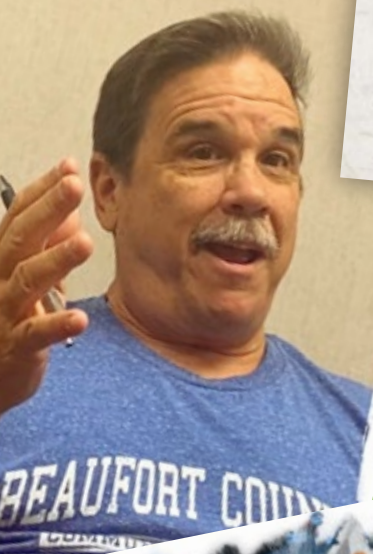




# LIFE

*on the Family*

Preserving North Carolina's Coastal Heritage Through Oral Histories



Health & Healing  
IN EASTERN NC  
2022





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# EDITOR'S WELCOME

## *Heal Thyself*

A wonderful aspect about living in Eastern North Carolina is abundance of natural resources available to us. It is a place where generations of people have lived exclusively upon the output of wide expanses of forests, swamps, and farmlands. Here, traditionally we have, and in many cases still do, derive our living from the land.

Even in our more advanced and technological era, the traditions of people living and thriving in coexistence with the local

environment continue. Farming resources, for instance, have enabled the availability of more earth-friendly products for those who don't grow their own food.

Locally available produce has many benefits. It reduces transportation costs and pollution and keeps money in the local economy. Often, when we rely on our local resources such as local farmers, we find that we not only help ourselves, but also the wider community around us.

Aside from sustainability, the local depth of history retained in the modern practices of life persists. Some natural medicines discovered thousands of years ago are still in use every day. Like many, I have an aloe plant, not only for its ornamental beauty as a plant, but also for its medicinal properties. Unexpected burns occur from time to time; it's inevitable when we use stoves or grills to cook our food that we will eventually encounter an accidental burn. The first advice we get when



we ask for burn relief? It's aloe.

Interestingly, despite its ever presence in our lives, especially in Eastern North Carolina where sunburns are also likely to occur, the plant is only native to a few regions of the world due to its intolerance to ice and cold. However, it is grown as a houseplant all over the world, often for the exclusive purpose of using it for burn relief.

People across the world have smeared the sticky goop inside aloe leaves on burnt skin for so long historians have a difficult time dating exactly when the plant was discovered and started being used medicinally by humans. Estimates range from 4,000 to 6,000 years ago. Whether the relief is found directly from a plant or in manufactured bottle of aloe purchased from the store, people today are still relying on an ancient healing method to cure themselves.

These insights about how we live in connection with the environment around us were all derived from conversations with my

Cultural Studies class. This year, we focused our research around traditional and modern wellness and healing for people who live in the region around the Pamlico River.

We learned many things about ourselves we did not realize, including the fact that we're using ancient healing methods nearly every time we get a sunburn. Other insights were new and exciting, such as how many different herbs and plants can be used to brew tea and how marsh mallow plants were once harvested to create a natural relief for sore throats.

In this year's edition of the class's final project, *Life on the Pamlico*, each student shares a local insight into what helps people stay healthy and flourish. In a time when healthcare and healthier living practices have emerged as a significant worldwide discussion, they have collected an array of local stories that show how the region approaches wellness and healthy living. Some stories reach back into the region's historical roots,

and others show how new ideas and approaches have continued to provide insights and additional options for people who want to supplement their lives in a healthy way.

I must note that none of these stories are meant to provide specific medical advice, and it is important when you feel unwell to consult with an appropriate medical professional. However, these stories will, we hope, illustrate for our readers an expanded view of health and wellness around us that encompasses both traditions and modern viewpoints.

From the student writers and the publication staff, we welcome you to the 2022 edition of *Life on the Pamlico*.

*Suzanne Stotesbury*

**EDITOR**





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# OLD AND NEW

## *Herbal Traditions in Eastern Carolina*

TAMMERA L. COOPER

Does the cost of gas have you dreading the drive into town or maybe the insurance company stopped paying for over-the-counter medicine is causing you issues? Well, you are in luck according to Dorita Boyd, owner

of the local herb nursery. An herb garden could be the answer to your woes, and Eastern North Carolina is the perfect place to grow herbs, with 275-day growing season.

For generations, people along

the Pamlico River have used herbs to help with various illnesses including stomach aches and coughs. Emma Dupree, a “granny woman” from Pitt County, is a great example. Her little white and green house was the local



center for healing in Fountain, North Carolina. “Aunt Emma” grew herbs in her backyard, making her tonics after visits with her neighbors complaining of diabetes, high blood pressure, or migraines.

She said in a 1979 video interview titled “Little Medicine Thing: Emma Dupree, Herbalist”, “I get calls and they come and use the yerbs raised right here in my yard. And they tell the story that its helpin them. This life of mine started with yerbs as an itty-bitty girl. 6 years old my daddy took me to seven springs. At 14, I went by myself... It’s just my life. I always did it and they always use it. Along with what the doctors give them. The doctors used the yerbs then.”

Aunt Emma grew up in the woods along the Tar River, collecting herbs and plants to develop her recipes. When she first moved to

## ***FORAGING IS A GREAT WAY TO COLLECT THE LOCAL HERBS, BUT YOU MUST STUDY AND LEARN TO IDENTIFY PLANTS***

Fountain, it was out of necessity that she provided tonics and potions for her fellow African Americans, yet it was because of her gift from God that she felt called to use it. A shortage of black health care was filled with the local “granny woman” when she was growing up in Eastern Carolina, and with her gift for the “yerbs,” she was a perfect fit. She assisted the local doctor with his mixing and did her own at home. Every visitor was sent on their way with a healing herbal remedy for the price they could afford and some conversation.

