

This booklet was made with love by emmy akin olivo, linguist/ethnobotanist/educator of acorn.wiki and coyote mountain nature school.

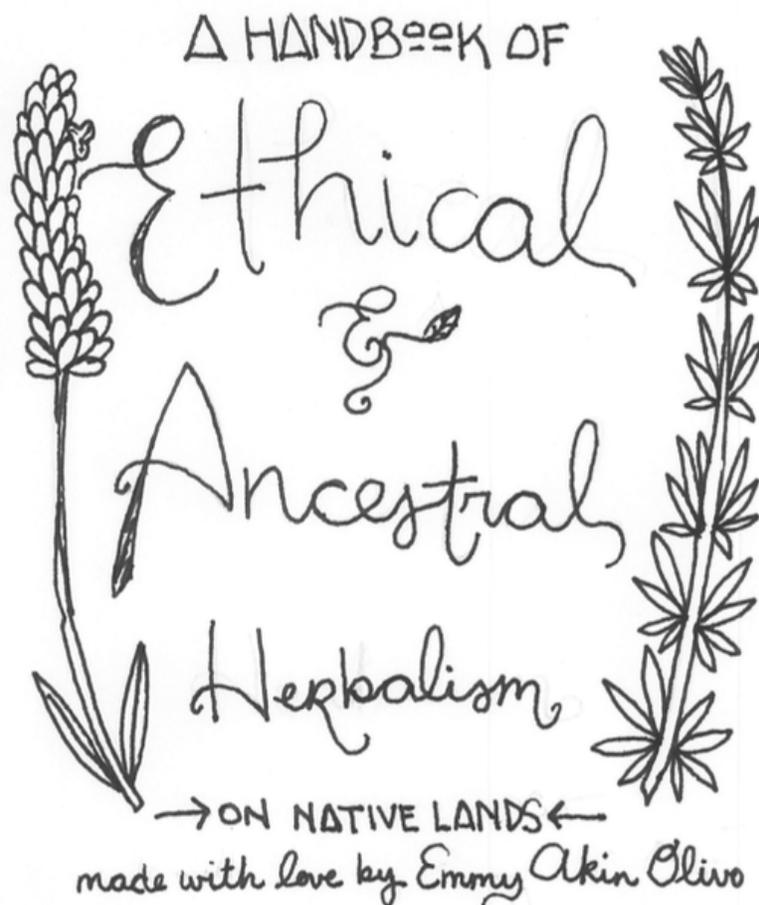
as a part of the Ethical Herbalism series, this booklet was made with respect to Indigenous peoples globally. it was made with the intention to help guide non-native residents of the americas to understand our role in the protection and liberation of plant medicines, while also sharing how each of us can reconnect with our own ancestral traditional medicines.

the original version was made 2018. this is the 2021 version.

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reconnection

some of us have stronger connections to our ancestry than others. some of us feel so distanced in time and space from our ancestral regions and cultures, that 'reconnecting' may feel silly. the point in the end is to research plant medicine and lifestyle practices that speak to you and inspire you to go deeper, healing the toxic disconnection instilled deep within us.

ANCESTRAL GARDEN

many of us with gardens are proud to have local native plants. do you also have a section dedicated to plants that are ancestral to you? even a single house plant can accompany you in reconnecting with your ancestry.

CLEANSE

while california sage bundles are a popular tool for cleansing, there has been a call by many native californians to stop buying bundles. how cleansing can it really be to buy and use an exploited sacred plant? luckily, our ancestors had their own way to cleanse. herbs were burned in cauldrons, bundled, or collected as 'strewing herbs' to throw on the floors, window sills, doorways and drawers of the house. what did/do the people of your ancestral lands do?

is your healing toxic?

before you step into any sweat lodge or shamanism workshop, be critical with yourself. what is it that you are seeking? connection or alignment? spiritual healing or cleansing? or are you seeking an exotic cultural or psychedelic experience? **spiritual healing is a process of addressing and alleviating traumas while breaking toxic cycles.** certain demographics have different traumas and cycles; for example, while black/indigenous/people of color (bipoc) must heal ancestral and personal traumas caused by things like slavery, genocide, and racism, white-identified people must focus more on breaking the toxic cycles that lead to things such as substance abuse, racism, and colonialism. if we choose to utilize indigenous medicine in our work, we continue the cycle of colonization of indigenous peoples and their lands. it is time for us to heal ourselves through exploring our own ancestral medicine, which we have been missing for so long. although some ceremonies and medicines are powerful enough to set any person- regardless of their heritage- on a healing path, it is more common that such medicine gets abused as a result. healing in itself is ancestral work; in our dna we carry memories as well as pre-dispositions to particular ailments. just like the best foods for your body, some of the best medicine you can find is the same medicine your ancestors used.

s a c r e d



p r o f a n e

the sacred/profane dichotomy witnessed in ethnobotany, as described by dr. mark merlin of university of hawai'i at mānoa, is the phenomenon in which sacred plant medicines and other ceremonial forms of healing can be abused and transformed into 'profane' and even toxic industries.

coca is a sacred plant native to the andean region of south america. its rich nutrients and life-giving properties are what makes this powerful medicine part of the backbone of andean cultures. it is used to communicate with the landscape and spirit world, making it central to life and death in the andes.

fermented & distilled beverages like beer, whiskey, mead and wine were traditionally made in europe as a form of medicine and sustenance. alcoholic beverages were originally taken as a community in ceremonial or celebratory contexts, or as a medicinal, nutrient-rich drink.

ayahuasca is a powerful & sacred plant medicine (brewed in combination with other plants) native to the amazon, used traditionally by various amazonian nations. it is a powerful medicine used to cure many ailments, always in ceremony by a healer who was born and raised in intensive training to be able to work with such medicine.

cocaine, one of the psychoactive properties of coca that gives energy to humans, is also the name of the toxic powdery substance used as a party drug. making cocaine requires near-enslavement of coca farmers, child soldiers to protect the factories, and has caused the death of thousands in south america as a result of production.

alcoholism/alcohol abuse is one of the most common ailments in the human experience. after generations of alcohol being used as a form of payment for indentured servants instead of its original sacred context, alcohol abuse is now a source of violence and addiction.

\$hamanism, or the commodification of ceremonies, has especially affected ayahuasca. peru has been ravaged by foreign tourists searching for healing- and most likely these tourists take ayahuasca from non-shipibo/ amazonian peruvians or worse, other foreigners. ayahuasca is not the only plant medicine to fall victim to \$hamanism

discuss: what are other medicines and toxic substances & industries that fall along the sacred/profane scale?

