

Journey School Food Community CSA

Week 13: March 30, 2007

Now pay attention. Do pay attention so I don't have to repeat myself. You humans do not seem to pay much attention. Do you think you can quiet yourself enough to pay attention to me? I am stinging nettle, though you may call me sister spinster, if you like. I have some things of import to impart to you, if you will just pay attention.

Wow, she's a little abrupt, that Miss Nettle. In fact her unexpected sting is all that most people associate with nettle. Last year, our family discovered the wonderful nutrition of this free gift. Nettle Quesadillas became an instant hit – simply place the tortilla and cheese in your skillet, heap the nettle greens on top and place a lid over all for a few minutes over low heat. Even this brief steaming removes nettle's sting. You can roll the tortilla and enjoy a power-packed snack in less time than it takes to open a bag of chips! For an even quicker nutritional boost, place a few fresh leaves in a cup, pour boiling water over and let steep until drinkable, then eat the leaves when you reach the end of your tea.

Having said as much, why do you think the first person went from being stung by this prolific weed to actually putting it in their mouth? How do we know when something so painful might be good for us? How do we know in any case what is good for us? The abundance of nettle and the arrival of April Fool's Day have set me thinking. Of all the wonderful things we've learned in the last two thousand years, I think one thing we've forgotten (particularly as adults) is how to recognize when we are being tricked. Perhaps with all the money-back guarantees and insurances of all kinds, we've stopped exercising the skill of discernment. I invite you to pause just a moment each time you see nettle this Spring and hear her voice "Pay attention, what is front of you?"

How can I help you pay attention? Let's try this: close your eyes and become aware of the sun on your skin, and the breeze tickling your temples, and the rich scent of the earth, and the chuckle of the stream. Feel the complex and satisfying nourishment available to you here where I live. And know that this is what I am: this complex nourishment of sun, wind, soil, and water, transformed by my attention and my care, transformed into food for your, into milk for you.

Green milk for you. Are you finding it easier to pay attention? Keep your eyes closed now: and continue to feel the warm sun, the gentle zephyrs, the deep earth, the sensitive waters. Feel all the rich and varied sensations available to you here in my home.

Let my voice move into your awareness, as I spin my sister story, as I tell you of my ability to feed you fully: I can nourish your energy, your being, your sense of self worth, and every cell in your body. Sister spinster, great green nettle, will nourish you with the care and joy that a mother brings to her task. I transform the very elements into green milk for you, green milk vibrantly alive with chlorophyll, calcium, iron, trace minerals, vitamins, proteins, and my own zest and love for life. I become, I am, the milk of you mother, the earth. I am the full breast of the earth, ripe for you to thrive on. I am the sweetness and richness that sustains you and heals you at your mother's breast.

Susun Weed from Healing Wise

Potato Nettle Soup

2 cups Nettle Leaves (young shoots)
1 Onion
6 small Potatoes
8 cups Water
1 tsp salt
1 tsp. Parsley
3 cloves Garlic OR 3 stalks green garlic

Puree onion, garlic, and nettles with 1 cup of water. Cut potatoes into small pieces. Simmer pureed mixture with potatoes and remaining water for 45 minutes or until tender. Use a potato masher to mash the potatoes making the soup thick and creamy.

Sauteed Nettles with Garlic & Olive Oil

serves 6

1 ¼ # Nettles, Cleaned
3T Green Garlic (Chopped)
1/2 cup Olive Oil
Salt & Pepper (To Taste)

First preheat a large sauté pan on medium high heat, (one large enough to accommodate the nettles, you can even use a large pot as well). Second pour ¼ cup of the olive oil into the preheated pan. Then put all of the garlic into the pan sauté briefly for about 30 seconds, just enough time for the garlic to release its essential oils, being sure not to brown or burn the garlic. Place the nettles into the pan and give it a good stir, let sit for just a second and then continue the stirring process. Once the nettles are completely wilted place them on a plate, drizzle with the rest of the olive oil and place a couple of lemon wedges for garnish.