All her instructions were given verbally. In fact, she didn’t write anything down; she mixed with her head and heart. This presented a

problem for the people she served when she died in 1996 just short of her 100th birthday, leaving no one to take over and fill the void her absence left. According to Fountain resident and researcher Alex Albright, during his Emma Dupree Day presentation in 2020, the loss hit the community hard. It was said Joe Exum, the local grocer holds one last bottle under his counter for his emergencies, not knowing what he will do when he uses the last few drops.

Here in Beaufort County, we are lucky enough to have a certified herbalist in Pinetown. Jennifer Smith dedicated her time to an online school, Vineyard Herbs, Teas and Apothecary LLC run by Holly Bellebuono, to learn her craft. Her business is small, just the way she likes it, serving friends and family and only using word of mouth to advertise.

While she believes in the effects of herbal medicine, she is quick to say that she also supports modern medicine. “I am a 100% believer in science.” The beginning of her business was by happenstance; she was looking for a way to help her family with small ailments and it grew into helping her friends, followed by friends of friends. Now she not only helps people locally but also across the country.

Jennifer’s salves and tinctures have helped numerous people. Sometimes she just answers questions about options for herbal treatments





at home, and sometimes she may actually make something to help the situation. Once, a man was mauled by a dog and had a terrible scar. She made a salve including one of her favorite oils, *Helichrysum*, and it improved the texture and appearance of the scar. Another customer had terrible migraines, and Jennifer made an oil blend that helped when other treatments, she said, didn't touch the pain.

Her ultimate goal is to help where she can and listen to her customers and friends. People are always ready to try things especially if they are hurting and are looking for alternatives. Jennifer focuses on getting as much information as possible to search for causes first and then looks for the safest method. "Do they have allergies? Are they pregnant?" are two of her questions. To keep everyone safe, it's necessary to ask them. If someone is pregnant, certain herbs can be very dangerous and put them at risk. Likewise, if someone has allergies, they might have a reaction to an herbal remedy. Safety in herbal medicine is just as important as scientific medicine.

Another safety rule Jennifer provided was, "Never ingest anything you are not 100% sure what it is." Foraging is a great way to collect the local herbs, but you must study and learn to identify plants. There are apps available that will help, but nothing beats having the knowledge in your head and readily available.

Jennifer also ensures the quality of the herbs she uses. She grows most of her own herbs from seed or



purchases them from the local herb nursery, Raindrop Ridge Farm. If she must supplement her pantry, she orders online from Mountain Rose or Frontier Co-op. They always provide her with top-notch product and service, she says. Her favorite herb is *Calendula*.

"It has anti-inflammatory, anti-bacterial properties that protect and soothe the irritated or inflamed skin and help relieve irritants," she explains. "It's great for eczema and has shown to be very beneficial for relieving the redness and discomfort of it. It also helps to produce collagen." Lavender and Frankincense are also on her favorites list for their calming and healing properties.

Another local resource is the Raindrop Ridge Farm, an organic herb farm, but it only operates during the growing season. For 27 years, Dorita Boyd has operated on her mother's family farm, taking on the challenge of an organic medicinal and culinary

farm. "I have medicinal herbs that no one else has," she explains matter of factly. Not to brag, she is not that kind of woman.

She started the business as a way to stay at home with her children. Each year, she only plants for the season. Once she sells out, that's it for the year.

But, this year is different. Sadly, this is the last year for the farm. Dorita has decided to enjoy retirement and close the business. Luckily for Beaufort County, unlike Aunt Emma, Dorita's knowledge has been passed on to whomever was curious.

Dorita shared with everyone who asked. She loved her community and Eastern Carolina loves her. Jennifer commented on how much Dorita meant to her and the community. "My heart breaks that I will no longer be able to get my herbs and plants at Raindrop Ridge, or consult and visit with my Dorita, my friend and mentor. But I am grateful for all she has taught me and how much I learned from her over the years. And because of her, I've gained a deeper knowledge and appreciation for plants and nature." The traditional herb gardens of Eastern Carolina thank her for all she has shared and done.

The residents of Eastern Carolina value tradition and are dedicated to sharing those traditions. The next generation will require encouragement and prove to continue them but that will not be hard with mentors willing to teach and share their knowledge. The tradition will continue with the dedicated gardeners and herbalists of Beaufort County.



# RECIPES

## *Homemade Lip Balm*

by Jennifer Smith



### INGREDIENTS:

3 tablespoons pellet beeswax  
3 tablespoons fractionated coconut oil (or cocoa butter)  
A few drops of Vitamin E oil  
Essential oils of your choice (rosemary, peppermint, lemon)

### EQUIPMENT:

Double boiler  
Large spoon  
Balm containers (sticks or pots)

### INSTRUCTIONS:

In a double boiler, melt beeswax and coconut oil. Add vitamin E oil and stir until it is entirely melted liquid. Take off the heat and use a spoon to test the texture (dip the spoon in the liquid and lift, let cool, and test the texture with your fingers). Add essential oils. Usually, it only takes about 5 drops. Stir. Add to your balm containers and label them clearly on the outside.

## *Nettle Tea*

by Dorita Boyd



### INGREDIENTS:

1 cup of dried nettle  
32 oz water

### EQUIPMENT:

French press coffee maker

### INSTRUCTIONS:

Add nettle to boiling water in a French press coffee maker. Let stand in refrigerator overnight. Compress and serve over ice the next day.

# THE HEALING POWERS

## *of Massage Therapy*

AUSTIN D. SQUIRES

When Brandon Daniels graduated high school in 2010, he wasn't sure what he wanted to do. One day after he graduated, someone brought to his attention that he should try massage therapy. Brandon was

very excited to hear it was a nine-month program so that he could get in and out the program quickly.

