43rd Annual
Columbines School of Botanical Studies
2027 Course Descriptions

PO Box 50532
Eugene Oregon 97405
http://www.botanicalstudies.net
541-687-7114

Back to Columbines School of Botanical Studies Homepage

Course of Study

The Columbines School of Botanical Studies offers a unique educational program ranging from entry-level lectures in community herbalism to a three-year program including botany, ecology, wildcrafting, plant pharmacy, physiology, pathophysiology, and clinical herbalism. Operating for over four decades, we specialize in field programs where the majority of the classes are outside with the plants for a truly 'hands on' experience.

Students may follow two tracks through three years of study: the Apprenticeship Track or the Lecture-Only Track. During the full Apprenticeship, students enjoy both "hands on" fieldwork and traditional lectures. Students experientially learn field botany, ecology, and wildcrafting techniques while defining their relationship with nature. The lecture component provides the inside classroom environment required for note taking and lecture-based learning. They are offered both in person and live on Zoom.

Columbines School awards a Certificate of Completion for each year of the Apprenticeships or Lecture-Only programs.

In addition to our core curriculum, Columbines School of Botanical Studies offers additional supplemental elective coursework for our Apprentices. These courses are not required to obtain the First or Second Year Certificates of Completion.

Back to Columbines School of Botanical Studies Homepage

43rd Annual 2027 First Year
Apprenticeship Field Program

Northwest Herbs, Global Concepts

First Year Apprentices study approximately 20 plants in depth. These herbs serve as an accessible medicine chest and a basis for further learning. By locating, harvesting, and processing these roots, barks, leaves, flowers, and seeds students learn a wide variety of techniques and ecosystems. This program covers hundreds of medicinal, edible, and poisonous plants that we don't harvest. Apprentices gain the knowledge to identify, wildcraft, and use these plants safely, although they are not studied in depth.

Upon completion of the Apprenticeship, students are able to identify, locate, harvest, process, and use unfamiliar plants outside of the class setting. These skills will apply throughout the world beyond the Pacific Northwest.

Topics Covered

- Botanical Terminology
- Plant Identification through Keys: Practice is the only way to master this skill.
- Plant Identification through Field Characteristics: Certain plants are identifiable without a key by their unique markings.
- Family Identification: We will cover the major plant families of the Northwest. This is a very useful plant identifying skill.
- Plant Pressing: This will be an optional activity.
- Ecosystem Identification
- Locating Stands of Herbs: Our program is unique in that we focus heavily on teaching the skill of finding your own populations.
- Tending and Propagating Stands of Herbs
- Wildcrafting: We will explore values and techniques for different types of harvesting.
- Herb Quality
- Transporting Fresh Herbs

Back to Columbines School of Botanical Studies Homepage

- Cleaning and Processing Herbs: This is an essential part of plant harvesting. We will use all the plants collected by the class. Apprentices will keep a complete selection of herbs.

- Food and Spice Plants: We will have the opportunity to sample many wild foods.

- Poisonous Plants: For safety, we will learn to identify plants that are poisonous or of unknown edibility that may be mistaken for useful plants.

- Herbal Preparations: We will discuss poultices, teas, tinctures, oils, salves, facial astringents, lozenges, and more. We will make many herbal preparations in the field with fresh herbs. Apprentices keep a complete selection.

- Forest Ecology

- Threatened, Endangered, Rare, Sensitive, "To Watch" and "At Risk" Plants and Ecosystems

You Must Want To

- Commit yourself to work hard. You cannot break field trip appointments and must reasonably plan to finish the Apprenticeship.

- Learn plant identification through keys and field characteristics.

- Learn our wildcrafting methods, including a high regard for the local ecosystems and the continuation of the local populations (stands). This includes gathering nothing but garbage during field trips without permission from a teacher.

- Locate your own personal stands of medicinal and food plants.

What to Expect

Field trips focus on identifying, locating, and tending stands of herbs. We will harvest and process some medicinal herbs and stop along the way to enjoy food and spice plants.

We will leave Eugene between 8:00 AM. We will return before dark (approximately 7-8 PM). Do not make appointments after the field trips, as you may wish to remain in the woods longer for hot springs, swimming, changing flat tires, and other unforeseen exciting experiences. Pack a good lunch and an extra meal. Once the class starts, there may not be bathroom facilities. Bad weather will not stop us from taking these trips.

