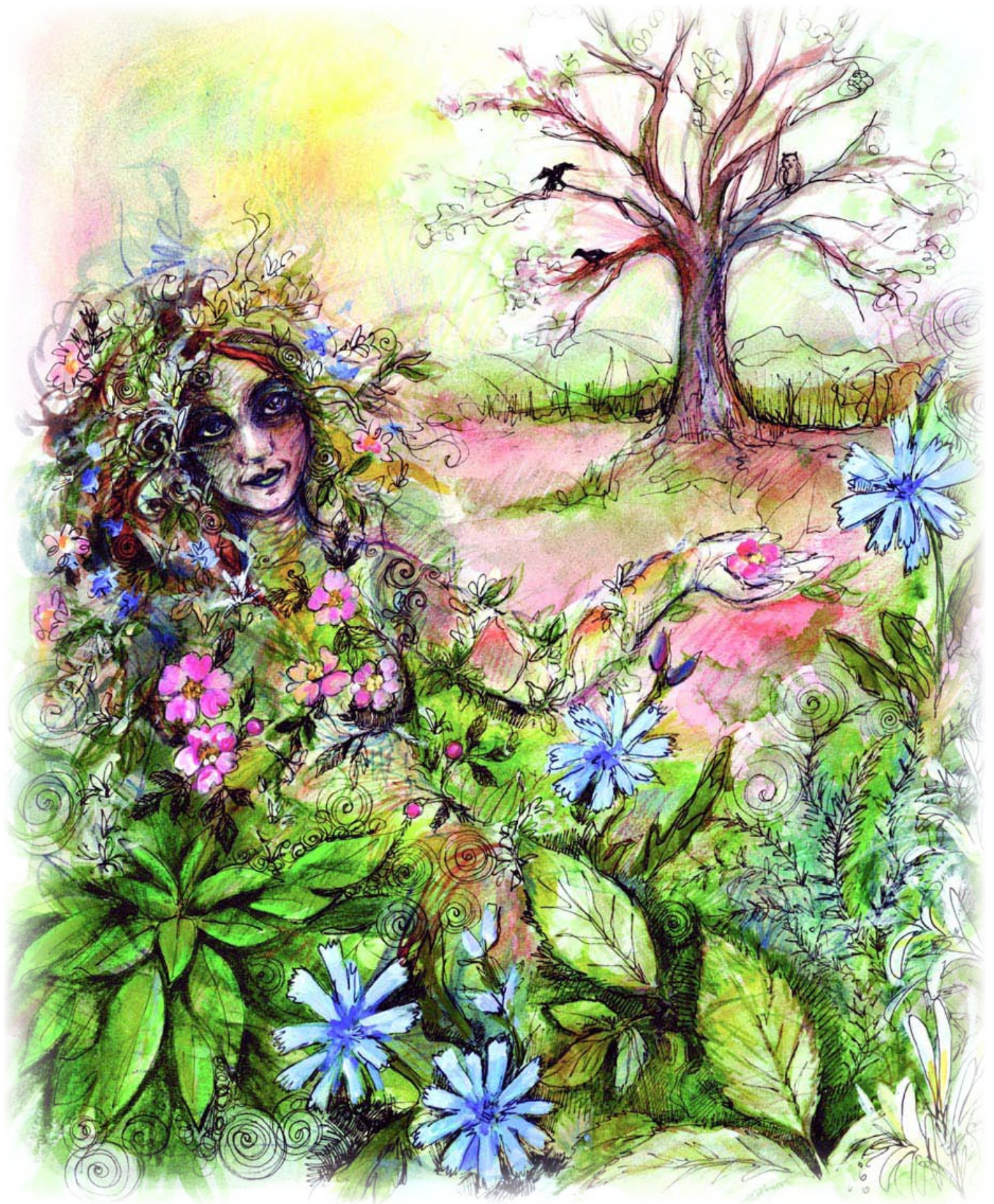
beds. Here is the garden that has helped me heal in so many ways. Filled with biodiversity and magick at every turn, it is a sacred place that I run to when life gets stressful and I need to ground with the earth. Before moving to the country, I had always wanted to study herbal medicine and learn the magick of the plant world. Now that I am here, my passion has rooted itself deep into the folds of the rich earth.

