

Healing In The Fields And Forests



The project is a discovery spanning across four seasons
This is our Summer Story



Scottish
Forestry
Coilltearachd
na h-Alba



Scottish Natural Heritage
Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba
nature.scot



Healing in the Fields and Forest is an intercultural, intergenerational, four-season foraging adventure involving the Scottish Nepalese community and friends. Funded by Scottish Forestry and Scottish Natural Heritage, our project involved 8 visits to the local countryside. Here we enjoyed nature through interactive activities exploring the traditional medicinal and cosmetic uses of native Scottish trees and plants, and the folklore surrounding them.

A Walk of Discovery

Our third Healing in the Fields in Forest was in Vogrie Country Park where we had been earlier in the year. This time it was much warmer and the trees and flowers were in full bloom. We looked at the different flowers growing in the woods and the meadows like Meadowsweet, Geranium, Yarrow, Lady's Mantle, Valerian, Soapwort and Wild Roses. In the afternoon we made creams and sprays from different flower waters and used a combination of essential oils from flowers, like rose and geranium to give them a perfume.

Trees and Plants on the Walk

Walking in the woods at Vogire we discovered many medicinal herbs. Meadowsweet, on the right, has been used by Scots since the Iron Age, as a pain killer, and also to flavour mead. It was so highly prized that many people were buried with it. There were also Wild Roses and Dog

Roses. The flowers are fragrant and the hips that come later

in the year are crammed with Vitamin C. There was also Cranesbill, a wild Geranium not to be confused with the cultivated Pelargonium (also called Geranium!). Wild Geranium oil is used in skincare for maturing skins.

We also found Angelica (bottom right) which is a member of the Wild Carrot family. This reminds us to be careful only to pick plants we are absolutely sure we can identify correctly. In the same family is a plant called Hemlock which is highly poisonous as is Giant Hogweed. But Sweet Cicely and Hogweed are both edible like Angelica.

Making a Herbal Cream

This recipe makes 250g cream. This will fill 5 x 50 ml size pots. (A useful measurement to know is that 1 medicine sized teaspoon is about 5 ml.)

- 25 ml Emulsifier Aromatic cold emulsifier
- 75 ml Vegetable oil - Sweet almond, apricot, sunflower, etc. On own or mixed.
- 125 ml Gel / Thickener - Xanthan gum gel
- 25 ml Flower water - Rose water, lavender water, witch hazel, or spring water. 1/2 tsp Vitamin E oil - Sometimes called Tocopherol or Wheatgerm oil
- Add a few drops of chosen essential oils at a time





Step 1. Making the gel

First make your gel in advance. You can use xanthan gum, cellulose, gelatine or even pure aloe vera gel. Xanthan gum powder is used at about 1.5% of the volume of water - this is roughly 1 level (flat) teaspoon per 100 ml. For the recipe above, sprinkle 2 level teaspoons of xanthan gum powder onto 200 ml of warm boiled water. Sprinkle onto the water very slowly, whisking and mixing in all the time to avoid any lumps. Cover and put aside for later.

Step 2. Making the cream

- Measure out the first 4 ingredients into separate jugs or jars.
- Add Ingredient 1 - the emulsifier - into a mixing bowl.
- Add Ingredient 2 - the vegetable oil(s) - and beat it into the emulsifier. Use a metal or wooden spoon (not a whisk) to avoid air bubbles.
- Add Ingredient 3 - the gel - and beat firmly into the mixture.
- Add Ingredient 4 - the flower water - and beat firmly into the mixture.
- Beat until you are happy with the texture and thickness.
- Stir in your Vitamin E oil and your essential oil(s).
- Spoon into a jar and put on the lid.

Keep in the fridge as there is no preservative in this cream. If you add more water, the cream will turn into lotion. Go slowly so you don't 'break' the mixture. You can also make the gel using flower water instead of plain water if you want a stronger scent and flower action. Infuse the oil with flower petals Put flower petals in a clean jam jar, cover with oil. Leave on a sunny windowsill for 3-4 weeks. Strain and use.

Making a Flower Water

Boil herbs or flowers in a little water, strain, add water and boil again. Add a little alcohol to dissolve a few drops of essential oil for a stronger scent. Add a little gel (or gelatine) to thicken it a little and prevent it being too runny. Put in a spritzer bottle for a refreshing face or body spray.