Back to Columbines School of Botanical Studies Homepage

Class sizes are small with generally six apprentices per field trip. With two teachers on each trip, we can provide individual attention. We teach through the oral tradition of repetition. Class participation is required.

We encourage and arrange carpooling. Drivers will receive a per trip maintenance reimbursement from the school for wear and tear on their vehicles. The gas expense is shared with the passengers in the car.

There will be one weekend and one weekday group per week, each identical in material. Apprentices will be able to schedule one of these days even with a weekend job or Monday to Friday, 9 to 5 employment. The lecture schedule is arranged around the fieldwork.

If you miss three field trips in the Spring Term, you cannot continue as an apprentice. One cancellation without notice (no-show) on a field trip is grounds for expulsion. Shoes are required for all field work. Please turn off cell phones and recording devices. Do not bring dogs, llamas, friends, or a rushed attitude on field trips.

This Apprenticeship requires commitment and hours of driving. It is exciting and rewarding in many ways; however, it is also hard work and is not for everyone.

Overnight trips are similar to one day trips but with a closer feeling for the earth. We will go to remote and powerful places. We will use the botanical and ecological skills learned in the Spring Term to locate and harvest medicinal and food plants. We generally camp near our cars.

What Equipment Will You Need?

- *Flora of the Pacific Northwest* by Hitchcock and Cronquist, University of Washington Press. Be sure to buy the new Second Edition.
- *Medicinal Plants of the Mountain West* by Michael Moore, Museum of New Mexico Press. We will use the new 2003 revised edition.
- Tuition includes a copy of the *Class Workbook*, handouts, and notes for the Apprenticeship. We will also provide a complete botanical identification kit, consisting of a hand-lens (loupe) or magnifying lens, a sharp razor knife, a dissecting tool, a metric ruler, and more.
- Daypack
- You will need a cutting board, pruning shears (clippers), sharp knife, vegetable brush, and other harvesting and processing supplies during this term.

Back to Columbines School of Botanical Studies Homepage

- Foul weather gear: This is exceptionally important and includes a raincoat, rain pants, rain hat, change of shoes, and waterproof boots for walking in mud and standing in 12" of water.

- Camping gear: We generally camp near our cars, so bring all the camping gear necessary for your comfort.

Extra Expenses

- You will be making a variety of herbal preparations, so be prepared to buy gallons of alcohol, a gallon and a half of olive oil, and a few cases of wide mouth mason jars (1/2 pints, pints, and perhaps a few quarts).

- Carpooling expenses

Upon Completion of the Apprenticeship

Apprentices come from diverse backgrounds and take this course for a variety of reasons. They are health professionals, botanists, students, herbalists, survivalists, and folks who know nothing about plants or nature but want to. What you take with you from this Apprenticeship depends on what you're looking for and what you put into it.

We will award a Certificate of Completion to those students who have successfully attended 80% of field classes and lectures during both the Spring and Summer Terms. You will NOT be able to use this to start practicing naturopathy or diagnosing and prescribing. This is not a skill easily obtained in a few months' study.

This Apprenticeship has been used for biology or botany credits in State Universities and High Schools. Arrangements need to be made by you with your school. Some apprentices have secured botanical jobs from the US Forest Service and other public and private agencies. College requirements are often waived in entry-level positions in lieu of the experience of the Apprenticeship. Anyone seeking to become a naturopathic health practitioner needs to know where plant medicines come from (not the health food store) and develop personal associations with the plants they prescribe. Most naturopathic schools lack wildcrafting courses. This Apprenticeship is an ideal first year introduction to herbal medicine.

Not everyone will become clinical herbalists, naturopaths, botanists, or disappear into the forests to live on wild foods. Most continue to harvest and make yearly batches of extracts for themselves and their families. However, everyone will define their relationship with nature in a way that will last a lifetime.

Back to Columbines School of Botanical Studies Homepage

Instructors and Staff

Howie Brounstein has taught botany, herbalism, and wildcrafting extensively for decades, including at such herbal establishments as the Southwest School of Botanical Medicine. He is the owner and a primary instructor of the Columbines School of Botanical Studies and has a clinical practice in Eugene, Oregon. He is well known for his brilliant in-depth teaching style and his passionate love of plants.

