

HERBOLOGY, HUMANS AND HAZELWOOD HERB FARM



Written by Jenny Horn PhD
and Susan Wells BA

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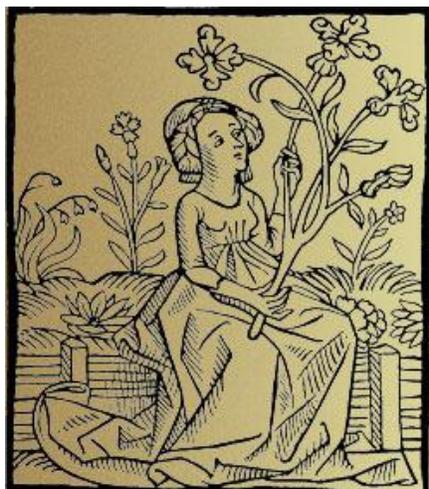
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History of Herbs and Humans

Folk medicine and folk lore worldwide provide evidence of the long use of herbs by humans; the study of herbs and how their unique characteristics can serve humans is an ancient craft. “Herbology” has been practiced since early humankind made note of a plant’s distinct characteristics or observed how plant was used by other species that lived in the region. Locally, aboriginal peoples continue to use native plants for many purposes, respectfully cultivating some and wildcrafting others. Worldwide, botanical gardens and seed repositories collect, identify, document, exhibit and propagate plant species for preservation, research, and for the enhancement and survival of humankind.



1 Woodcut of Woman Gathering Herbs

Studies of folklore from early Europe to the 20th century show that distinctions between schooled medical professionals, ecclesiastical healers, and illiterate “wise-women” herbalists are very hard to make. In fact, the existence of folk medicine is accepted by scholars even though there are no references to the healers themselves throughout the history of folk medicine ¹. Once associated by Western society with witchcraft, herbs remain powerful allies for assuring the health of humans, as well as that of pets and livestock. Contemporary society has rediscovered the ancient fascination with herbs, and many traditional healing claims are now being confirmed by science.

As the Herbalism site for the BC ECONOMUSEE Network, Hazelwood Herb Farm celebrates traditional and modern techniques to propagate herbal plants and transform them into a wide range of herbal products. Local lore, ancient wisdom and the vision of the founders of Hazelwood Herb Farm all inspire the current owners, Barbara Stevens and Mark Warrior, to carry on an age-old tradition as Herbalists. Unique to Hazelwood Herb Farm is the collection of over 450 herbs that are cultivated on site.

As objects of human transformation, herbs are living artefacts that are cultivated or gathered from the wild and then crafted by skilled artisans into high-quality products for health, utility, and pure enjoyment.

When is an herb not a spice?

Herbs are not spices but are aromatic plants whose leaves, fruit, flowers or stems are used to flavour food or give potency to health and beauty products (think of rosemary or chamomile). The term Herb is also used when any plant parts are prepared for medicinal or other use ⁴.

Spices are typically tropical plants whose bark, roots, seeds, buds or berries add zest to food with their aromatic and pungent properties (think of cinnamon or nutmeg). The term Spice is not used when the plants are prepared for medicinal or cosmetic use ⁴.

“Herbology” refers to the study of the production and use of plant-based products for culinary, medical, spiritual and cosmetic purposes. The plant components used could include leaves, stalks, bark, roots, seeds, fruit or flowers⁴. The use of plants for healing the body is also called botanical medicine, naturopathy and more recently, phytotherapy.

The preparation of food has historically included herbs for flavour, aroma, colour and shelf life. Herbs and herb-based preparations are likewise a large component of traditional medicine as well as being used for modern treatments. Traditional sacred herbs such as sage, cedar, tobacco and sweet grass continue to be offered in Amerindian healing ceremonies. Cosmetics and body care products have relied on herbal ingredients that may cleanse, enhance and perfume the body.



2 Cumin and Dill listed in Dioscorides' *Materia Medica*, c. 1334

Herbs: Magic, Medicine or Myth ?

The ancient knowledge that herbalists pass on about their craft is time honoured and still respected in cultures throughout the world. Today, the World Health Organization acknowledges global herbal use, recognizes the importance of herbs to large populations in the world, and they are strongly supportive of the preservation of indigenous pools of knowledge³. To many impoverished people, wild and free sources of herbal remedies are still the only treatments available.

In order for oral traditional knowledge to be preserved, many herbalists rely on the passing down of knowledge and experience to decide upon the most appropriate herb or herbal preparation for an intended use. This shared knowledge base is truly an “open source” of information. At the same time, years of rigorous research and education is imperative for any herbalist to become proficient in their practice. Deeper understanding can also be built on the sturdy foundation of mentorship and empirical or experiential knowledge.

Herbal Artisans at Hazelwood Herb Farm

Preserving knowledge, sharing that knowledge and bringing more exposure to the use of herbs is the shared vision of Barbara Stevens and Mark Warrior, who purchased Hazelwood Herb Farm in 2010. They now cultivate over 450 varieties of herbs and forage for others to flavour or preserve food, to keep people and livestock healthy, and to make beauty and household products.

The original owners of the Hazelwood Herb Farm were Jacynthe Dugas and Richard White, the husband and wife team who created the farm. They transformed a love of helpful plants in their Nanaimo backyard into a business when they relocated to this site in 1986. Their successful business initially provided nursery stock of unusual or important herbs but this evolved into the production of a wide range of health, beauty, culinary and botanical plants and products.



3 Entrance to Hazelwood Herb Farm

When Barbara and Mark bought Hazelwood Herb Farm from Jacynthe and Richard in 2010, it was inevitable that the production methods and recipes that attracted a loyal customer base would be shared. As Barb and her skilled staff enhance the farm with their personal style and product line, the tradition of herbal production and processing continues.

Barbara, Mark and the staff are studying together to continuously increase their knowledge as they follow in Jacynthe and Richard's footsteps. Indeed, one of the founding families of the North Oyster district (where

Hazelwood Herb Farm is located) practiced healing themselves, and they would be pleased to watch the next generation of herbalists advance their knowledge of the traditional craft.

Healing History in the District

The town of Cassidy in the North Oyster district of south eastern Vancouver Island was named for an Irish farmer who was the descendant of hereditary physicians, so it seems fitting that Hazelwood Herb Farm was established nearby.