He attended Miller Motte College in Greenville, North Carolina. Not only was the program

fast he, enjoyed it. Brandon has been doing massage therapy for over 8 years now. He said it was awkward at first because his clients can get undressed to their comfortability.

But, the benefits of massage



## ***“TART BERGAMOT, ZESTY LEMON, AND AQUATIC NOTES OPEN THIS MASTERPIECE WITH SUCH A BRIGHT SCENT...”***

therapy far outweigh the awkwardness. First, he said that it's a significant pain reducer for tight muscles. It also reduces stress and promotes the immune system.

He says massage therapy even helps patients with insomnia. Insomnia is a common sleep disorder that can make it hard to fall asleep, hard to stay asleep, or cause you to wake up too early and not be able to get back to sleep. You might still feel sleepy when you wake up. Insomnia will drain not only your energy and mood but also your wellbeing. One method to combat insomnia is to visit a massage therapist.

Brandon tells a story about one of his favorite patients who he feels like he had a breakthrough. When the client was walking to the treatment room, Brandon noticed the man was using the wall to hold himself up. The man was having severe lower back pain. Brandon performed massage techniques such as effleurage, petrissage, tapotement, friction,

and vibration, which all encourage circulation and the softening of connective tissue. That helps break down knots and relaxes the muscle. After the session, Brandon noticed the man could stand upright to walked well without the use of a wall as a prop.

Brandon also uses aroma therapy. He says he starts with non-scented jojoba massage oil because it goes well with scented oils. He explains when you mix the oils, you have to make sure you dilute the acidic levels of the aroma oil. If it is not diluted, it may be too strong and cause a rash on people who may have specific allergic reactions.

He says one of his favorite blends at his place of work is called Happy Life. This refreshing fragrance defines joyful and vibrant people. “Tart bergamot, zesty lemon, and aquatic notes open this masterpiece with such a bright scent...” Brandon muses.

Another modality Brandon employs is myofascial release. He says



myofascial release works along the line of muscles that might be causing the pain. It tries to reduce tension throughout your body by releasing trigger points across a broad section of your muscular system. You can picture it as a white piece of chicken with strings of muscle fiber in it. The tight strings of muscle relax upon massage, and that works for people as well.

Brandon would like to tell everyone if they are ever in need of a great massage, come visit him. He currently works at LaVida Massage in Greenville, N.C. beside Target.





# DEEP ROOTS FARM

## *Growing Organic*

ANDREW HARP

Deep Roots Farm is a small farm here in Washington, North Carolina; it's an organic farm owned and operated by Will and Tabitha Roberson. Having met at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, N.C., the two started a farm in the Triangle called Rocky River Farm; there, they grew for five years prior to deciding to move back down east to Washington, N.C. Their history is here in little Washington: Will grew up here, and his grandmother had a farm here. This is home.

In the spring, they grow lettuce, kale, chard, carrots, spinach, flowers, and strawberries; in the summer, they grow tomatoes, peppers, chili peppers, watermelons, squash, zucchinis, and cucumbers. When asked what Tabitha's personal favorites are, she said: "My favorite things to grow are probably the things we can't find around here, like the fresh, organic strawberries; [their six different varieties of organic] blueberries; some of the different varieties of squash and zucchinis that you can't find around here." She also elaborated on some of the varieties they have, of which are difficult to find in stores:

"... we do a two-toned squash called Zephyr that's green and yellow [and] different colored tomatoes." She added, "Probably my favorite thing to

grow is actually our flowers because they're beautiful in the field, and I get to have fresh bouquets in my house all summer long; and, I like putting





the bouquets together and selling those at market.” The Robersons currently take all their produce to Harbor District Market—located down on Main Street in downtown Washington—on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. However, they are hoping to soon expand and bring their produce to a New Bern market and possibly to a Greenville market in the near future.

While the farm focuses on organic foods, it is important to note that Deep Roots Farm is not certified organic. “Being a small farm like us, becoming ‘certified’ would require jumping through a lot of hoops, paying fees and doing paperwork. It just isn’t worth it, especially since we’re not doing it wholesale. We have pickups and take the produce

to a local market. [Customers] come up and talk to you, and they are comfortable with you; it creates a trust-with-customer base where a USDA sticker is not necessary,” Will explains. Instead, they use organic growing methods—they do not use pesticides, herbicides, or any synthetic fertilizers, whatsoever, to grow their produce. They rotate their crops and use different fields, which helps preserve the soil and keeps it from being overused; this keeps the soil healthy and nutritious for the produce. They also use cover crops, usually a grass and a legume: “So we have Crimson clover with the grass; grass creates a lot of biomass to keep weed pressure down [and we] don’t have to use any herbicides. Clover adds a lot of nutrients and nitrogen

back into [the] soil so we don’t have to use any synthetic fertilizers like other farmers use,” explains Tabitha. They also grow some things on plastic, so there won’t be as much hand weeding. As a result, the weed pressure can be kept down, and the produce is kept clearer with little dirt being left on it. Tabitha points to the strawberries, which serves as an excellent example of how they use organic methods to grow their produce. Again, they do not use pesticides, synthetic pesticides, or herbicides; however, they occasionally use an organically certified pesticide when needed. Furthermore, to promote growth, they never fumigate their soil. “[We] never fumigate soil, which is done by a lot of conventional farmers in order to keep fungi down, disease pressure down, pests, and



***“FOR PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE IN SUSTAINABILITY AND PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT, WE MAKE SURE OUR SOIL IS LIVING AND HEALTHY.”***

things like that; [however], fumigating soil actually kills everything in the soil,” said Tabitha. “For people who believe in sustainability and protecting the environment, we make sure our soil is living and healthy.” Fumigating the soil refers to a process where a pesticide is turned into a gas, passed through the soil, and essentially does what was aforementioned. However, fumigation does involve highly toxic chemicals and compounds that can enter the soil and cause damage.

