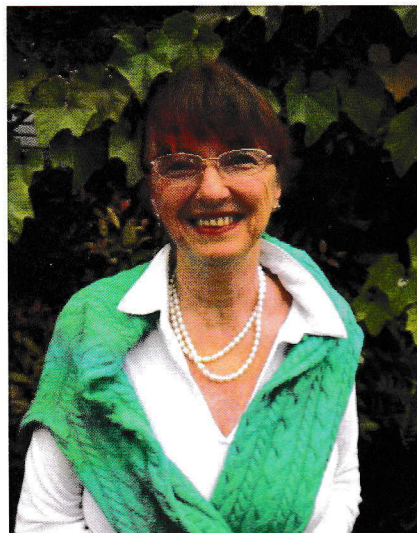


Sharing biophilia with children

Eva Scherer



Eva Scherer was born in Poland and has a Masters Degree in Agriculture from Warsaw University of Life Science (SGGW). After working in the Government Sector in Warsaw, she moved into the self-employed arena practising natural medicine, massage and herbalism. After emigrating to New Zealand in 1996 she created the brand of 'YMassages' with several sports massage clinics operating in Auckland.

For the past few years Eva has been involved with the Ngataringa Community Garden developing and running several programmes for children in the local community; Medicinal Weed Tours, Junior Assistants and, recently, the popular Herb Fairies. They all contain elements of the CMC programme focusing on and developing love, respect and care for nature.

In 2018 she was awarded the Silver Cross of Merit from the Polish Government for her programmes for children.



It was a privilege for me to open the NZMH Conference last year, and it gave me the opportunity to share my experience of introducing children to herbs. This presentation was based on my involvement with a Community Garden in Devonport.

I believe that the majority of herbalists are already passing their herbal passion down to kids and I thought that my practical tips and resources on how to make it easy may help them in a creative way.

The concept of Herb Fairies comes from the John Gallagher programme, which can be viewed on this url link https://www.amazon.com/gp/bookseries/B071P2KY65/ref=dp_st_B01FIX851O After some adaptation for Ngataringa Organic Garden conditions, I made a user-friendly version that I will share in this article. This is just a framework so please feel free to adapt it to your own requirements.

Herb Fairies Academy Lesson Plan

- 1) Tour around the garden with attention on the six fairies that we use in our Herb Fairies Academy:
 - Plantain
 - Violet
 - Calendula
 - Chickweed
 - Melissa
 - Dandelion
- 2) With respect to each herb, the student takes samples of the plant using scissors. Children squeeze the leaves to smell and taste them. Some of the material will be used for making a tea infusion and some for drawing sketches.
- 3) We look closer at the plants using magnifying glasses. The children are shown the pistil and stamens to explain the reproduction process.
- 4) We take time for the group to know each other better using one technique from my Children Massaging Children (-CMC) program – back massage. Here is the url link to the CMC program <http://childconnection.org.nz/sample/>
- 5) The herbalist reads a brief overview of the health properties of the herb emphasising the main ones. For example; Melissa helps with nervousness and promotes good sleep.
- 6) Infusion preparation.
- 7) Children listen to the story/lore (from my adaptation of the John Gallagher program) while drinking the herbal infusion. I love herbal lore – each herb has its own and I recorded them in high quality for children. An audio version is on my website <http://nog-garden.com/herb-fairy-blog/>. I hope you enjoy listening to them and feel free to use this audio recording.
- 8) Children draw a pencil sketch of the herb and write the common name and botanical name.
- 9) Children colour the Herb Fairy picture squeezing the juice from the fresh plants.
- 10) Preparation of a simple culinary dish using which ever herb is being presented, and then enjoy eating it.



I would really appreciate any feedback on your experiences while working with children. The biggest reward will be to hear of your and the children's joy.

Eva Scherer

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