The original settlement in the Cassidy area, also known as Granby, was a planned industrial town established by the Granby Consolidated Mining, Smelting and Power Company in 1918. The model town included 50 residential houses with modern water, sewer and power systems. The town was connected to the E&N Railway by a 3 mi (4.8 km) spur line, but in 1932 it closed, and in March 1936 most of the buildings were auctioned off and removed.



4 Cassidy, BC 1918

The town of Cassidy was named for Thomas Cassidy, who farmed in the Oyster district after arriving from Iowa in 1878 (Irish: Ó Caiside / Ó Casaide) Ironically, the Caiside's were originally a medical family who were hereditary physicians to the Maguires and they would surely have held extensive knowledge about herbs and how to extract and apply their healing properties².

Nurturing a Nursery

Extensive knowledge of herbology is still being applied in the North Oyster district, where Richard White and Jacynthe Dugas developed Hazelwood Herb Farm as an authentic herbalist's garden. For over 25 years, they lovingly nurtured over 450 traditional and standard herbs, carefully tended patches of wild plants and formally-designed spaces, and gradually incorporated pathways for wandering and resting places for quiet enjoyment.

What made their farm unique was that they propagated or grew from seed a selection of unusual and exotic varieties of traditional herbs as well as the full range of more standard herbs. This unique catalogue soon made the farm a favourite among Vancouver Island gardening enthusiasts.

Jacynthe loved the healing herbs and began experimenting with making healing creams and salves as well as soaps in small batches in the farm kitchen. This gave birth to the Herbal Heaven Gift Shop, which combined Richard's love of cooking with herbs and Jacynthe's passion for healing and cosmetic herbs.

In 2010, the farm and all of its living treasures were passed on to Barbara Stevens and Mark Warrior, who are keen on inspiring the next generation of herbalists! They are continuing the Herbalist tradition and are building on Hazelwood's reputation for producing unique, high-quality herbal plants and finely-crafted herbal preparations for home and personal use.

EconoMuseum Network



ÉCONOMUSÉE
BRITISH COLUMBIA

Hazelwood Herb Farm is the BC Herbalism site for the EconoMusée Network, which celebrates artisans at work who use both traditional and contemporary techniques to produce exceptional craft or agricultural-food products. The knowledge and passion found within high-quality agri-food and craft producers is a collective treasure that is a form of heritage capital. The intention of the EconoMuseum Network is to add value to this cultural capital in order to increase the economic success and sustainability of the artisans who create the ancient crafts and of the surrounding region as well.

As a BC ECONOMUSEE Network site, Hazelwood Herb Farm welcomes people to tour the gardens, which are designed to teach visitors about the transformation of raw herbal materials into hand-crafted artisanal products.

Visitors to the farm are invited to indulge their senses as they stroll through the Formal Gardens, which include an interpretive area, a small water garden, a lavender field, and rows of tender herbs for



**5 Formal Gardens at
Hazelwood Herb Farm**

processing. Visitors can rest a while under the hops or in the nook by the pond and watch the comings and goings of the birds and the bees. Once the visitor's curiosity is piqued, they can browse the documents in the Gazebo, which contain traditional and contemporary knowledge about the 450 varieties of herbs that are seasonally available from the walk-through Nursery.

There is also exploring to be done in the Production Garden, or the curious can peer over the fence at the Processing Sheds as the seasonal rounds cycle through. Visitors can learn about the hand-crafting of a wide range of culinary, beauty, health or household products in the Kitchen and Boutique. By providing interpretive experiences for the visitor, EconoMuseum Networks link customers and students to quality artisans and producers, which can create a lasting (and valuable) bond that is beneficial to all.

Excited about Agriculture and Agri-tourism

Knowledge of the crafted products and their history can add value in the mind of the consumer because it brings them closer to the artisan/producer and to the traditional practices used to craft modern products. As such, an EconoMusee Network site is part of an economically-viable market model for small-scale artisans or agri-food producers.

Small acreages that are farmed and managed by local entrepreneurs constitute an important portion of small business on Vancouver Island. Regionally, the economies stimulated by market gardens, plant nurseries, livestock, eggs and hay sales (among other products) support local farmers and local communities. The sale of goods at the farm gate or the promotion of farm visits in the district are important components of strategies that are aimed at increasing agri-tourism.

The EconoMusee Network encourages agri-tourism by increasing the visitation rates of tourists as well as local customers. Hazelwood Herb Farm has successfully integrated agri-tourism into their marketing strategy by providing interpretive spaces throughout their nursery, gardens and production facilities. The Farm also provides tours and workshops on the propagation of herbs or the crafting of high-quality, handmade herbal products.

It is anticipated that a visit to Hazelwood Herb Farm will bring a greater appreciation for the historical importance of herbs in diverse cultures as well as for the many ways in which herbs continue to enrich our lives in the modern world.

Herbs as Artefacts of the Human Experience



6 Arabic Herbalist

Herbs are steeped in mystery and yet are commonplace at the same time. Wild herb plants have been manipulated by human hands for eons, so that many herbs have been transformed into commonly - cultivated plants. These plants are further crafted into products that have great practical, mythological and spiritual importance to us.

As objects of human transformation, herbal plants are living artefacts of the human experience.

Hazelwood Herb Farm practices the ancient, transformative craft of Herbology, which is the preparation of plants for use by humans and animals. Hazelwood Herb Farm is home to over 450 living artefacts that speak to the depth and breadth of the knowledge held and passed on by practicing herbalists.

Herbs are interwoven with the human experience and we transfer our knowledge or embed their mystery through the evocative names that we call them: Belladonna, Woolly Lambs Ear, Horsetail, Skullcap, Coltsfoot, Angelica and Foxglove. Humans have likewise been transformed by herbs, which

have been with us at our birthing beds and on our deathbeds. Herbs have anointed our kings and overcome the scourge of plagues and pestilence to become true artefacts of the human journey.

One herb that has been a long-time companion on the human journey are hops, whose flower is used to flavour beer. This member of the family *Cannabaceae* is native to temperate zones and is grown worldwide⁴. Hops were introduced to southern Vancouver Island, and its presence changed the economic, social, and cultural landscape of British Columbia forever.

Hops

“Little man, may all your life be full of sunshine and may the snow rest lightly on your head as it does on Mount Tuam when you grow older.”

This was the blessing pronounced over Nicholas Stevens, born on a September day in 1891. His Coast Salish (*Lekwungen* or *Songhees*) mother, Emma delivered him in a tent while picking hops with her family in Saanich. Over a century later, his granddaughter Barbara grows hops at Hazelwood Herb Farm.