When asked how he got started with organic farming, Will explained that he always worked outside and just became interested in outside activities, especially food production. A graduate from NC State University, Will has a degree in horticulture. “Horticulture has a lot of aspects to it, not just one path; there are multiple. And I’ve been in the industry, and I used to be in landscaping, working on many farms. I know the chemicals used in conventional farming; they’re not necessary.” He says all the chemicals used in conventional farming are not worth it; first, they are not necessary to grow produce. Then, there is also an environmental impact of these chemicals (chemicals such as synthetic pesticides, herbicides, and synthetic fertilizers): they leech into the environment’s soil, water, and produce; they come right back to the people. Runoff can catalyze this effect.

Will also mentioned a book by Rachael Carson, “Silent Spring,” which was published in 1962. The book focuses on the negative, harmful aspects of conventional farming chemicals, predominantly DDT (dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane), a synthetic insecticide that was popular at the time. “I’m scared of these chemicals, honestly,” Will explains, “and when these chemicals are used, they have the potential to enter the water supply and our food supply, which leads right back to us.

We want clean air, water, and food, so we stay away from those chemicals.” After reading the book, Will became even more aware of the harmful effects of using conventional growing methods, of using herbicides and pesticides and conventional chemicals to grow food that are all toxic and dangerous. It made him gain an even more heightened passion for growing organically, staying away from

chemicals.

The Robersons also feel like organic farming is catching on. Will points to food security as being a factor in organic farming growing in popularity. In stores, it is hard to find stuff grown here, especially in the bigger supermarkets. “They’re not as much localized, being shipped and stuck on a shelf. Here, it gets in hands quickly,” Will explains. Organic, local farms like Deep Roots Farm are crucial and important to every aspect of our lives: not only are they better for the environment, but they are also healthier for people. People want healthy air, water, food—so that they may be healthy themselves. It all starts locally, organic, and deep rooted.





# TO JUICE OR NOT TO JUICE

## *Giving Nutrition a Shot*

GREG SUNDBERG

Ever since the 1970s, when a slew of movies such as *Nearly Dead*, *Fat*, and *Sick* grabbed people's attention, interest grew in the process and the benefits of juicing fruits to improve one's health. There are as many different health benefits and reasons to drink the juices of fruits as there are fruits themselves. Other than Vitamin C, there are a slew of nutrients such as alkaline, potassium, several different types of Vitamin B, and fiber, just to name a few.

But, what does juicing do that eating a normal piece of fruit doesn't do? Logically, it wouldn't seem that there is any difference between eating a fruit and drinking its juice. But science has surprised humanity multiple times before, so there is no reason to believe that this is not another case of truth being stranger than fiction.

To shed light on the question, I turned to the one person that I know who could help with this subject: My mother, Tanya Midyette, who earned a nutrition major from the University of North Carolina and has gotten into the juicing trend herself this past year.

Before she became a nutrition





major, Tanya was pursuing English education. When asked about her switch partway through, she replied that after losing interest in her original goals, some friends of hers talked her into giving nutrition a shot. “You’re so interested in eating healthy and exercising’, my friend told me. ‘Maybe you should look at nutrition.’” She’d swam competitively when she was in middle school and was always looking for an edge over her competition, which sparked her interest in this subject.

When she finished the long years at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, she’d planned on going into a sports medicine career (there was no program for it at UNC at the current time). “I knew I would need to

get a degree in nutrition and a minor in exercise physiology. My hope was to work with athletes to help make them better at their sport.” But, life always throws curveballs in our plans. Tanya said that while she was still in school, she had volunteered at the student wellness center where students could receive exercise testing and nutrition counseling. She found out that Duke had a similar position and applied, getting the job, and enjoying her role until she got married and had kids, assuming the stay-at-home-mom while we moved around for a few years.

However, her interest in exercise and nutrition never truly waned. “When we moved back to North Carolina, there was a YMCA in our neighborhood, and so, we became

members,” was her answer to how her experience led her to join the jobs I knew she’d had in my lifetime. “Because I had some experience teaching group fitness classes at UNC and Duke, I was able to get a job at the YMCA as a coach, and it was a perfect fit.” The experiences she gained while at the YMCA stayed with her for years, eventually allowing her to join the local CrossFit as one of their coaches.

“CrossFit puts a huge emphasis on eating right in order to improve your performance. Not just in the gym, but also in everyday life, so we are always looking for different ways to gain an advantage over one’s own diet and body.”

But age is still a factor in



***“IT’S VERY UNLIKELY THAT YOU’RE GOING TO EAT AN APPLE, A QUARTER OF A PINEAPPLE, TWO BEETS, SOME LEMON, GINGER, AND TURMERIC IN ONE SERVING IF THEY WERE ALL WHOLE FOODS,”***

everyone’s life, and eventually, she had to retire from CrossFit when we moved to Chocowinity. There was a year between her leaving her life as a coach and buying the juicer. “We were on YouTube one day,” she explained. “One video leads to another, and we eventually found a video on juicing. We did some more research into it and decided that it was the way that we wanted to go.” It was not an immediate purchase, but eventually, the juicer found its way into their home and on their island counter.

When asked about the juicing the fruit versus eating the fruit as a solid, Tanya had two ways to approach the argument. She stated that if you were only going to juice one fruit, then you should just go ahead and eat the fruit as it is, because there is no difference between eating one piece of fruit and drinking the juice of one fruit. The chief advantage of juicing multiple fruits into one drink is that it gives you a greater volume of nutrients in smaller dose. Instead of eating multiple pieces of fruit and eventually getting full, all of the fruit pieces are blended into a much more manageable size for drinking. “It’s very unlikely that you’re going to eat an apple, a quarter of a pineapple, two beets, some lemon, ginger, and turmeric in one serving if they were all whole foods,” Tanya explained. Also, juicing is a great way to dramatically

increase one’s intake of important nutrients that help to fight cancer, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes. Juicing is an easy way to ingest all of those nutrients in a more sustainable manner and can help those with pickier palettes by blending fruits one doesn’t like with fruits that one does like.