Note: The nettles do not have the water content like spinach or other similar greens. So it might help to put a couple Tablespoons of water into the pan after the nettles have started cooking, just to hurry the cooking process. Myself I do not put the water, because I like the texture of the nettles when you sauté them. It is like little crispy nettle leaves and it also brings about a certain nuttiness. (Both recipes from <http://www.mariquita.com/recipes/nettles.html>)

If you find you just don't like the taste or texture of nettles, don't despair. You can still partake of her nourishing gifts. Try these fun recipes:

Nettle Face Saver

2 cups fresh nettle leaves
1 cup water
1 lemon
½ cup water
Simmer leaves in water in closely covered pan for ten minutes. Cool a bit. Chop or mash leaves and spread evenly on a thin cloth. Steam face (carefully) with nettle water and then apply warm nettle pack. Leave on 10-15 minutes. Finish by washing face with lemon water. Weekly use helps prevent blemishes, lily build-up, loss of skin elasticity, and sun damage.

Green Goddess Plant Food

¼ pound fresh nettles
4 cups water
Pour boiling water over nettle in quart jar and let steep overnight. This recipe may be increased at will. We keep a 55 gallon drum near the greenhouse and gardens filled with water, nettle leaves, comfrey leaves and other weedy inspirations. "and tightly lidded to contain the smell.

Foliar Feed: Strain nettle infusion through cloth; add three tablespoons to 2 cups water. Spray on plants

Root Feed: Pour q cup cooled, unstrained (leaves and all) infusion on ground under tree or shrub. Water in.

Insecticide: For mildew, white flies, aphids, and other plant pests: dilute 4 ounces strained nettle infusion with 1 quart water and one teaspoon of lizuid soap. Use immediately as a spray. Again, the may be made in very large batches.

Susun Week [Healing Wise](#)

Our Sunbalm Book

The Sunbalm Book, also known as 'Secrets of Sunbalm', is a book that the Founder's have been working on since July 2006 and is just now being finished! The characters in the book are dolls that we have made, the personalities of the characters are very similar to that of their creators {Amri and I really throw insult at each other for fun! And Malaika really does hate it}. I think every one knows Drake, my dog. Well, he has been made into a Shifter and put in the book as one of the Founders. We love to write and Sunbalm is the perfect thing to write about. We hope you have as much fun reading it as we have writing it! Zoe Mathias

Prologue

*You look up higher then the tallest tree to see the ball of fire in the sky
When the fireball hangs low in the sky look down below your feet onto mother earth
Oh yes, my riddle started with the sky so high above but the dirt beneath your toes is as much of a mystery as the blue sky above
So look below when the fireball hangs low beneath your horses' hooves
Then go to where our magic keeps the tide from crashing through our castle walls
Dig down deep till you find the key to your treasure chest
And so there lies your second key below your feet*

The Chief Supervisor of Ring of Stones looked out his window and seethed in anger at Castle Sunbalm. He had found the first Riddle, but he needed more, he needed a plan. He called his assistant Bortok.

"How many strong do we have?" he asked.

"500, sir and more coming. We also have a spy in Castle Sunbalm sir," squeaked Bortok.

"Good," the Chief Supervisor snarled, "We'll have an attack as soon as possible."

Corin

A lone rider swept toward the Castle Sunbalm's wall. His steed looked tired and dusty. Castle Sunbalm was a beautiful place, even if it was hot and dry. The buildings looked old and worn with ivy and chickweed vines climbing to the roofs.

Sarah looked down the Forge wall to see the rider and wondered what the rider was doing but did not think anymore about it until there was a thundering knock on the Forge door. Six people sat around a large clay table. The Forge was a big rock-clay made room full of tables and hammers and all sorts of other tools.

"I wonder who that is?" asked Zoe, as she climbed down the ladder. She came back a few seconds later followed by two soldiers and between them walked a proud young man. Kira thought he might be around nineteen, but it was hard to guess. Allyson thought he was rather handsome but he also looked like a troublemaker. Rae {who was a huge lioness} leaned toward Sarah and whispered jokingly, "I wonder how he tastes?" This set Sarah into a quiet fit of giggles.