Hops (*Humulus lupulus*) are an herbaceous hardy perennial vine that can reach a height of 30 feet each year. They were one of the first commercially-grown crops on Vancouver Island, being established in 1862 to supply the fledgling beer breweries in Victoria³.



7 Hops pickers in Washington State

At the peak of the industry in the 1940s, over 4,000 people worked in the hop fields and drying sheds, including First Nations people, Mennonites, Japanese, Chinese and Euro-Canadians.

For over 100 years, Coast Salish families moved freely between Saanich, Washington and the Fraser Valley to tend and harvest the hops. Employment in the hop season meant much-needed pay and provided an opportunity to maintain bonds between scattered families, especially after the banning of the traditional potlatch (gifting and honouring ceremony), which lasted from 1884 to 1951.

This annual event was a time for visiting, trading, matchmaking, or playing *slahal* – the traditional 'bone game'. After long hot days in the hop fields, families and friends would gather on warm evenings in the bunkhouses and dancehalls that were sometimes provided for the workers.

It is well known that hops are important in brewing beer and the recent flourishing of microbreweries on the Island has revived interest in this ancient herb. At Hazelwood, they carry on other traditional uses of this herb by using them in teas, breads, pillows, soaps and lotions.

Until the introduction of modern chemistry and pharmaceuticals, Western Civilization depended on specialized herbalists to heal wounds and cure ailments, as do many people around the world today. Planting, caring for, harvesting, preparing, packaging and assisting others in the use of herbs and herbal products are all considered to be an herbalist's activities.

Traditional Formal Gardens

Knots and Wheels and Plants that Heal

Throughout history, herbalists have gathered herbs from their favourite patch of wild plants, or they have cultivated the herbs closer to home in informal gardens. Many cottagers had “grandmother” gardens out the back door that typically contained over 70 herbs and were often chaotic and boisterous. Others have incorporated herbs into classical designs for formal gardens.

An ideal garden contains plants for both pleasure and function. Some gardens are surrounded by tall hedges for shade and shelter from the wind. Many formal gardens have a water feature as a central focus, while others frame a long, sweeping vista or are meant to be viewed from a high window.

Both the Celtic Knot and the Garden Wheel are classic herb garden designs. The Celtic Knot garden has a series of knotted pathways, while the wheel design has pathways that form spokes extending out from a raised centre bed.

Contemporarily, the Chateau de Versailles in France boasts the Star Grove labyrinth, and some ancient universities still cultivate Physic Gardens for teaching herbal medicine.



8 Celtic Knot Garden

Whether formal or half-wild, most kitchen gardens had herb collections, with many herbs filling multiple roles in the household and barnyard. For example, fennel, rosemary, sage and thyme all have culinary, medicinal, cosmetic and practical applications.

Culinary Herb Gardens

Culinary herbs were originally added to food as a way to take in their healing properties, but they soon came to fulfill many roles, including adding flavour to make food more palatable and digestible, or preserving the food from spoiling.

Many culinary gardens incorporated multi-purpose herbs and plants into their design. For example, a “potager” is an old term for a French garden that contained a combination of herbs, vegetables, fruit trees and salad plants ¹⁴. Typical kitchen herbs listed by the epicurean Apicius in the 1st Century AD

include: anise, basil, bay, capers, caraway, celery seed, coriander, cumin, dill, garlic, mustard, myrtle, oregano, parsley, pennyroyal, rue, safflower, saffron and Welsh onion ¹⁴.

Functional Herbs in Gardens

In addition to their culinary applications, many herbs are grown for purposes of function, form or to increase the visitor's enjoyment. Whether tumbling wildly or tidily arranged, fragrant herbs fit naturally into any garden design. At Hazelwood for instance, creeping thymes are planted between the paving stones, or mints are set into garden borders to release their fresh smell as visitors brush past.

Herbal hedgerows of myrtlewood, roses or juniper can be grown to both enhance the landscape and to define the borders or screen a property or garden. Other herbal trees or shrubs such as boxwood or germander can be carefully shaped into living topiary sculptures that are ornamental or whimsical in nature. Hedges can also be formed into mazes, whose intricate patterns are trod by folks seeking both fun and contemplation.

Herbs in Spiritual Gardens

Some gardens were designed to encourage contemplative thought and to focus the mind on the matter under consideration. Both labyrinths and mazes are examples of meditation gardens that incorporate



symbolism, and they are suggestive of danger and redemption, blindness and light, satisfaction and serenity, as well as temptation and chaos ¹⁴. "Unicursal" labyrinths have a path that twists and turns but never comes to an abrupt halt, while mazes do contain dead end paths. The contemplative and the daring can both get lost in a maze, while a labyrinth will always lead them forward. Mazes also have a rich history of enhancing spiritual experiences; the word "amaze" means to bewilder, while "maze" means "delusional" ⁵.

9 Medieval Labyrinth

Traditional Botanical Gardens

Other herb gardens were specifically designed to provide botanical or medicinal sources for health and healing. Ancient monasteries were some of the first to cultivate gardens and orchards. Monastic gardens were designed for self-sufficiency and so produced a wide variety of herbs for distilling into balms, crèmes and elixirs (medicinal potions). The monks also infused herbs into distilled spirits to enhance the digestive process; herbs infused in spirits would include angelica, anise, caraway, coriander, elecampane, hyssop, speedwell, sweet cicely, sweet woodruff and violets ⁴.

Traditional medicinal gardens also include the Physic gardens that were attached to the teaching universities in late Medieval Europe. Here, student physicians and apothecaries (early pharmacists) were trained in the growing, identification, purification, and preparation of herbs and herbal products. Many Physic gardens were laid out in classic patterns such as the Knot, Wheel or Spiral shape.

Botanical Gardens

Today, some older universities still tend their historic Physic gardens, while others have incorporated them into more modern facilities. The collection of plants in the Harold and Francis Holt Physic garden (established in 1976 at Botanical Gardens at the University of British Columbia UBC) is mostly derived from Britain's Chelsea Garden, which was established in 1673. UBC has also incorporated a section to introduce medicinal plants that have been documented from wild origins⁶.

Many formal gardens are established in public spaces or in commercial settings rather than being hidden



10 Chelsea Physic Garden

behind the walls of the manorhouse as in days of old. Two examples of formal gardens that exist today are the UNESCO World Heritage sites of the Chateau de Versailles in France and the Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden in South Africa.