The particular juicer that I watched her use separates the pulp from the juices. Tanya stated that since she didn’t want to just waste all of the pulp, she researched some things

to do with it. They settled on feeding the pulp to their late dog, Rudy, and while they have no current plans to do the same with the new black lab twins, Jax and Tag, she said that they would consider after they get settled down first. She has stated that they are uncertain of the nutritional benefits of giving the pulp to a dog, but they don’t want to just let the pulp go to waste

A particular favorite juice that comes from the juice recipe book that was included with the juicer, favored because of its ease to make and its deliciousness, is called Apple Lemon...Aid. Tanya, along with the recipe book the juices come from, say that you get alkaline and Vitamin C, not to mention, you get a very refreshing beverage.





# RECIPES

## *Apple Lemon...Aid*

Golden Delicious Apples (2)

Unwaxed Lemon (1/3)

ice Cubes (However Many You Want)

Fun Idea: Freeze around Ice-Lolly Holder for a Healthy Popsicle!



## *A Taste of Florida*

Peeled Florida Oranges (3, Medium)

Peeled Florida Pink Grapefruit (1/2, Medium)

Peeled Lime (1, Small)

Ice Cubes (However Many You Want)

Quick Tip: If you can't get Florida Fruit, get creative and have fun!

# RON BALDWIN

## *Building A Healthy Lifestyle*

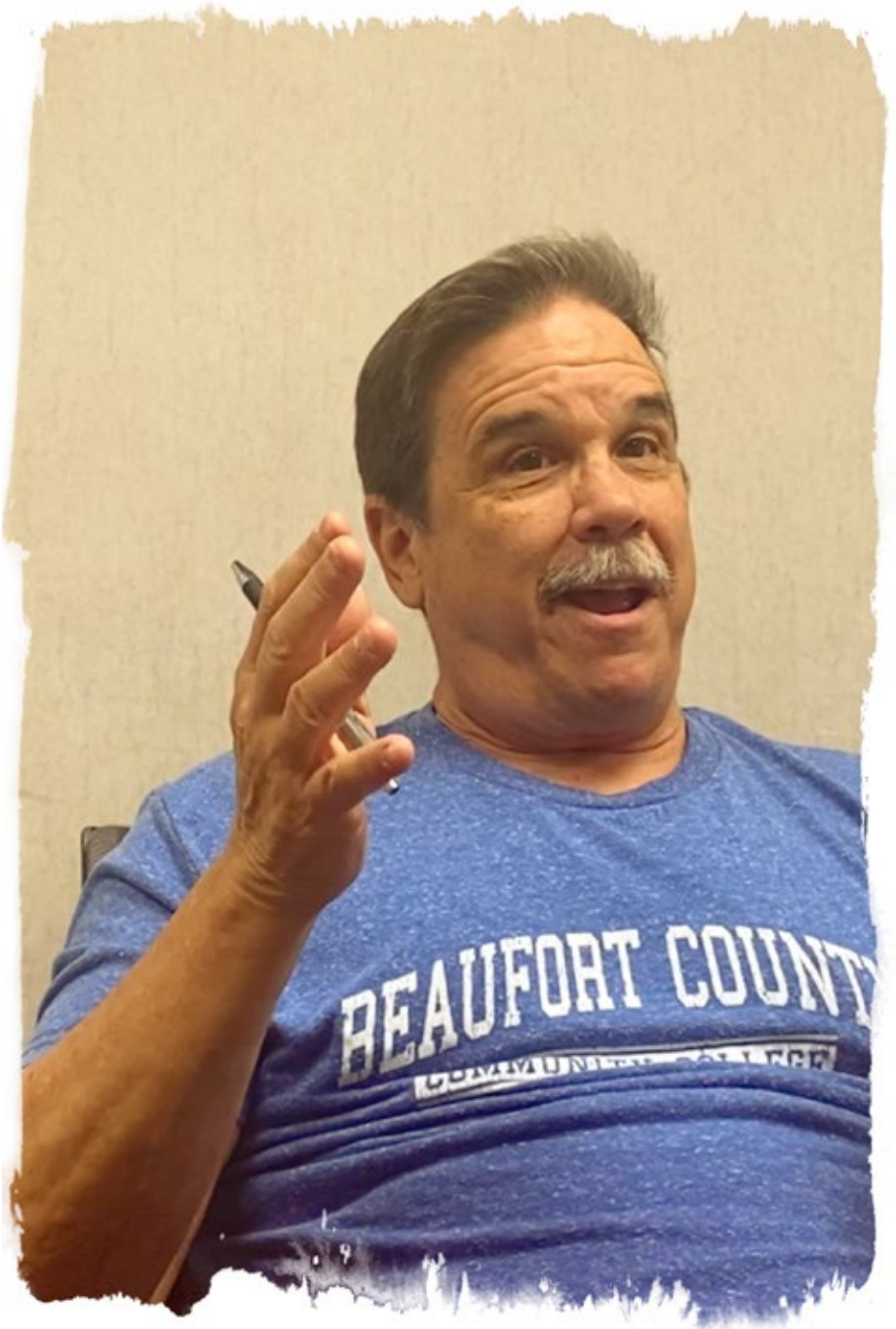
RILEY OVERTON

Every year, the anxiety surrounding health increases. As people spend more time online and sedentary, and dodge the ever-changing threat of the global pandemic, people begin to worry more and more about their health, but many find it difficult to make a change.

There are many reasons for the 21st century's decline in health aside from the COVID-19 pandemic. The sedentary lifestyle so many people have adopted in the past decade, obesity, and diet are all major health problems today's community struggles with.