Kira threw a pillow at her to make her stop. Drake looked him over and asked, "What are you doing here?"

"He said that he wanted," said one of the guards whose name was Shan, "to see the leaders of the village so we brought him to the Founders."

"Very good, your watch should be over so go and rest," Zoe said.

"Should we take him?" asked James, the other guard.

"Well, seeing that the jailer and the only police officer are here you can leave him," said Rae. The guards said good-bye and left. Allyson looked the young man over and asked,

"What is your name?"

"My name is," his voice was quiet and rough, "Corin."

"And what are you doing here?" Drake asked, impatiently.

"Just traveling from far away," Corin said.

"From where? The only settlement around here is Ring of Stones," said Drake.

"I lived in the forest, duh," said Corin smugly.

"You lived with the Elves?" asked Rae. Though Corin couldn't see Rae her voice sent a chill down his spine.

"Nah, Elves are annoying, I lived on a riverboat," said Corin.

"So near Ring of Stones, right?" Kira asked, with a raised eyebrow.

"Up river actually, Ring of Stones is bad place to live by with all the racket of people screeching, and I wanted to get away from there so I came to ask if I could live here," Corin told them.

"So we're just supposed to trust you! We're not stupid!" cried Sarah.

"Hmm, well you can sleep under the Watch Tower for tonight. There is a bed but we will have to get more comfortable blankets, I will take you there," said Zoe.

"I will come too," said Allyson.

"So will I," said Drake quickly.

"All right, lead on," smiled Corin.

"I'm going to bed," yawned Rae.

"Cat nap?" asked Allyson.

"No," said Rae glaring.

"Okay, Okay it was just a joke," said Allyson.

"Come on," said Zoe. They walked past a building covered in vines that had a sign that said 'JAILHOUSE' when Drake told them, "I'll be right back." When Zoe looked questioningly at him he said, "I have to go to the bath room, okay?"

"Of course! Go to mine, Rae's toilet has paint in it," grinned Allyson. As they walked on Corin spoke,

"This house is nice," he told Zoe.

"That's Lemon Flower Infirmary," said Zoe matter-of-factly.

"Oh, I see very nice. Do many get hurt in this land?" asked Corin.

"No not many, sometimes people get sick or get broken bones, but most times it's snake bites sent by the Lone Rider," Zoe told him.

"Who is the lone rider?" asked Corin.

"You don't know who the lone rider is! Interesting, I thought everyone knew about her,"

"Her?" asked Corin.

"Yes, she's been spotted riding west, toward Ring of Stones," If Zoe saw Corin wince she didn't say anything, "she fights with two rapiers, but the scariest thing about her is that she has a cobra wrapped around her head and rattle snakes around her arms."

"She's Saragona, snake empress, and Knight of the seven Deserts," chorused Zoe and Allyson.

"Ah," sighed Corin.

"Allyson can show you around, while I get blankets," said Zoe as she walked to the Infirmary.

"Come," commanded Allyson. She walked in to the building's bottom floor. Corin followed silently; the room {it was only one room} was bare except for a small clay bed and for a mattress lay a pile of dried leaves.

"I hope that this will suit you, Corin," said Allyson. Corin looked down at the small bed and thought of his luxurious bed made with silks and sighed. "It's perfect, it makes me homesick," Corin sighed again.

"Hope it doesn't make you too homesick," called Zoe from the door. Corin noticed a huge black wolf at her side; it had big amber eyes that stared right back at him. Corin choked back a yelp of surprise. Allyson and Zoe's eyes snapped onto Corin.

"He's perfectly gentle, unless someone is hurting or is trying to hurt me. Are wolves savages in your land?" snapped Zoe coldly.

"Ye- I mean no," Corin quickly changed what he was about to say when he noticed Allyson and Zoe's glares. Zoe threw a few blankets onto the bed and stormed out.

"Now you did it she'll never forgive you, even if it's not your fault. I'll be here in the morning," Allyson told him over her shoulder. As she walked out the door she noticed two guards on either side of the Tower. Good thinking.