

PLANTS AS MEDICINALS

Kari Tauring, Minnehaha Ave. Community Gardens, Minneapolis, MN

Kari Tauring, M.A.T., Interdisciplinary Artist/Educator

Kari has been helping neighborhood children and adults develop relationships with plants, the environment, and each other in the Twin Cities since 1999 through means as varied as performance ritual to hands-on planting programs. Her 2005 hands-on projects center on **Medicinals** and include Hiawatha Green Thumbs (in collaboration with the KEEYS program), Ms Kari's Summer Green Thumbs (a summer learning program for all ages), and "Sustainable Medicinals in an Urban Environment" (a collaboration with Minnehaha Avenue Community Gardens, United Plant Savers, and other educators including Lise Wolfe and Sandy Arseth.)

Presentation Summary:

Medicinals are plants we see every day. We step on them in sidewalk cracks. We walk through them in ditches. Some people want to exterminate them. Yet others, seeing the benefit of a plant medicinally or financially have harvested them to extinction.

Kari teaches about Medicinals by educating about the many names, histories, and uses of the medicinal plants that city children see every day. She teaches about the quality of the plant, the soil it was grown in, and provides opportunities to grow, harvest and use these plants in a variety of ways. This presentation models what her Summer Green Thumbs and others will learn as well as chronicles the process of the Green Thumbs from May through August. Using lecture, power point photo montage, a table of samples and resource lists Kari may inspire others to begin at the beginning – educating children.

Highlights in the presentation include:

- The idea of Weeds revisited –an interactive learning experience about the word weed.
- Getting to know plants – names, histories and uses – changes how we relate to these plants and makes them part of the total community.
- Utilization/consumption of plants changes our relationship to them in an intimate and internal way. When we feel their affects on our bodies our relationship to medicinal plants deepens.
- Plants as Mirrors – Plants (especially Medicinals) give us clues about other parts of our community that need healing. If an area is overtaken by a medicinal plant, what does it want us to know?
- Art and medicine – using the resources.

More information on www.karitauring.com

WEED

a name people call plants they do not want

So to get rid of all weeds, then, we must learn to want all plants! Name some common weeds:

How many words can you make from the letters:

W E E D S

Say Weed.

Say it again.

What feelings do you have when you say it?

Say:

A _____ we do not want.

It keeps rearing it's ugly head. I can't get rid of it. It is out of control. It is taking over everything- everywhere! It does not belong here. Eradicate invasive species now!

What feelings do you have when you say this?

"Americans in their Green Spaces"

Ms Kari to the Green Thumbs

MK: What green does every American have in common?

GT: Gardens...indoor plants...the food we eat like lettuce...money is called green...lawns...golf courses

MK: Let's take lawns. If you have a house in the city, the minimum you have to do is cut your grass. What are other things you can do to tend a lawn?

GT: Mowing...watering...seeding...fertilizing with soil, compost – sometimes chemicals...

MK: What about getting the non-grass out of your lawn?

GT: Weeding...like the garden. I heard that salt water works to kill the grass and weeds in the cracks of your sidewalk! But you have to be careful because it will kill everything.

MK: Some products are designed to kill the things in your lawn...(discussion ensued)

Isaac, will you go to my lawn and pull 3 or 4 non-grass plants up for me?

Hannah, pick four other plants you want to study and let's make books!

Isaac Found:

White clover, creeping Charlie, plantain, and dandelion.

Hanna Found:

Tansy, thyme, lambs quarters and morning glories.

Please have a look at what they learned up at the table and on line at:

<http://www.karitauring.com/greenthumbs05.htm>

“Everything has a use and purpose or it would not exist. Your job is to find the use and purpose of everything and everyone.”

Myrtle Engen to Ms Kari
(grandmother)

The more we learn about others, plants, animals, people, the more we understand them. We must not be adversarial towards life on any level. The emotions of intolerance and dislike...hatred even, once introduced into the human system, tend to spread just as the emotions of joy, friendship, empathy and respect can spread.

The key is in building relationships.

Education, understanding, emotional honesty, safety of expression, tools for communication, respect, a desire to be unafraid of the other, to know

These are the keys to creating a
Sustainable Urban Environment.

<http://www.karitauring.com/sustainableurbanenvironments.htm>