Children's Woodland Activities

Our summer exploration started with a mystery expedition across park, fields and woods. Before setting off we'd each written a different direction into a folded paper fortune teller. As we walked each of us took a turn to open up instructions ... things like: "Walk North for 30 steps then turn right and keep going until you pass a fallen log" or "Stop at the first Oak tree then turn left and walk ahead for 2 minutes". This random way of walking was really fun and adventurous because it took us into all sorts of areas we might've normally avoided. We clambered through undergrowth, through brambles and nettles and into dark corners of the wood. At times we had to carry the smaller children and we all looked after each other like real explorers! The bigger ones turned over an old rotting log and there we discovered lots of strange





creatures like wood slaters, centipedes and slimy slugs. Jamie, the botanist's son, picked one up and told us lots of slug facts:

Did you know?

- Slugs have soft bodies and move by pulling themselves along using a long and very strong muscly foot.
- Slug slime helps them slide across the ground and helps them stick to steep surfaces.
- Slugs come out at night and prefer the wet and the cold.
- Slugs can dehydrate and die if caught in a wind.
- Slugs live underground and absorb moisture through dirt.
- Slugs are vegetarians and eat plants.

We also made leaf I.D. wheels, which helped us to discover what leaves grew on which trees. The Horse Chestnut tree was an easy one to spot and so was the Oak tree with its knobbly leaves. Beech leaves are soft and shiny. Sycamore leaves came in all sizes and we made little helicopters from the winged Sycamore seeds. Our favorite tree was the Rowan tree. It had bright red clusters of berries and we had lots of fun throwing berries up to the sky for the birds – and at each other!! We walked into the very woody part of the park above a river and we found a giant tree with a huge trunk where we created "Greenmen" out of clay and natural stuff like leaves and feathers and grasses and beech nuts that we found on the woodland floor. The adults came by and found us having so much fun that they all wanted to make Greenmen too!

For lots of great nature inspired activities to do with your family and friends check out the Nature Detective resources at:
www.naturedetectives.org.uk

Lasting Impressions

It was amazing knowing that lots of plants surround us that are medicinally valuable. It is a really nice and peaceful place and I would like to come here frequently to learn something new and interesting.

Sharada Aie

Making and drinking the juices was great. I learnt a lot about plants, something I have little knowledge about, and it was fascinating to hear the medical implications they have. I also really enjoyed the atmosphere.

Ashkan Zaie

It was very enjoyable and informative. I enjoyed making and trying juice from the plants we had collected. I think we will need to get a juicer to make our own health drinks.

Lesley Watson

I most enjoyed the nettle leaf, green apple and ginger juice tonic because this is helpful for skin.

Saadia Nassim

I saw raspberries in the wood. I found clues for the nature hunt and made a bag to put things in. It was very very good.

William Limbu

It was definitely an enjoyable experience for my child and me. I enjoyed learning new things such as picking nettles, dandelions and other leaves to make delicious healthy juice.

BS



Me and my family enjoyed it a lot. It reminded me of my motherland. I want to learn more information about the plants.

Srijana Sharma

It was a very enjoyable and useful day for my family. The day was organised very well for both the adults and children. We most enjoyed learning about different types of herbal plants.

Indra Rai

I enjoyed picking the stinging nettles because it was fun. We should love to participate in more events like this.

Bhim Kumari Gharti Magar

I learned about different plants and herbs – I enjoyed processing the juice.

Yasoda Roka

Healing in the Fields and Forests promotes the therapeutic and health benefits of plants growing in green space and woodlands, seeking to inspire a life-long interest in and love of nature and the great outdoors.

Our thanks to:

Gurkha Association Scotland
Nepal Scotland Association
Scottish Natural Heritage
The Woodland Trust
Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh
The people of North Middleton
Tika Limbu
Jennet Walton
Albert Harris
Dr Mark Watson (RBGE)
Dr Bhaskar Adhikari (RBGE)
Alasdair Taylor

Project facilitators:

Joanna Boyce – Creative Art Works CIC
www.creative-art-works.org
For more information on projects email
joanna@creative-art-works.org

Monica Wilde – Napiers the Herbalists
www.napiers.net
For more information about the recipes
used in this workshop go to
www.monica wilde.com

Photography by Kishor Dangol:

If your group is interested in taking part in a similar project
please contact romena.huq@forestry.gov.scot

[www. forestry.gov.scot/engagement](http://www.forestry.gov.scot/engagement)



**Scottish
Forestry**
**Coilltearachd
na h-Alba**

Scottish Forestry is the Scottish Government agency responsible for
forestry policy, support and regulation
S e Coilltearachd na h-Alba a' bhuidheann-ghnìomha aig Riaghaltas
na h-Alba a tha an urra ri poileasaidh, taic agus riaghladh do choilltearachd



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot