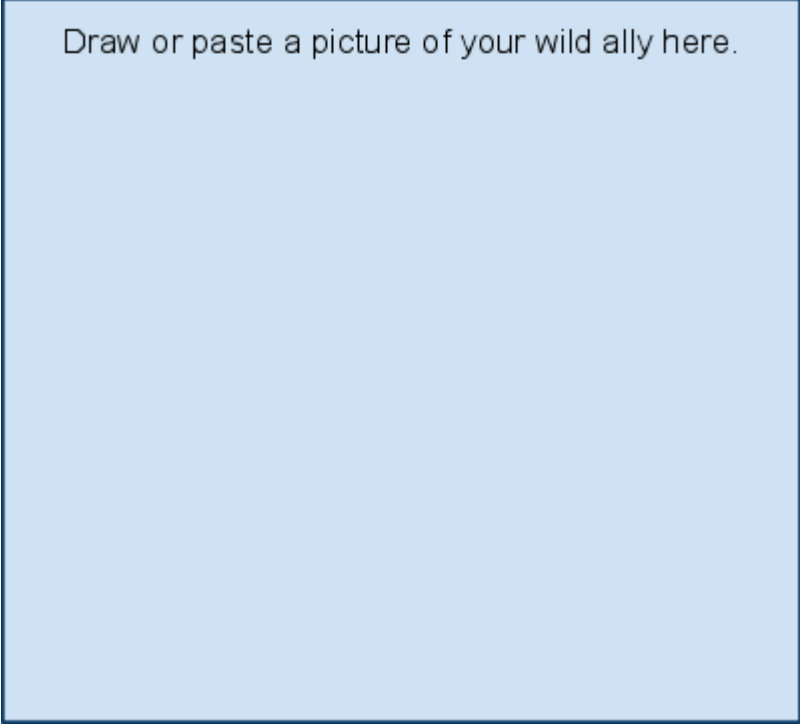


# My Wild Ally

Draw or paste a picture of your wild ally here.



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(name of your wild ally)

**by**

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(your name)

## Introduction

One of the best ways to learn about the edible and medicinal qualities of wild plants is to choose one plant to study in depth. It has been said if you know one plant well enough, you can use that plant to treat anything.

When you observe, read about and use one plant extensively, the skills you learn will easily carry over to other plants, and you will know so much about wild edible plants in general, because you will understand the plant world in a more intimate way through the study of your one plant.

People often ask me how I learned about wild plants, or if it was just something I've known all my life. When I was young, the only thing I thought was growing outside was grass. Given more thought, I suppose I did notice bees on clover flowers, and I loved hunting for 4 leafed clovers. I liked to pop the yellow tops off of dandelions or blow the seeds off when they turned to puffballs, and in the fall I picked burs off my clothes after running around outdoors. But I had no idea these plants were useful in any way.

I became interested in herbal medicine in college when exposed to a family who used homeopathy. In homeopathy, both edible and poisonous plants and other substances are diluted and turned into remedies which can treat all kinds of conditions. My interest in natural healing began. Like my thinking that only grass grew outside, I had previously thought the only kind of medicine was Western medicine, and though I was always interested in health and healing, I knew that Western medicine - surgery and drugs - wasn't for me.

A new world of natural healing opened up when I entered massage school after college. Afterward I studied as an apprentice with an herbalist for three months. The world of wild plants opened up for me.

We took wild edible walks and I was fascinated to realize how much grew wild, right at my feet. These *weeds* were not just edible but highly nutritious and medicinal. Garlic Mustard, Croneswort (Mugwort), Dandelion, Burdock, Mullein, Violet; all these plants and many more suddenly became meaningful to me. A new dimension, which had been there all along, became visible.

Here I was introduced to the idea of choosing a plant ally. One plant to get to know thoroughly, which is what I am asking you to do now. Please choose a wild plant that:

- is edible
- grows wild as a weed
- grows near you, so you can access it and study it easily.

Choose a plant you are drawn to, or maybe even the one plant you know. I chose dandelion at the time because that's the only plant I knew. Dandelion made an amazing ally: all parts of the plant are edible and it is a very nourishing and powerful medicine.

You will be observing the plant you choose, drawing it, reading about it in many different sources, eating it, making medicines from it, and taking extensive notes. You may use this workbook as a place for your drawings and notes or get a separate blank book; it's up to you.

I have left ample blank spaces and pages in this book. These are places to answer the questions posed as well as for you to jot down your notes, thoughts, and drawings. There are more blank pages at the end so you have plenty of room.

I know you will enjoy this journey. A new world is about to open up to you, whether you have studied plants before or this is your first foray into the natural world. When you follow one plant as deeply as you will in this book, you can not help but be transported.

Much love,

Melissa Sokulski  
Creator of Wild Ally Workbook

***URGENT NOTE: Please ensure that you definitively identification of any plant that you plan to ingest, use medicinally or topically. You must be confident of its identification, know of any look-alikes and be certain you know if any part of the plant is poisonous. It's best to seek assistance from an expert when first encountering a plant. Once you've learned from the expert, you'll be able to safely enjoy your entire life -- let's try to keep it a long one!***

***The instructions in this book are meant for educational and entertainment purposes. Please seek expert guidance for proper identification, and to get advice on edibility and medicinal uses before eating or taking any wild plant.***

## **Medicinal Properties**

What are the medicinal properties of your wild ally? For example, is your ally known to promote urination/be a diuretic? Is it anti-viral? You will find out in your resource books. Please define any terms you do not know.

Which parts are medicinal, and how are they used, specifically?

What is the best time to harvest the parts of your plant used?

In what ways is your plant used? Made into a tea? Tincture? Salve?

## **Oils and Salves**

Is there any part of your plant you can make an oil with? What properties of your plant may go well into an oil? Plantain leaves soothe the skin and take away itchiness, comfrey oil helps heal the skin and bones, St. John's wort as an oil soothes sore muscles and can soothe the skin from burns, including sunburns.

Oils are made the same way as tinctures and vinegars, except use olive oil as the base. Olive oil is a natural edible oil. Anything we put on our skin is absorbed into the body, so you should really never use anything on your skin that you wouldn't want to eat.

It is okay to use freshly dried herbs in oils...it helps the oils from becoming rancid. You may also gently heat the oil and plant (for example, in a slow cooker on low for a couple days), which reduces steeping time.

Fill a jar with your plant. Make sure it is as dry as possible (harvest on a sunny day and do not wash, and or even dry the plant for a day or two first.) Chop or crush the plant to increase surface area (the area that will be in contact with the oil.) Fill the jar with olive oil.

Label with plant, medium (in this case olive oil) and month/day/year.

Steep 4 weeks, or gently heat in a slow cooker or in the oven on very low for two days.

Strain out plant matter, saving oil. Label again.