Formal gardens can be designed to incorporate a rich diversity of plant life, or they can be designed as monoculture gardens, which feature only one plant or plant species at a time. Monoculture cultivation is one of the first forms of ecosystem management by humans, and early examples include managed woodlands, moorlands and grasslands.

Monocultures: Natural and Cultivated

The advantages to cultivating a monoculture crop include reduced plant competition, control of unwanted species, and simplifying the need for diverse machinery to produce, harvest or process the plant materials. The disadvantages of monoculture cropping include lack of biodiversity, increased demand for pest management and the higher risk of depleting the soils.

The uptake of monoculture cropping by the industrial agriculture industry has given this style of crop management a bad name, but it is not necessarily an unsound practice. At Versailles, and throughout France, the expansive lavender gardens are fine examples of a managed monoculture crop.

Lavender Gardens



The lavender gardens at Hazelwood Herb Farm is a monoculture garden that was designed to complement the existing formal garden. The lavender garden is planted with primarily French and English lavender for harvesting and processing, as well as to provide a relaxing place for human visitors and an active attraction for beneficial insects and honeybees!

11 Lavender Fields

Lavender was first introduced to Britain by the Romans, and the monks soon adopted it into their monastic gardens. It has a wide range of uses, including flavouring and preserving food, as an essential addition to a medicine cabinet, as a useful addition to floral arrangements, and even as decorative candy on cakes. Lavender has strong anti-bacterial, anti-fungal, anti-inflammatory, anti-convulsive and anti-depressant properties. Its features are so versatile that it has been harvested for centuries to create everything from potent insect repellants to stimulating perfumes and relaxing bath products ⁷.

Rest and Rise Refreshed and Renewed

Aesthetic beauty, quiet corners and the right selection of plants not only attract wildlife, birds and bees to the herb garden, but they also soothe the soul. A favourite feature in many traditional and contemporary gardens is a water fountain, pond, cascade or even birdbath. The presence of a water feature can create quiet places for contemplation whilst supporting backyard wildlife.

The pond at Hazelwood Herb Farm offers a sanctuary to frogs and insects along its shady fringes, which are lined with Corsican mint and liquorice flag. A variety of pond plants provide shelter and help to balance the chemistry of the water. For a good mix, be sure to include oxygenators for clearing the water, floaters to provide surface cover, marginals along the soggy banks to provide protection and deep water aquatics to keep the pond and its residents cool ⁸.

Designing a pond for diversity of life can bring great pleasure to humans and creatures alike. Flowers along the banks will attract insects, as will the water itself, and the pond will act as a drinking bowl for birds and small animals. Be sure to create a shallow pebble slope for them to enter and exit the pond.

Build the pond with different depths to ensure a variety of environments for plants or animals. Having a thriving pond may mean leaving out the goldfish or Koi! Fish tend to eat the eggs of the frogs and other creatures, and will definitely make an impact on who else decides to make the pond their home.

Manifesting Micro-Habitats

Ponds, fountains and waterfalls create moist or humid micro- habitats that can take on a life of their own. The micro climates and micro environments on any property will vary depending on wind and sun exposure, health and type of the soil, and the slope of the land.



12 Water fountain at Hazelwood Herb Farm

At Hazelwood, herbs are chosen and placed carefully because of their contribution to the micro environment in that location. There are a number of micro-climates for a range of preferences, such as full sun, partial shade, water side or arid spaces, which will create a healthy balance of insects, plants and animals. For example, pendulous flowering sages provide habitat for many insects and their nectar attracts the Rufous hummingbird. In late summer, the flowering lavender, marjoram and oregano come alive with butterflies and the soft humming of pollinating bees.

Bee-Friendly Gardens

Barbara and Mark are committed to creating a bee-friendly garden at Hazelwood Herb Farm and they do all that they can to encourage birds, bees and butterflies to make the farm their home.

For maximum attraction to bees, the garden should be in full sun and have a windbreak to help protect the bees. Herbs that will overlap in season will provide nectar and pollen for a long period of time – the most important nectar plants for bees include clovers, fruit trees, mustard, willow herb and dandelion¹⁴. Other choice herbs for bees are borage, catnip, chives, comfrey, mints, thyme and lavender⁹.



Vancouver Island is home to at least 10 bumblebee species, as well as Mason bees, Leafcutter and Carpenter bees, and other indigenous pollinators. Pollination is a key activity that transfers the pollen from one flower to another and assures the plant will bear fruit and produce the next generation. Pollination greatly increases the success of field crops, orchards, commercial or backyard gardens, and the production of food for livestock¹⁰.

Some species of pollinators appear to be diminishing at an alarming rate, with both wild and managed populations (such as European honeybees) being impacted by “colony collapse syndrome.” There is much speculation as to why this is occurring and theories include the impact of pesticides and other chemicals, loss of habitat, and the spread of diseases and pests such as the varroa mite¹⁰. Other sources associate the decline with electropollution or electrical disturbances in the environment¹¹.

No matter what the cause for their demise, Hazelwood Herb Farm is doing its utmost to try to encourage and sustain healthy bee and insect populations in their neighbourhood. Barbara and Mark make sure that there are lots of friendly habitats for the bees (dead wood, leaves and undisturbed soil), they employ environmentally-friendly gardening methods, and they plant herbs, shrubs and trees to attract bees and other pollinators.

The formal display, production gardens and fruit trees at Hazelwood depend upon busy pollinators to keep the cycle of life moving forward and to improve the productivity of the farm. With the rising pressures of a modernized, globalized economy, the importance of maintaining healthy local food and botanical sources is fuelling the growing interest in herbs and their natural properties.

Understanding Herbs in the Modern World

The use of herbal remedies and folk medicine is still a large part of many health systems around the globe. Although there are a vast number of medicinal plants known and used by humans, relatively few are cultivated commercially on a large scale. Recently, a new market is emerging for herbal components, health foods and preventative medicines, and these products are marketed under terms such as functional foods, nutraceuticals and natural health products. The return to traditional ways of knowing and being in Western culture is being driven by changing cultural, spiritual, and religious needs; increasing interest in returning to a more natural lifestyle; growing public willingness to take responsibility for their own health; and increased acceptance that food has therapeutic value.

Scientific Assessment of Ancient Herbal Wisdom

The consumer shift away from manufactured medicines and foods and towards more natural ingredients and production processes is driving the scientific community to rigorously evaluate many aspects of ancient herbal wisdom and its application. For example, science now recognizes that herbal plants contain numerous phytochemicals beneficial to human health.