Leah Kays is a 2006 graduate of the Columbines School of Botanical Studies and has remained deeply connected to the school ever since. A botanist and herbalist based in Portland, Oregon, she brings an earth-centered perspective shaped by years of teaching. Beginning as a substitute instructor, Leah has steadily grown into her role as a full-time teacher, sharing her knowledge and passion with students.

How to Apply

Lectures require a deposit to reserve a place. We require an interview only when applying to the First Year Apprenticeship Program. You do not need an interview for the lecture track. Interview applications are available for download at our website. A $35 interview fee is required when the interview is scheduled and is transferable to any future classes.

We believe that it is important to spend some time watching us teach before making the decision to invest your time and money in our school. This is why all our prospective students for the First Year Apprenticeship Program need to have a 3 hour “in person” interview in Eugene, Oregon. During these 3 hours, it is primarily *you* interviewing *us*. We will talk about teaching style, curriculum goals, course specifics, extra equipment, scheduling, etc. This is essentially a class about our program. Afterwards, you’ll have a better idea whether or not you want to listen to us talk for 300 hours, and your questions about the program will be answered.

We process applications on a first come first serve basis, so you may not receive a call to schedule an interview until later in the fall. If accepted, a $500.00 non-refundable deposit will be required to hold your place in the 2027 Spring Program.

To register for a lecture series, or for more information regarding specific classes, call us in Oregon at 541-687-7114 or feel free to email admin@botanicalstudies.net.

Columbines School of Botanical Studies at PO Box 50532, Eugene, OR, 97405. Visit the Web Page at http://www.botanicalstudies.net, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube.

Back to Columbines School of Botanical Studies Homepage

Financing
We do not give grants, scholarships, or loans. Payment plans are available on a case-by-case basis. All accepted payment plans will receive an additional 7.4% financing charge which is waived with automatic payments. All money paid is non-refundable. If you are unable to participate, all money except the deposit will be applied as credit for future classes.

Back to Columbines School of Botanical Studies Homepage

Course List

Apprenticeship Track

1st Year Apprenticeship Program

Upon completion of the Apprenticeship, you will be able to identify, locate, harvest, process, and use unfamiliar plants outside of the class setting. These skills will apply throughout the world beyond the Pacific Northwest.

Spring Term (April-June):
10 field trips, 1 overnight field trip, and 23 lectures (2-3 lectures/ week: 1/week discussing field trips and practicing plant identification; 1/week covers Herbal Concepts and Northwest Medicinal Plants; 1/month Herbal Preparations Lab).
Pre-requisites: None.
Instructors: Brounstein, Kays.
$4,840 includes a $500 non-refundable deposit. A $200.00 discount will occur for payment in full before January 15, 2027. A $100.00 discount will occur for payment in full before March 15, 2027.

Summer Term (July-September):
4 overnight field trips and 8 lectures.
Pre-requisites: Successful completion of 1st Year Apprenticeship Spring Term.
Instructors: Brounstein, Kays.
$3,008 includes a $500 non-refundable deposit. A $100.00 discount will occur for payment in full by June 15, 2027.

2nd and 3rd Year Graduate Field Programs

These graduate programs are offered in alternating years and provide opportunities for continued field studies beyond the first year.

Graduate Program: Ecology and Plant Associations (Offered in 2027)
This program trains students to rapidly orient themselves within new ecosystems. Emphasis is placed on ecological principles including fire ecology and on identifying plant associations throughout Oregon. Students will also deepen their studies in botany, wildcrafting, and plant preparations.

Back to Columbines School of Botanical Studies Homepage

(April-August 2027):
8 field trips, 1 overnight field trip, and 1 three day field trip.
Pre-requisites: Successful completion of the 1st Year Apprenticeship.
Instructors: Brounstein, Kays.
$2,600 for field only program includes a $500 non-refundable deposit. A $100 discount will occur for payment in full for the field portion before January 15, 2027.
$3,410 for full program with Second Year Lectures includes a $500 non-refundable deposit. A $100 discount will occur for payment in full for the field portion before January 15, 2027.

Graduate Program: Further Botanical Studies (offered in 2028, formally the Alumni Series)
This program continues the journey with expanded studies in botany, herbalism, and wildcrafting. Students will revisit key foundations from the first year and receive an introduction or review of ecology concepts. This program presents all new material tailored to class interests and experience ensuring both depth and variety in the curriculum.