Technology addiction is a main underlying cause for the sedentary lifestyle. The popularity and accessibility of technology, which has taken away the incentive to do anything for many people. Activities like hiking, going on a run, or going to the gym often fall second in line to being on one's phone.

This lifestyle paired with poor eating habits often leads to obesity, which, according to Healthline, affects over two-thirds of Americans. This is especially true for the South, which has the highest rates of obesity.





Obesity itself is linked to over 60 other chronic diseases, but it's not very easy to overcome; being overweight makes it harder to change one's sedentary lifestyle.

It doesn't help that a sedentary lifestyle is unintentionally promoted by school systems and most jobs as well. Sitting for many hours consecutively, like most students and office workers do, is becoming more of a problem every year. It's primarily an issue for senior citizens because it can negatively impact mobility and flexibility, and especially because these are long-term effects, it's important to avoid starting a sitting habit young. It can also contribute to heart disease, diabetes, and some cancers; it's such a problem that the term "Sitting Disease" was created, which is a term used to link the more than 30 chronic conditions that are caused by a lack of physical activity.

Neglecting one's health can affect one in every aspect of one's life. Ignoring physical health can take a toll on one's mental health and vice versa; neither one can be ignored. Poor mental health can make it extremely difficult to take care of one's physical health, whether it's from lack of motivation or self-esteem.

When poor physical health is reflected in weight, that can also take a major toll on one's mental health. Discrimination such as fatphobia can cause low self-esteem and anxiety about eating and going out; it can also cause stress eating, which contributes to the weight problem.

Ron Baldwin is a former health instructor at Beaufort County

## ***AT THE END OF THE DAY, THE HARDEST PART OF MOST PEOPLE'S HEALTH JOURNEY IS STARTING.***

Community College in Washington, N.C. He has always had healthy influences; his childhood friend's father was a Physical Education coach, and he participated in sports and martial arts.

When Baldwin was younger, his main focus was getting bigger and being perceived as stronger. He says, "I went to school in a pretty rough part of town in Baltimore, so the bigger you were, the less you got beat up."

Even though he started out of necessity, he began to really enjoy working out. It wasn't until after graduate school that he began thinking of his overall health and began dieting. It wasn't particularly difficult for him, and changing his diet was the most difficult part of his journey.

Otherwise, "I never really developed any bad lifestyle choices...I never got into drugs. I never got into a lot of things you can do nowadays," Baldwin says. At the end of the day, he made a decision and stuck to it.

As for his career, he started in the gym. "The gym is a good, positive place to be. You know, positive people, oriented people," Baldwin says. He wanted to be around that for the rest of his life, so he went to school for exercise physiology and became a personal trainer, which kept him in the gym, right where he wanted to be.

Later, however, he got to a point where he needed a change. "I always wanted to be a teacher," he explains. He wanted to be a source of positivity for his students, which is extremely

necessary in health classes, especially when teaching middle or high school students. At least for high schoolers, he says, "Most of them really are looking for direction. They really want to learn, they're willing to learn what to do and what not to do."

The positive guidance that instructors like Ron offer is exactly what the younger generation needs to unlearn the sedentary lifestyle and be passionate about and conscious of their health. Because of social media, more and more people are struggling with eating disorders, which can often be aggravated by health class due to the discussion and tracking of one's eating and exercise habits, but an instructor who speaks positively and practically of taking care of one's health can make a significant difference.

Many people think they have to go to a fancy gym, and start off with an intense routine, but improving your health can be as simple as making an effort to walk around the block a few times a week, or trading out one meal a day for a healthy alternative. There are opportunities everywhere, even in rural areas like eastern North Carolina. At BCCC, there are stations to work out different parts of your body: upper body, lower body, and cardiorespiratory. There is also a stretching station.

Many people struggle with holding themselves accountable when it comes to exercising. To combat this, one can work out with a friend, or join a club—whatever you're interested in,

there's a club for it. There are groups of people interested in things like swimming, running, hiking, or even disc golf.

Sometimes, that can still feel like too big of a commitment, but there are still many things one can do in their day to day life without sacrificing much time or money. It's important to take "baby steps" like going on a walk every day, or a few times a week, which works out your legs and boosts your metabolism; swapping out a candy bar for a piece of fruit; going on a walk while watching a video instead of sitting or lying down.

The ways you work out and the

things you do to care for your body can change depending on factors like your age and goals. As people get older, they may stop caring about how they look, or how people view them, and instead focus on how they feel physically instead. For example, as he's gotten older, Baldwin has begun focusing more on maintenance than building muscle.

At the end of the day, the hardest part of most people's health journey is starting. Anxiety, a lack of knowledge, and insecurity can all make it difficult to feel comfortable starting, but everyone begins in the same place, with the same mindset.

"Just start incorporating those little steps, and you'd be amazed how much better you start to feel," Baldwin says.

Getting started on one's health journey can be difficult. It comes naturally to some, and may take more time for others, but even then, everyone has struggles. Still, you'll always be grateful you started, Baldwin says.

To learn more about physical education and public amenities available at Beaufort County Community College, see the college website.





## The Power of Tea

## DELANEY LEWIS

**T**ea is not only a staple in the diet of the American South but is also a powerful wellness tool. Maria Holt of Moonraker Tea Shop in Ocracoke knows this better than

anyone. Originally from Pittsburgh, Maria grew up drinking black tea and sweet tea made by her southern grandmother. She learned more about other teas, particularly loose-leaf teas,

as she grew older and went to college.

When asked about teas healing properties, Maria remarks, “This is where things really get interesting when it comes to tea. Tea is very



high in antioxidants.” Many teas also contain caffeine to provide a natural boost of energy.