Other recent scientific studies have shown profound differences in the chemical composition of some plants according to the time of harvest and to whether specimens were gathered from wild or cultivated sources. It is now becoming widely accepted that plants readily adapt to the environment, lunar cycles, time of year and weather patterns⁴. Many traditional herbalists are guided by the movement of the moon and the stars and by knowledge of the local weather patterns and are aware of the symbiotic interactions of these forces with plants, animals and insects.

Holistic healing preparations are also being assessed, and the modern application of chemistry in pharmaceuticals and cosmetics has fine-tuned the ability to isolate and extract the various, distinct botanical compounds found in plants. Herbalists have long understood and trusted the power of these compounds and have shared the mystery of their interactions in the body despite not being able to isolate or name them distinctly.

Preserving the Tradition

Humans have long been fascinated by herbs and many herbalists have recorded their observations and shared their knowledge in order to inspire others. One of the most influential works in Western

Herbology is “The English Physician,” compiled by Nicholas Culpeper in 1652. In this seminal work, Culpeper shares his understanding of herbal identification, plant attributes and common folklore uses and then describes how to prepare a wide range of medicinal products and products for cosmetic, scents or for flavourings in foods.



13 Nicholas Culpeper

Sharing the Pleasures of Propagation and Production

At Hazelwood Herb Farm, Barbara and Mark are carrying out the ancient tradition of knowledge transfer from one generation to the next, and they use their gardens, nurseries, and processing kitchen as their classrooms. A visit to the nurseries or production gardens can be very informative for the visitor who seeks to understand the traditional and contemporary uses of herbs for culinary, household, cosmetic, botanical or spiritual purposes.

Barbara is committed to propagating annual and perennial herbs at Hazelwood Herb farm, partly because of her own fascination with herbs, but also because she shares a growing concern for the preservation of medicinal plants and the expansion of knowledge about their safe uses and preparation. In this regard, Barbara identifies strongly with the teachings of Rosemary Gladstar of the United States,

who is committed to the conservation and cultivation of medicinal plants that are at-risk across North America, and to the preservation of botanical sanctuaries ¹².

Hazelwood Herb Farm provides sanctuary to a wide range of herbal plants in both cultivated and wild landscapes. Barbara and Mark are committed to encouraging biodiversity on the farm, and they encourage the cultivated plants to co-exist with the local wild plants.

Variety is the Spice of Life

Creating spaces for symbiotic (mutually-beneficial) relationships to develop between different species is a key element to encouraging biodiversity. Biological diversity (biodiversity) is essential for sustaining plants, people, and animals because having a wide variety of species creates a robust ecosystem ¹³.

Barbara encourages biodiversity in the cultivated gardens by adopting sustainable gardening practices. Natural fertilizers, herbal pest repellents, beneficial insects, compost and crop rotation in the cultivated garden all protect and help maintain this balance. While the wild gardens are tended by human hands, nature has the final say in what grows where, and for how long.

Cultivated Herbs

A wide variety of herbs are cultivated at Hazelwood Herb Farm, and many of them begin their lives as tender shoots in the nursery. Here they are nurtured along until they are hardy enough to be gradually “hardened” to cooler temperatures before they are moved outside to the display or production gardens. Other plants are of hardy varieties that will establish themselves well in local climates and do not need to be acclimatized.

Gatherings from the Gardens

The Production Garden is where herbs of all sorts are carefully cultivated to bring out the most potent characteristics of the plant, for later use in a range of preparations. From early spring, young shoots and tender leaves are harvested for fresh use and later, seeds or stalks are collected for drying and processing, while roots can be dug despite the frosts of fall and winter. Many herbs have multiple applications, while others are very specific, and this is all essential knowledge for herbalists to have.

One example of an herb that has multiple, divergent applications is Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*).



This hardy perennial has adapted very well to the Maritime Mediterranean climate of southern Vancouver Island. The leaves and stems of this woody, pine-scented evergreen are harvested throughout summer and fall, and they can be used fresh or dried.

Rosemary has a long history in European culture; Pliny the Elder recorded 18 different remedies that were made from the plant. Its pungent odour was thought to improve memory, and it remains a symbol of remembrance at weddings, war commemorations and funerals ¹². Others hung sprigs to repel bad dreams and ward off witches.

14 Rosemary in Kohlers Medicinal Plants, 1887

More recently, rosemary has been approved in Germany for the treatment of indigestion, and its oil can be used for muscle and joint pain, or to increased circulation¹⁴. The anti-oxidant properties of rosemary are widely recognized, as is its capacity to inhibit food-borne pathogens such as *Listeria monocytogenes*, *Bacillus cereus*, and *Staphylococcus aureus*¹⁴. Most people, however, know rosemary as an essential culinary herb for Mediterranean cooking not because of its preservative properties, but because the pungent flavour is well suited to lamb, chicken, or pork, as well as to soups and sauces.

Culinary Herbs

Other culinary herbs that are age-old favourites include oregano, sage, and certain species of flowers. Culinary oregano (*Labiatae origanum vulgare*) was used extensively by the Romans, whose myths reveal that Venus was the first to grow this herb in her garden. The Romans introduced oregano across Europe, and it eventually made its way to North America, where some strains have naturalized as wild marjoram.

Hazelwood Herb Farm grows plenty of culinary oregano. Its leaves and stems are used as a preservative, disinfectant and to flavour food, while its flowers and leaves are used to produce essential oils.

A wide variety of sages are also grown at Hazelwood, including many fruit sages such Pineapple Sage (*S. elegans* and *S. elegans aureus*) and Tangerine Sage (*S. elegans* cultivar). These perennial shrubs prefer full sun and well-drained soils, and they need to be taken inside for the winter. Many varieties of fruit sages are used to flavour teas, jams, jellies and fruit salads. In the garden, the fragrant leaves of the fruit sages will release a tropical aroma when brushed against, and the late-blooming flowers of pineapple sages will keep the hummingbirds and butterflies visiting the garden well into autumn.

A Bouquet for Breakfast

The pleasures of flowers extend well beyond their looks or their fragrance. Traditional herbal remedies incorporated flowers as dried, fresh, or in essence. Edible flowers were widely enjoyed during the Victorian era, and their use is seeing a revival by modern chefs¹⁵. Today, flowers make delicious additions to salads or vegetables dishes and can beautify cakes and garnish plates.