(April-August):
5 field trips, 2 overnight field trips, and 1 three day field trip.
Pre-requisites: Successful completion of the 1st Year Apprenticeship.
Instructors: Brounstein, Kays.
$2,100 for field only program includes a $500 non-refundable deposit. A $100.00 discount will occur for payment in full before January 15, 2028.
$2,910 for full program with Second Year Lectures includes a $500 non-refundable deposit. A $100.00 discount will occur for payment in full for the field portion before January 15, 2028.

Back to Columbines School of Botanical Studies Homepage

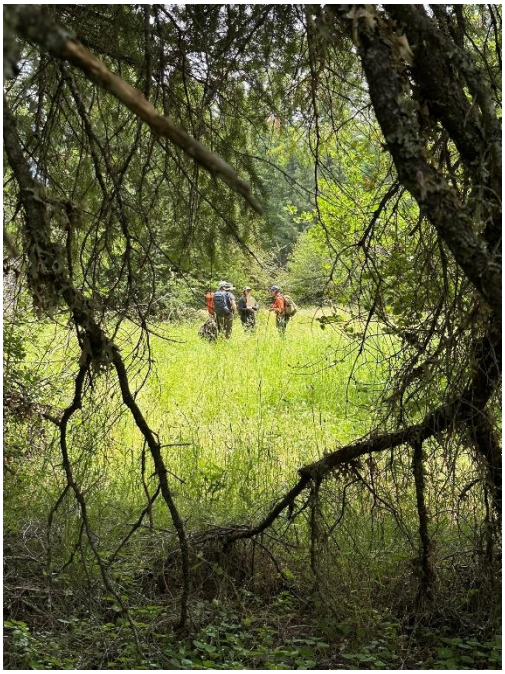
Lecture-Only Track

1st Year Lecture-Only Program

Herbal Concepts and Northwest Medicinal Plants
Teaches fundamental principles of herbalism using a selection of Northwest medicinal plants. Herbal preparations and medicine making labs are included throughout the year.

1st Year Spring Term (April-June):
13 lectures (32.5 hours).
Pre-requisites: None.
Instructor: Brounstein.
$490 includes a $50 non-refundable deposit.

1st Year Summer Term (July-September):
8 lectures (24 hours).
Pre-requisites: Successful completion of Spring Term Lecture-Only Program or Spring Term 1st Year Apprenticeship.
Instructor: Brounstein.
$360 includes a $50 non-refundable deposit.



2nd Year Lecture-Only Program

Topics may include local medicinal plants, handling and using drop dosage herbs safely, clinical intake, case history review, and clinical assessment techniques. This class teaches the student of herbalism to understand chronic illness in a clinical setting.

2nd Year Lectures (April-November)
18 lectures (54 hours).
Pre-requisites: Successful completion of 1st Year Apprenticeship, 1st Year Lecture-Only Program, or one year of herbal study from another institution with instructor approval.
Instructor: Brounstein.
$810 includes a $100 non-refundable deposit.

Back to Columbines School of Botanical Studies Homepage

3rd Year Lecture-Only Program

Clinical Internship
Interns sit in with an herbalist and client in the clinic, assuming increasing responsibility as their skills increase.

Pre-requisites: 2nd Year Lecture-Only Program, or instructor approval.
Hours may be used as clinical experience for the American Herbalist Guild Professional Membership.
Instructor: Brounstein.
$25/hour.

Clinic Roundtables
Lectures presented for clinical interns and those on the Clinical Internship wait list. Interns and practitioners discuss important clinic cases.

Pre-requisites: 2nd Year Lecture-Only Program, or with instructor approval.
Instructor: Brounstein.
$15/hour.

Back to Columbines School of Botanical Studies Homepage

Electives

Available after completing 1st Year of Columbines School
***Available to students on the Lecture-Only Track**

***Physiology for the Herbalist (September-November)**:
Covers basic physiology concepts including membrane physiology, the nervous system, and the digestive system. Required text: The Physiology Coloring Book *by Kapit, Macey, and Meisami.*

18 lectures (36 hours).
Pre-requisites: Completion of 1st Year Apprenticeship, 1st Year Lecture-Only Program, or comparable experience with instructor approval.
Instructor: Brounstein.
$540 includes a $50 non-refundable deposit.

