

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.

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plant allyship



## being a plant ally

being an ally does not only entail sharing resources, but refusing to consume particular resources as well. just as vegans and vegetarians disrupt the meat industry by refusing to pay for and consume animal meat, allies to native communities can choose not to:

- consume or buy cocaine
- consume or buy ayahuasca
- buy california white sage

in order to not only protect the plant medicines from abuse, but also honor the people these plants are native to.

declining to participate in ceremonies of sacred plants that are not ancestral to the \$haman administering the medicine is equivalent to declining to participate in colonist practices. to actively refuse to participate in such practices is an act of breaking an intergenerational cycle of conquering native lands, bodies, and cultures for the use of its resources.

discuss: what plant medicines can you decline to pay for and/or consume, and which communities will you be supporting in the process?

## common ailments in allyship

- 1. self-hate.** in our journey in understanding the depths and expansiveness of violence caused by white supremacy, it is difficult for white people dedicated to anti-racism to appreciate their skin. our bodies can be a constant reminder of the injustices of this world. lack of self-love and even self-hate can be common, even causing white people to look at other white anti-racist activists with distrust.
- 2. substance abuse & colonization of medicine.** it is not unusual to find abuse of sacred medicines in activist circles. for example, cocaine is still a popular party drug. cocaine is actually a property of the sacred coca leaf; however, the powdery substance used so often in the US is a bastardized version that is a product of enslaved poor farmers, gang and civil wars in various latin american countries, child soldiers, and colonization of indigenous lands. it is the consumption of this profane form of sacred medicine that fuels death and violence of native lands and people.  
discuss: what else do you think often plagues those who seek to be allies to other groups?

this booklet was written with the intention to connect with herbalists, healers, botanists, plant friends, hippies, activists and others who are identified as white, in an attempt to help guide folks to an ethical path of herbalism and healing.

## PLANT // ALLYSHIP

**ALLY.** noun. mid-15th century. “a person (or state) formally cooperated with another for political or other purpose.”

**ALLY.** verb. “combine or unite a resource or commodity with another for mutual benefit.” also, “side with or support (someone or something)”

**ACCOMPLICE.** noun. mid-16th century. “a person who helps another commit a crime.”

**PLANT ALLY.** noun. “a plant that continually guides, speaks to, supports, and heals a person.”

as with social/political alliance, cultivating relationships with plant allies is non-linear, continuous work. it requires deep listening, humility, practice, and self-reflection. cultivating the openness to allow plant allies to come forward will always bring us into more healing pathways, not only for ourselves, but for the people and ecology around us.

discuss: how would you define plant ally?

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very often, people abuse sacred medicines for three reasons: to find a path/understand their purpose in life, to heal trauma, or because of curiosity of sacred medicine and the ancient knowledge it has to share.

these three common thirsts can be satiated without exploiting limited and deeply sacred resources from other marginalized groups of people. in fact, we can all collectively learn to heal our own traumas, break toxic intergenerational cycles, find our paths, and unearth forgotten knowledge through non-appropriated practices and connecting with our own ancestral roots. this can be done through herbal medicine as well as other artisanal and cultural practices.

discuss: what is a personally ancestral practice you have unearthed, intentionally or accidentally?

by reconnecting with our own unique and diverse ancestries, we can arrive to common ground together. being connected with the flow and rhythm of nature, tuned in through the calendar of ritual and ceremony and the philosophies behind them is something that is wholly humanistic in nature. however, it's important to understand the nuance of what is common among all human societies (cleansing, harvesting, celebrating, healing, eating, etc), and what is unique and sacred to distinctive cultures.

discuss: what's an example of an aspect of a culture that can be shared by everyone? what's an example of an aspect that should remain only for the people of that culture?

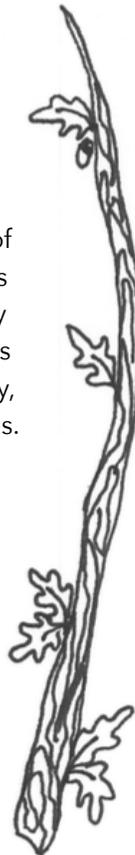
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## ancestral allies

**angelica root** this medicinal plant is native to asia (*angelica sinensis*), europe (*angelica archangelica*) and california (*angelica californica*) and has unique medicinal as well as spiritual uses in all three places.

**oak** while oak trees are known to be the food staple of most native californian tribes, their family tree reaches all corners of the planet. in parts of europe, especially in celtic culture, oak trees are sacred beings that act as a bridge between human and spirit world. traditionally, ceremonies are conducted in the presence of oak trees.

**plantain** *plantago major* is native to europe and north and central asia, but can be found in almost every nook and crevice in the world. like dandelion, its resilient adaptability extends to even the smallest cracks in concrete. commonly used as a poultice or in salves, plantain's versatility and indiscriminate healing properties make it a popular medicine among all people throughout the world.



## plant communication

plants and humans have an extensive, rich history of communicating with one another. it's a common misconception that humans only learned about medicinal plants through trial and error: there are many ways in which plants tell us about what they can be used for. though plants cannot speak, they have numerous ways to communicate including through their scents, alkaloids, chemicals, or even the way in which they grow or bear fruit.

### DREAMING OF PLANTS

has a plant ever come to visit you in a dream? this is usually one of the loudest ways in which plants try to speak to us. if you dream of a plant, research about its medicinal or spiritual use.

discuss: have you dreamt of a plant lately?

### WHO'S ON YOUR MIND?

what plant have you been thinking about lately? you may sometimes find yourself thinking about certain plants - or maybe you're noticing them a lot more when you are out and about. this is a great opportunity to research this plant — maybe its medicinal use could be helpful to you!

discuss:

which plants do you feel connected to lately?

what lessons have you learned from a plant recently?

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