Fresh flowers should always be used in moderation, as their unusual presence may upset the digestive system or aggravate allergies. Flower petals that can be used fresh include tuberous and waxy begonia, dandelion, day lily (*Hemerocallis* species), and nasturtium (genus *Tropaeolum*)¹⁵. The blossoms of the domestic apple (*Malus* species) may be candied for use as cake decorations or added sparsely to fruit dishes in fresh form.



Edible flowers also stimulate table conversation, seeming strange to eat something so naturally beautiful. However, before rushing out to begin picking, there are a few essentials to keep in mind:

15 Nasturtium flower

- ❖ Be very sure to know which flowers are edible before you nibble; some will make you very sick.
- ❖ Remove the stamen and pistils and eat only the petals (eat pansies and violas whole).
- ❖ The best edible flowers are organic and are picked away from the roadside or pet zone !

Skin Care Herbs

Long recognised for calming the soul and the skin, herbs are used around the world to help people (and animals) look and feel better. Lavender, aloe vera, calendula, rosemary, chamomile, wheatgrass and bergamot remain essential to many beauty products and routines.

Calendula (*Calendula officinalis*) is a valued ingredient in many skin care products. Both the flowers and the leaves of this bright cheerful plant can be used in skin lotions to cleanse and nourish, to clear up pimples, and to remove warts, corns and callouses ¹⁶.

As a member of the marigold family, calendula is recognized for its rejuvenating properties and its antiseptic, anti-fungal, and anti-bacterial qualities. It was used extensively to dress wounds in the American Civil War, as it promotes healing, similar to arnica.

Botanical Herbs

Evidence of herbal medicines being used dates back as far as 50,000 years ago, with traces of pollen in Neanderthal caves indicating its use as a bronchial dilator. Ephedrine, which is found in pollen, is recorded in the first known herbal medicine guide, Shennong Bencaojing (Classics of Materia Medica), which was produced during the Han Dynasty nearly 2,200 years ago ¹⁷.

One healing herb that is familiar to many North Americans is St. John's Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*); in fact, "wort" is the Anglo-Saxon word for medicinal herb and "hypericum" refers to "above the pictures" because it was hung above early shrines to repel evil spirits ¹⁸. St. John's Wort grows in temperate zones all around the world, so its medicinal properties were put to use by many civilizations. The English used it to cure mania, in Russia it protected against hydrophobia, Brazilians used it as an antidote to snake bite, and many indigenous people used it as a calming agent.



16 St. John's Wort

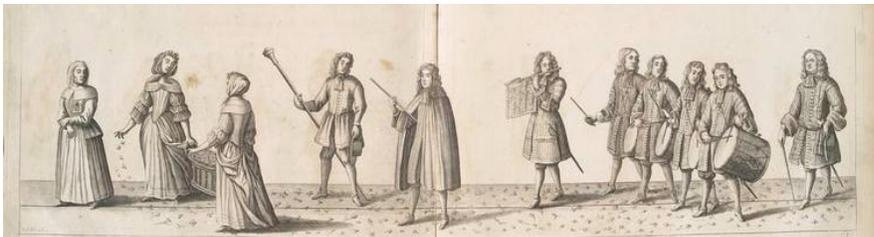
Today, St. John's Wort oil is known for treating neuralgia, sciatica, wounds, varicose veins, ulcers and sunburn ¹⁸. Many herbs that have potent botanical (medicinal) properties also make powerful household or utilitarian products.

Utility Herbs

Herbs have been used in housekeeping applications for thousands of years. Archeologists have discovered that as early as 77,000 years ago, plants that deterred pests were spread out on sleeping platforms and then burned periodically to destroy any accumulated insects¹⁴.

Housekeepers during the Middle Ages strewed herbs on bare dirt floors to repel fleas, lice, moths and other insect pests. The herbal carpet masked unsavoury smells and provided insulation. Lemon Balm, basil, chamomile, costmary, cowslip, daisies, fennel, pennyroyal, pine, rose, sage, southernwood, sweet flag, sweet woodruff, tansy, thyme, sweet violet and winter savory were used for this purpose⁴.

Fragrant flowers and herbs were often strewn before royalty or newlywed couples, sometimes to ward off diseases of the streets but also to represent virtues such as loyalty and love. Laurel, rosemary, and bay leaves were commonly used¹⁹.



17 The Kings Herb-woman, and her 6 Maids, with baskets of sweet herbs & flowers, strewing the way

Housekeepers also cultivated calendula (*Calendula officinalis*) for the yellow dyes that could be extracted for colouring cheese, butter or fabric, while the red dyes from St. Johns Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*) were said to represent the blood that was let at his beheading. When hung above the door on the saint's birthday, St. John's Wort was believed to ward off evil spirits and thunder. Other herbs were used in a variety of ceremonies because of the spiritual properties they were believed to possess.

Sacred Herbs

Since time immemorial, many civilizations have used herbs in ceremonies and rituals or when communicating with their ancestors (think of incense, frankincense and myrrh).

The nine sacred herbs of the Anglo Saxons are chamomile, chervil, crab apple, fennel, mugwort, nettle, plantain, sainfoin, and watercress, which were all considered to drive away evil. Other herbs that warded off spells, the devil, and lightning were dill, garlic and houseleek (hens and chicks)¹⁴.

For many Native Amerindians, the four sacred herbs are tobacco, cedar, sage, and sweetgrass. These sacred herbs each had distinct properties, although they are all used in smudging (burning), cleansing and for offering prayers²⁰. Other wild herbs are also used for sacred purposes, such as red willow bark, osha root (lovage), and uva ursi (kinnikinnik).

Wildcrafting Herbs

When is a weed not a weed?



Sometimes overlooked as “weeds” in our backyards, native plants are regaining popularity worldwide, as their role in health, comfort, low maintenance gardening and traditional ceremonies is being revived. Many traditional herbalists prefer to harvest herbs and plants where they grow wild (wildcrafting) as opposed to cultivating them where it is convenient for harvest.

18 Stinging Nettles (*Urtica dioica*)

Native plants thrive in response to the local terroir (complete growing environment), so they generally need less care and water than introduced species. Local plants play a vital role in the local ecosystem, providing food, shelter and medicine for local animals, birds, insects and people. At Hazelwood Herb Farm, the surrounding woodlands provide a natural environment that allows the continuation of wildcrafting (gathering native plants) for some of Barbara’s favourite local herbs.

