

Arnica - A Quest to Heal with Carol Anderson

by Laura Walker

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Stricken with painful eczema and dry skin, Carol tried to find products that would ease her symptoms but nothing seemed to work. Out of frustration and pure need, her pursuit to create medicinal remedies for herself were born in order to care for her skin.

"I had not a clue what I was doing," she admitted. With no formal training, just deep motivation to find solutions, Carol researched, experimented and taught herself. She made products as she needed them to address extreme chapped lips, eczema of the scalp and even menopause side effects. She tried different ingredients and observed what they did. Eventually, she made products for friends, and suddenly, her successful Magic Island Herbals business took off.

Kelly Larson, a great friend and Magic Island Herbals supporter, partnered with Carol for a few years and helped create her famous Healing Skin Salve. Carol reminisced that it was nice having a friend to help grow the business. "It unfolded for me," she said. "I don't think I chose it. The same with the jewelry. I count my lucky stars that I get to play with herbs and gem stones. I hadn't planned for this and I am very grateful."



It's evident when chatting with Carol that her passion comes from a place of service to herself and others, as well as a commitment to use quality, organic ingredients. She laughed as she explained, "Sometimes I lose customers because I encourage them to try my products and walk away. Don't listen to me, listen to your body and pay attention to what the lotion is doing for your skin. Once it absorbs, you can tell if it's for you." She added, "Just because it's natural doesn't mean that it's for everyone." Her approach is to use the gentlest response to begin with and to do the least harm. Taking harsh medications should be a last resort. She recalls coming up with arnica for a friend and that's what she chose to talk with me about.

Arnica Montana, commonly known as Mountain Arnica, known for its high potency, is a perennial that grows to a height of 1 to 2 feet with yellow-orange flowers similar to daisies. Stems are round and hairy, ending in 1 to 3 flower stalks, with yellow flowers 2 to 3 inches across. Leaves are bright green. The upper leaves are toothed and slightly hairy, while lower leaves have rounded tips. It is native to the mountains of Europe and Siberia, and is cultivated in North America. Fresh or dried flower heads are used in medicinal preparations.



Tinctures of arnica can be used as an external remedy for bruises, sprains, sore muscles and joints and even mosquito bites. Carol stated that most doses of arnica are perfectly safe, though she would not recommend this for anyone with a heart condition. Carol sells two products that contain arnica. Her spray absorbs into the skin to remedy bruising and is incredibly strong. This is the only product that she sells that comes with a warning. The oil she produces, however, is very gentle.



Carol ethically harvests arnica in the Eastern Washington high desert mountains. She shared that they tend to grow best where there once were landslides and burns. She has found the plants in these locations to be very vibrant and powerful which she can actually feel as she's gathering. She emphasized, "My goal is to not leave a footprint or take more than 5 percent. I respect the plant and where it grows. I only take the buds, never the whole plant. Arnica heals the land and I want it to heal bodies too."

She concluded that it has been one of her busiest years, and in reflecting about the challenge of keeping up with the needs of customers, she is reminded of the greatest advice she has ever been given: "You can have it all, you just can't have it all at once." This advice has led her to evaluate her priorities. "It's important to pace yourself," she says. "Sometimes I would forget about me. If I really want to honor what I do for others, I have to honor myself too."

Source: <https://thelostherbs.com/arnica/>

Check out two of Carol's favorite books:

Plastic-Free: How I Kicked the Plastic Habit and How You Can Too by Beth Terry

Addresses plastic-free packaging which Carol is focused on achieving.

The Lost Book of Herbal Remedies - The Healing Power of Plant Medicines by Nicole Apelian and Claude Davis

An unexpected diagnosis of multiple sclerosis led the author to apply her research skills towards her own personal wellness which Carol can relate with.

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