***Dancing Interplay of Hormonal Cascades: Reproductive System Intensive (December)**:
Using both Western physiology and Michael Moore's constitutional model, we will cover topics such as menstrual cycle regulation, birth control pills, synthetic hormones, fertility, estrogen dominance, and herbal and nutritional support for folks born with ovaries.

4 lectures (12 hours).
Pre-requisites: Completion of 2nd Year Lecture, Physiology for the Herbalist, or comparable experience with instructor approval.
Instructor: Brounstein.
$180 includes a $50 non-refundable deposit.

*** GI Tract Physiology Intensive (January)**:
An in-depth look at the western physiology of the digestive system, and Michael Moore's constitutional physiology of the upper and lower GI.

6 lectures (12 hours).
Pre-requisites: Completion of 2nd Year Lecture, Physiology for the Herbalist, or comparable experience with instructor approval.
Instructor: Brounstein.
$180 includes a $50 non-refundable deposit.

Available during or after 2nd Year of Columbines School

***Physical Assessment Skills (October):**
This lab class teaches physical assessment skills for clinical herbalists including legalities, ethics, vital signs, deep tendon reflexes, neurological screening, HEENT (head, ears, eyes, nose, throat). This is not a class in diagnostics, but rather one of "red flag" assessment.

6 lectures (18 hours).
Pre-requisites: Enrollment in or completion of 2nd Year Apprenticeship, 2nd Year Lecture-Only Program, or comparable experience with instructor approval.
Instructor: Brounstein.
$360 includes a $50 non-refundable deposit.

Back to Columbines School of Botanical Studies Homepage

Alumni Field Trips

Available after completing 1st Year of Columbines School

Central Oregon Alumni Overnight Field Trip (May):
We will tailor the curriculum according to class interest and alumni experience to include different plants and focus. Botany review, edible and medicinal plants, and wildcrafting are all possibilities.

Time and Dates TBA.
Pre-requisites: Completion of 1st Year Apprenticeship.
Instructors: Brounstein, Kays.
$400 includes a $100 non-refundable deposit.

Alumni Botany Review Field Trip (June):
Re-take the first year spring overnight for a botany review of early spring to early summer plants and families.

Time and Dates TBA.
Pre-requisites: Completion of 1st Year Apprenticeship.
Instructors: Brounstein, Kays.
$300 includes a $100 non-refundable deposit.

Apiaceae (Carrot Family) Review (September):
A review of the Carrot family taxonomy for current and old students that will further botanical skills using familiar friends and new plants.

Time and Dates TBA.
Pre-requisites: Completion of 1st Year Apprenticeship.
Instructors: Brounstein, Kays.
$400 includes a $100 non-refundable deposit.

Back to Columbines School of Botanical Studies Homepage

Columbines School of Botanical Studies

2027 Spring Apprenticeship Interview Request Form

Date _____

Name _____ Pronoun _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Birth Date _____

Directions

Interviews are required for the Spring Apprenticeship fieldwork only. You do not need an interview for a lecture series like Herbal Concepts, Physiology for the Herbalist, etc. Interviews will be conducted in person and last three hours. We will cover our course description and teaching methods in depth. This time allows you to interview us and become familiar with our teaching styles.

Send your completed Interview Request Form to the email or physical address on the first page of this file. We will call or email you to confirm receipt of your application. Interview scheduling begins typically in September 2026. We process applications partially on a first come first serve basis, so you may not receive a call to schedule an interview until later in the fall. A $35 interview fee is required when the interview is scheduled and is applicable to any future classes.

If accepted, a $500.00 non-refundable deposit will be required to hold your place in the 2027 Spring Program. If you have any questions about the class or the interview process, contact us at 541- 687-7114.

Application Questions

What experience do you have in botany or herbalism? (None is required for this Apprenticeship)

Back to Columbines School of Botanical Studies Homepage

Columbines School of Botanical Studies

2027 Spring Apprenticeship Interview Request Form

What experience do you have in botany or herbalism? (Continued)

Why do you want to take this class?

What city do you plan to live in during the Apprenticeship?

Will you have a vehicle during the Apprenticeship? If yes, what type? If not, will you have access to borrowing a vehicle once or twice during the Apprenticeship if needed?

How did you hear of us?

Back to Columbines School of Botanical Studies Homepage