Some guidelines to consider when gathering wild plants include:

- Know and respect the endangered species, leave the first plant you encounter and seek the next, and allow the mature plants to stay in place to nurture the next generation along.
- Pick only a few leaves or flowers from each plant; only uproot them if you will use the root.
- Pick only from healthy plants and take only what you can use right away.
- It is customary to thank the plant and offer a prayer, song or words of gratitude. You can also offer sacred herbs or even a strand of hair to show respect to their creator.

Whether cultivated or wildcrafted, the herbs that Barbara at Hazelwood Herb Farm is thankful and respectful of the herb plants that she carefully nurtures. All the herbal products made in the processing kitchen are processed according to traditional, small batch recipes and methods, although with a little help from some modern kitchen conveniences !

Preparing for Processing

Harvesting

When plants are thought of as commodities, they begin to be harvested without thought or thanks for the contributions they make to the human experience. At Hazelwood, Barbara and the staff are always mindful when they harvest the herbs, and they are committed to making the best use of the plant as is possible. This means knowing when in its cycle to harvest each plant part to gain the most benefit from its properties. From early spring, young shoots and tender leaves are harvested for fresh use, and later in

the summer, seeds or stalks are collected for drying and processing. Roots can be dug late in the season, despite the frosts of fall and winter.

Harvesters and foragers must also pay attention to the time of day and the weather to be sure to pick plants on sunny days after the dew has dried from their leaves. Whole plants lose their potency more slowly than plant parts, so it is also advisable to leave plants intact until they are ready for processing.

There are several natural methods of preserving herbs for cooking and for use in home remedies. Fresh herbs may be used immediately, carefully dried for future use, or processed as an infusion to preserve them and provide the basis for a variety of other herbal products.

Drying

Not all herbs are available in the garden year round and one simple way to preserve them is by drying.

The freshly-picked herbs at Hazelwood Herb Farm are dried on racks in a well-ventilated dryer on site. The thoroughly-dried herbs can store for one year if they are kept dry, cool, and dark.

Once dried, the leafy stalks are hand rubbed and sifted into flakes, which are ready for use in the kitchen. Dried herbs and flowers are excellent for making teas or for adding to culinary, skin care or household products.

Infusions in the Sunlight

Streaming sunlight creates potent herbal infusions ! Infusions are prepared much like teas, but are steeped for much longer to draw the properties of the herb into the solution as it sits soaking up the sunlight. Traditionally, monks infused spirits to create after-dinner digestive aids with herbs such as angelica, fennel, mint, thyme and violets ¹⁴.



Hazelwood Herb Farm creates solar infusions by immersing freshly-harvested leaves and flowers in water, oil, vinegar, alcohol or glycerin (depending on the end product) and placing the clear bottles in the sunlight. This process values the integrity of the plant and minimizes the impact on the environment. Barbara uses her infusions when she is processing extracts, salves, soaps, oils, vinegars or preserves.

21 Sunlight Infusions

Traditional Transformations in Process

At Hazelwood Herb Farm, small, hand-crafted batches of lotions, potions and culinary delights are produced in the health-inspected preparation room. This room has a “cottage kitchen” feel and is equipped with familiar kitchen tools that are used in processing the herbs. The processes are still very similar to the way that preparations were crafted years ago. While the equipment may have been upgraded and the chemistry of the processes more scientifically understood, the products and uses for them would likely be familiar to traditional herbalists.

Simple ingredients are combined with the Hazelwood herbs to preserve and support the beneficial properties that are essential to the recipes. Many of these recipes were handed down from the previous owners. Barbara and her staff continue to add recipes from both ancient and contemporary sources, including searching centuries-old writings about herbals, scanning reputable sites on the Internet and gleaning wisdom from renowned herbalists and the previous owners.

Traditional Emulsification and Preservation Challenges

For long term storage, the continual suspension of herbal ingredients in a carrier such as oil, fat or beeswax has been a challenge for herbalists. Animal fats can become rancid, temperature fluctuations alter the viscosity of many oils, and fermentation occurs without preservatives. Before the advent of sealed containers, liquids might be covered with oil to create an airless environment. Dried products only lasted until moisture crept in, but freshly picked and processed items lost potency quickly. Often remedies were prepared on an as-needed basis, encouraging frequent visits to the village herbalist or apothecary.

Mortar and Pestle

The mortar and pestle (sometimes referred to as an "Apothecary Grinder") is an essential tool that is used worldwide by traditional and modern herbalists. The bowl-like mortar holds the fresh or dried herbs, while the pestle is used to pound and grind the herbs to release the oils and flavour essences. Rice, corn, millet, sorghum and wheat are pounded in large mortars for food preparation around the world.



21 Mortar and Pestle

For pharmaceutical use, the mortar and the head of the pestle are usually made of porcelain, while the handle of the pestle is made of wood. This is known as a Wedgewood mortar and pestle and originated in 1779. For culinary purposes, non-porous materials are best, such as marble, ceramic or dense glass.

In Slavic folklore Baba Yaga or Baba Roga is a hag (wise woman) or witchlike character who flies through the air in a mortar, using the pestle as a rudder. In Russian tales, she kidnaps children (presumably to eat them), and she sweeps away the tracks behind her with a broom made of silver birch. In other myths, she is sought out for her wisdom and occasionally offers guidance to lost souls ²¹.



19 Baba Yaga with Mortar and Pestle

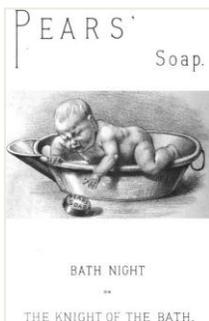
Baba Yaga is one of many archetypal "witches" whose image in the community fluctuates between the wise woman herbalist and the symbol of everything that is dark ²². Despite the ongoing persecution of herbalists and healers across the centuries and in multiple ways, the ancient practice of herbalism continues to be passed on between men and women who safeguard the knowledge about multiple culinary, beauty, household and health applications.

Traditional Culinary Products

Herbs were initially gathered and cultivated for their beneficial health and preservative properties. They were deemed essential to preserve prepared food, to add colour and to protect stored food from decay. Pungent garlic, juniper berries, clove and oregano initially preserved the freshness of food, through their anti-bacterial qualities. The prevalence of curries in hot climates illustrates the use of cayenne to extend shelf life, as these hot peppers have also demonstrated anti-bacterial qualities. Even common nettles had their purpose - historic use included wrapping dried nettle leaves around stored apples, root vegetables and moist cheeses to preserve them and keep off pests. With refrigeration and canning becoming commonplace, the primary contribution of herbs as a flavouring became more appreciated.