In the center of this garden space lays our next guide, the stout herb *Comfrey*. In spring her wide, soft leaves are some of the first to emerge, providing an early harvestable green for our milking goats. Comfrey has many uses both internally and externally, but I see its main virtue as being that of a wound healer. In both spring and fall, we dig the mucilaginous roots, macerate them, mix them with oil, then steep them (covered) in the warmth of the sun for one full moon cycle before straining the mixture, and mixing in melted pure beeswax to make a truly magical healing salve. Comfrey helps wounds heal quickly while lessening scar formation; gently stimulating new cell growth, and drawing toxic material out from under the skin. You can even apply it to fractures and broken bones to facilitate healing. I admire this plant for its tenacity, so be careful where you plant it, as it is almost impossible to eradicate as from each severed root a new plant will grow. Comfrey reminds me of the seeds of knowledge, once planted, they grow for a lifetime!

**I live intertwined with the land and community like the mass of tangled honeysuckle that greets visitors on the meandering dirt road to the farm.**









To the south of the comfrey patch lies a wild mass of *Red Raspberry* basking in the sun. The tangled thicket squeezes greedily onto the pathway, the green of the vines' leaves contrasting in autumn with the blood red of the berries that entice us into their midst. The raspberry patch dominates the center of our largest community garden, providing sweet nourishment after a sweaty morning de-bugging potatoes or weeding kale. Red raspberry leaves make one of the best herbal infusions for women. I have fond memories making sweetened iced tea from the leaves to help cool and nourish my pregnant friends during the heat of the summer. I drink tea from the leaves each day for a week before (and during) my period to help alleviate cramps. Not only is red raspberry a wonderful female tonic, but she can ease diarrhea, soothe bleeding gums and inflammation, and she is full of vitamins and minerals. After fall's harvest, our supply of dried raspberry leaves nourishes us though a wintertime of tea drinking.

Next, let me turn your attention to the bright blue *Chicory* flowers that dance in all the untamed corners of the garden. It seems every spring that these oceanic flowers appear, seemingly overnight, even though we never plant them. They provide a valuable array of food and medicine despite being considered a "weed." The toothed leaves of chicory are amazing when picked for salads; as bitter greens they enhance our digestion and help cleanse the blood. Chicory, like dandelion also helps to cleanse and detoxify the liver. Each autumn we dig chicory's roots to be dried and roasted. I love drinking hot chicory suffused with honey and cinnamon on a cold morning. Chicory's roots ask me to bring my taproot of energy deeper into the earth, to draw strength to heal and nourish.

Turning past the gardens, let us meander towards the rich sunlit fields bordering the creek. The clear spring-fed waters of Lick Creek encircle our community. As the flowing water rushes nearby, let me introduce you to a dear friend of mine, *Yarrow*. This little fern-like plant was one of the first I became comfortable with using medicinally. Each spring yarrow blooms, turning the fields into seas of moon-white blossoms. Reach down and taste a leaf; it is bitter and strongly medicinal in flavor. One of this plant's main uses is externally as a styptic to help stop bleeding. Many times wandering with our goats through the thickets and briars, I have ended up with a nasty scratch, and each time this

happens I speak yarrow's name and magically she appears. I simply chew a leaf and then apply to the affected area. Fresh yarrow — or a tincture made from the flowers — is also useful to help the body break a fever that has gone on too long and is draining the body of energy. Silently the moon rises in the sky above the trees; working with yarrow often puts me into a trancelike state, and I often wildcraft with it alone using the time to reconnect to the land.

As we start to loop back up to the gardens I notice a solitary *Wild Rose* alongside the path. The plant's large body marks the edge of the pasture, with rich white flowers yielding an intoxicating allure. Rosehips are high in vitamin C, contain antioxidants, and promote cooling in the body. We distill the petals to make a diluted essential oil (hydrosol) useful for all types of skin irritations. Rosehips or rose petals can also be made into wine to help draw love or passion into our lives. Suddenly I notice the light hitting the petals growing dimmer; against the western sky I see the sun starting to sink towards the horizon.

**As we look back up the gardens, we come to the sacred oak, bringing us full circle. Learning to live in conscious community mirrors the discipline required for working with healing plants.**

The birds chatter soothingly on our walk back up to the sacred oak, bringing us full circle. My choice to make my home here at East Wind for five years has brought me much happiness. At times, living so closely with sixty other people has brought me to tears; as with any group of people, connections and relationships take time, communication, and a great deal of effort. Learning to live in conscious community mirrors the discipline required for working with healing plants. Yet through my mistakes and triumphs I have learned how to be a better gardener, herbalist, communitarian, lover, and friend. Here at East Wind, I always feel the pull of the beautiful earth grounding me back to my center. ☺



*SAGE KOHOUTEK is a member of East Wind, an egalitarian community located in the beautiful Ozark Mountains. Her interests include growing vegetables and herbs for the community, making medicines, milking goats, singing folk tunes, reading, and playing harp for the squirrels and birds around her home. For more information on East Wind see [www.eastwind.org](http://www.eastwind.org).*