However, Maria says that the biggest health benefit of drinking tea is the hydration it provides. “What’s nice about tea is if your organs are hydrated and your body is hydrated, you’re going to function a lot better. Every person is usually suffering from some type of dehydration. If it tastes good, you’re going to drink more.”

In addition to physical benefits, there are psychological benefits as well. Making tea can be a practice in mindfulness, as it forces one to stop and redirect their focus. Maria says, “There’s a big thing about the placebo effect. One of the things that I like to say is that taking that five minutes to sit down and brew a cup of loose-leaf makes you calm down for a moment. It makes you take that stress-relief moment and focus on something that’s not a stressor.”

In addition to their general benefits, there are some teas that are made for providing specific health benefits. These are often called “remedy teas.” Remedy teas can be used to aid in stomach problems, weight loss, allergies, and many other specialized issues. “When it comes to holistic medicine, I’m a proponent of it,” Maria says, “because sometimes I do believe you just need something simple.” While she supports the use of tea as medicine, she does say that it should not be relied on as a sole remedy. “I’m a strong believer in modern medicine as well,” she adds. “If it works, awesome!”

If a simple remedy doesn’t work,

## ONE OF THESE PLANTS USED TO MAKE TEA IS THE YAUPON HOLLY, THE ONLY CAFFEINATED PLANT NATIVE TO NORTH AMERICA.

then try other methods or medicines. “If that doesn’t work, then go see your doctor,” she clarified. It is also important to talk about any home remedies with a professional in the topic. “Any time you do any of these things, and if you’re going to be taking anything for wellness, always discuss it with someone who’s really trained in it,” Maria explained. If using natural healing remedies, it is important to have input from someone who has a deep understanding of the topic. Failure to do so could result in the improper use of natural medicines.

Tea is also great for those who don’t like caffeine or don’t handle it well. “If you’ve ever noticed, when you drink tea, you don’t get the jitters. You’re alert, but you don’t get the jitters,” Maria says. While many teas do contain caffeine, they also contain a chemical known as L-theanine.



This causes caffeine to be absorbed at a lower rate, lessening some of its effects. For those who want to avoid caffeine completely, there are herbal teas. Herbal teas come from fruits and herbs, and typically, they contain no caffeine. There are also decaffeinated teas, which have had the majority of the caffeine content removed. This can be done with carbon dioxide or water.

In addition to having health benefits, tea has deep historical connections. Tea originally comes from China, but it is also native to India. It then made its way to Europe through trade with Portugal, and later it was brought over to America with British settlers. Tea had a rough start in the colonies. “It was one of the big things that started to get taxed,” Maria explains. “We all know about the Boston Tea Party.” Once tea became more widely consumed in the United States, the South developed its own variety of tea—iced and sweeter than most variants before it—sweet tea. “What’s interesting is that the South kind of capitalized on tea, and turned it into what we know as sweet tea,” Maria says. Despite its rocky start, the tea industry is growing in the United States, having doubled over the past ten years. Maria says, “Tea, in the world, is the second most drank liquid after water. So, the United States is finally catching up on that.”

With the countless different varieties of tea, it may be surprising to discover that most types are made from just two plants, the camellia sinensis and the camellia sinensis assamica. However, tea can be made





from other greenery. One of these plants used to make tea is the Yaupon Holly, the only caffeinated plant native to North America. Yaupon is commonly found in the American South and is known to grow within North Carolina. "Yaupon does grow on Ocracoke, and it looks like a Holly tree," Maria explains. Yaupon was originally introduced to the area by settlers, and was initially used as a tea replacement. It has a deep history as well. Maria explains part of its past: "It was introduced from the Native Americans to the settlers, and the reason why they liked it was because it was a tea substitute." Yaupon tea was incredibly popular in the colonies during the revolutionary period. It was one of the colonies' major exports to Great Britain up until the end of the Revolutionary War, at which time

the rates of tea being exported and consumed greatly dropped.

While there are many benefits to drinking tea, there are potential negative effects as well. When asked about the possibility of harmful impacts from tea-drinking, Maria says, "There are a few. Obviously, you can drink a lot of caffeine and not be getting enough sleep. That's a big one." This can occur despite the lessened effects of caffeine that tea typically provides.

Additionally, drinking large amounts of iced tea can pose risks to those prone to kidney stones. Studies have shown that drinking iced tea frequently and in large quantities can promote the production of kidney stones in those who have suffered from them in the past. "If you're prone to kidney stones, either stick to herbal teas or just drink hot teas,"

Maria suggests. Drinking tea in moderation can allow one to avoid these potentially harmful effects.

From healing remedies to a sweet, sippable delicacy, tea is a household staple throughout the American South. Its variety in flavors, caffeine content and health benefits make it a versatile drink that many can enjoy. Between its physical and mental benefits, it promotes mindfulness. As said by Maria, "tea makes you slow down, and we all need that sometimes."

Moonraker Tea Shop is located at 587 Irvin Garrish Highway, in Ocracoke, North Carolina. More information can be found by visiting [www.moonrakerteashop.com](http://www.moonrakerteashop.com) or by calling (252) 928-0443.

# ELDERBERRY SYRUP

## *Natural Cold Relief*

MEL STROUDT

You know the scene well: a commercial comes on for the latest sinus medicine. It has all the happy healthy-looking people in it and promises that you can be this happy too if you just take their latest medication. It's full of pictures of sunshine and smiles out with everyone having fun in nature. Then, it is followed up by the pages of possible side effects and warnings about the use of this drug. Have you ever wondered if there might be a better way to treat your cold? You might feel more comfortable if there were a solution that didn't involve having to cross check the complicated symptoms that would make the medicine harmful for you. You might feel quite frustrated at the available options. You may even be asking yourself if there is a better way. There is a new movement going on in Eastern Carolina as well as the rest of the country returning to old practices for treating colds. People are looking toward medicinal herbs, you know, the ones that nature provides for us to use. These individuals are seeking remedies without any extravagant chemical additives. These are the

very questions one Washington local found herself asking. Ashley Autry has a family here with her husband and two children. She approaches the family's health and wellness a little differently than one conventionally would. While she does take her children to the doctors on a regular basis, prescribing medication is not always the first thing she goes to in order to resolve their health concerns.