Traditional Cosmetic Products

Commonly used to soften skin and to beautify, early cosmetics contained fats, lard, minerals and herbal colorants as standard ingredients. Some men and women used Belladonna drops for pupil enlargement and Henna colouring for skin and hair, or they took milk baths for pale skin and applied berry juice for red lips. At other times, they risked their health by applying powdered arsenic and lead to whiten their skin! In the name of beauty, humans have undertaken some vain pursuits!



While the popularity of personal cleanliness has historically waxed and waned, some form of cleaning product has persisted for skin and hair. Solid soap was virtually unknown in northern Europe until the thirteenth century when it was first imported from Islamic Spain and North Africa. Most homeowners made their own soaps until commercial hard soaps were produced economically in England in 1789 by the still-familiar Pears' Soap Company.

22 Pears' Soap advertising

Some traditional cosmetic applications have worked well and others are now understood to be toxic. At Hazelwood Herb Farm, pure, non-toxic ingredients are blended into time-tested recipes for skin and hair care, and the results are enduring, safe and sustainable!

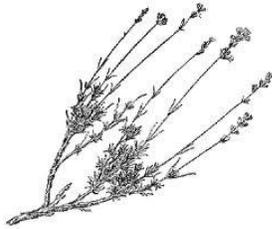
Traditional Medical Products

While many successful recipes and applications have persisted over time, the medical knowledge of the era influenced the way that herbs were employed. Tallow, turpentine, tar and invocations were added to the healer's tools in an attempt to enhance the plant powers that seemed so mysterious. Some plants were said to repel or attract spiritual elements, and these elements were blamed for illness. A belief in the "humours" of the body during the 15-1600s contributed to the use of bitters, sweets and sour as curative approaches²³. Purges, leaches and the influence of mythical powers were partnered with empirical herbal knowledge in early Victorian times.

The herbal benefits of many early products and treatment processes have more recently been proven to have scientific credence, while some of the products and application processes have not. For example, coal tar distillate is on display at Hazelwood Herb Farm, which was used as a vapor treatment for respiratory ailments. We know today that inhaling coal vapors would create health problems of its own!

Contemporary Transformations in Process

The use of herbal remedies and folk medicine is still a large part of the global health care system, and plant-based products are offered to consumers by a large assortment of practitioners and producers.



20 Lavender Plant

Large pharmaceuticals have replaced the apothecaries of yore, and rather than village healers, government health departments oversee mass production and distribution of health care and treatment. Modern health care products are commonly blended from ingredients that are collected and shipped across continents and are applied far from their origins. Artificial colours, fragrances and preservatives are used because they are less expensive and extend the shelf life and profit margin of most commonly-sold home products.

In contrast, at Hazelwood Herb Farm, there is a continuous flow from seedling to field to harvest and then to production. Many of the ingredients are handpicked at the peak of their potency and then carefully preserved within hours of their collection. Here, the advantage of fresh, local production gives the skilled staff the best possible ingredients to work with.

As the global availability of original ingredients shifts, Barbara is able to recreate the success of a product by using local plants, and in doing so, she reduces the need for shipping and storage. This also ensures that the freshest, most cost-effective products are presented in the store. Instead of Slippery Elm from Eastern Canada, perhaps local Marshmallow will provide the needed effect. From the field to your kitchen and cabinet, there is integrity and a personal touch in each of Hazelwood's products!

Small Scale Processing for Sustainability

Herbalism practised at the cottage herbalist level can promote the development of self-sufficiency and sustainability for the artisan and their products. On Hazelwood Herb Farm, sustainability also means ensuring the best use of all their resources.

Each item is hand crafted in the compact, health-inspected kitchen at Hazelwood. Due to public health standards, visitors are not invited into the preparation area, but can view it from the observation window just outside the boutique.

In order to maximize her time and effort, Barbara has been able to incorporate some modern appliances to assist with what were previously labour-intensive processes that can lead to repetitious strain injury. The processing kitchen on site sports a blender, a crock pot, a hand mixer and even at times the use of a hand-held drill and paint mixer for soap making!

Barbara's small-batch soap making has evolved through trial and research, and she has achieved perfection in spite of fluctuating environmental influences. She discovered that temperature, humidity and barometric pressure can alter the outcome of a batch, as can the amount of stirring!

Emulsifiers and Preservatives

High quality, safety and freshness are paramount in modern Herbology, so small batches ensure rapid distribution of popular products before the next replacement run is scheduled.

Various vegetable-based emulsifiers and oils are used by traditional soap makers to suspend herbal components in lotions and creams. Beeswax blended with oil hardens into a solid base for balms and salves, while lecithin and cocoa butter harden bars and sticks. Coconut, olive, almond and avocado oils offer soothing bases for skin products.



21 Honey comb

Instead of using potentially-harmful preservatives, Barbara relies on a series of barriers (inhibiting ingredients) to prevent contamination of her products. The use of boric acid, citric acid, vinegars and essential oils (among others) may slow the growth of bacteria and extend the shelf life for over 12 months. In combination, they halt a variety of potentially-destructive microbes. While this strategy works well, it is not meant to produce unlimited shelf life for her preparations. These products are meant to be used while at their peak, so the kitchen produces a ready supply of fresh products.

Bountiful Products in the Boutique

The range of stock on the shelves in the boutique is driven by demand at Hazelwood Herb Farm. The turnover of product is carefully monitored and shelf life is preserved with non-toxic ingredients and frequent production. From locally-sourced packaging, to on-site storage, to home-grown ingredients, the integration of local inputs shows the integrity in Hazelwood's commitment to sustainability.

The boutique is stocked with the simplest of dried herbs, myriad blended teas, a selection of salves or ready-to-prepare baking mixes and specialty culinary blends. Each product has its origins in the Hazelwood Herb Farm soil.

Culinary:

Spice rubs, bread mixes, vinegars and oils, mustards, prepared jellies and chutneys flavoured with ingredients grown on the land.

Beauty:

Lotions, creams, massage oils and aromatic essential oils and colognes. Lip balms, gentle shampoos, shower gels scented soaps for all occasions and a men's skin toner!

Medicinal:

Healing salves, delicate baby products, therapeutic teas and massage oils and Aromatherapy preparations and pillows. Soothing soaps and shampoos for common complaints.

And more!

Pet supplies that deter pests, catnip stuffed cat toys, safe housecleaning solutions and even vehicle air fresheners!

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