Growing up, Ashley's aunt showed her wonderful things that

grew outside. They would make raspberry jam in the summer and suck the centers out of honeysuckles. There was one time when her uncle, the one who was married to her aunt, went on an all vitamin diet for 30 days. While this is not recommended by medical professionals, it does show the level of trust and devotion he had for the power of natural healing. Ashley says, "They have been a major contributing factor to the way I choose to live my life and care for my children's health."





She explains that its just another way to teach your children about our wonderful world and all it has to offer.

Ashley is a teacher at the local high school and knows the value of what we put in our children's minds and bodies. This was one of the reasons that she chose to explore the benefits of natural remedies. She says, "Our children are an investment in not only our future but the future of the world."

In 2007, Ashley moved to North Carolina for college from the snowy mountains of Pennsylvania. In Pennsylvania, the growing season is much shorter, and there are not as many herbal options to choose from

## **ELDERBERRIES AND THEIR FLOWERS ARE FULL OF ANTIOXIDANTS AND VITAMINS THAT ARE KNOWN FOR BOOSTING THE IMMUNE SYSTEM**

locally. She says it was refreshing to her when she moved down to North Carolina with the sun and warm weather. She was able to unlock a new world of options. These plants popped up in her backyard and everywhere that she looked. While she will still order online in the off season, however she does have dreams of one day being able to walk into her yard to get anything she may need right there available at her fingertips.

One of Ashley's go-to recipes for

a cold going around her house is her Elderberry Syrup. This can be made by anyone wishing to give their family a natural immune system boost. Elderberries and their flowers are full of antioxidants and vitamins that are known for boosting the immune system. This helps when you have a cold as well as before to prevent the cold in the first place. The recipe also includes cinnamon. Cinnamon has anti-viral, anti-bacterial, and anti-fungal properties. This makes it the perfect mixture for fighting a cold

in any angle it may attack you from. Cinnamon is also good for the gut health as well as lowering blood sugar and blood pressure. It has even been suggested that cinnamon is good for an aging brain. Another ingredient used in Ashley's elderberry syrup is cloves. Cloves are also full of antioxidants. They are known to reduce one's risk of developing heart disease, diabetes, and certain cancers. Antioxidants are compounds that help the body to fight free radicals. Free radicals can damage the cells in your body leading to disease and cancers. We are exposed everyday to free radicals, and it is virtually impossible to avoid them.

Another thing that Ashley will do in the event that she or one of her family members gets sick is start the day off with orange juice mixed with turmeric. Turmeric is an antioxidant as well as an anti-inflammatory property. It will help with the aches



and pains you get when you are sick. It is recommended by medical professionals on healthline.com that 1.4mg of turmeric per pound of body weight is safe to ingest daily. So, if one has trouble with joints, this may be a helpful thing to try. Ashley said that she has found that when mixed with orange juice with lots of pulp in it, she cannot even taste the turmeric because it has such a mild flavor. You could also mix it into a meal, as it is quite mild in taste.

Ashley is most definitely not alone in her quest to disconnect from the main stream pharmaceutical company's medications that have been the only option that larger society thought was available. More and more, you can find on social media where people who have a desire to cure themselves and to alleviate symptoms are finding their relief in herbal medicine.

This may all sound new age and experimental, however, it is not. Since a long, long time ago people have turned to plants, berries, and spices for their healing powers. According to NCPedia.org, among other sources saying the same thing, the use of medicinal plants began about 60,000 years ago and is evident on archaeological artifacts. There are written accounts of the use of these herbs as far back as 5,000 years. This is what we did before we started to make health marketable, before the use of money as payment for your healthcare. Many believe health should not be an industry; it should be something that everyone is able to enjoy to their fullest despite the amount of money in

their bank account. Some are turning to the plant world as a way to take back control and to fight against the idea that only a pill can heal you, as that could cost thousands a month. Most people, rightfully so, feel taken advantage of and helpless.

That's great, but does it work? If you are asking yourself this question, you are not alone. In the Cleveland Clinic's latest study on elderberries, they found that taking elderberry while having the flu shortened the length of the flu by four days versus the placebo. The article posted also mentioned that the elderberry is beneficial for your complexion as well as boosting your immunity. Medical News Today has also reported several studies on the effectiveness of elderberries used to treat a cold. One study showed the same four-day improvement over the length of a cold or flu. Thirty-two people who

were experiencing flu-like symptoms showed an improvement in their fever, headache, muscle aches, and nasal congestion after consuming 175mg of elderberry extract in lozenges they took four times a day for two days.

If you have ever had the desire to try a more natural alternative to the way you treat your health, there has never been a better time than now to start. Ashley says, "It's not hard, anyone can do it. Just start small and work your way up. Before you know it, you will be amazed at what you learn and how you feel." Many different kinds of people in the world seem to agree with Ashley and be headed in the same direction as her. If nothing else, at least there is now an alternative being popularized for those who once thought there was none. The world is a better place with people like Ashley in it and we will continue to see the amazing trend gain momentum.

## RECIPE

### *Elderberry Syrup*

- 1 Cup Dried Elderberries
- 3 Cups Water
- 5 Sticks of Cinnamon
- 6 Whole Clove
- Honey to taste

In a pot on the stove, bring all ingredients to a boil and reduce heat to a simmer. Leave on simmer until the level has reduced to less than a half of what it was. Strain the solids out once slightly cooled. Add honey to taste. Bottle and use within two weeks.







LIFE ON THE PAMLICO  
is produced  
as the final project of  
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