

LIFE OFF THE LAND

PRIMAVERA 2012 / ESPAÑOL Y QUÍMICA



"THIS IS WHY ALCHEMY EXISTS," THE BOY SAID. "SO THAT EVERYONE WILL SEARCH FOR HIS TREASURE, FIND IT, AND THEN WANT TO BE BETTER THAN HE WAS IN HIS FORMER LIFE. LEAD WILL PLAY ITS ROLE UNTIL THE WORLD HAS NO FURTHER NEED FOR LEAD; AND THEN LEAD WILL HAVE TO TURN ITSELF TO GOLD.

"THAT'S WHAT ALCHEMISTS DO. THEY SHOW THAT, WHEN WE STRIVE TO BECOME BETTER THAN WE ARE, EVERYTHING AROUND US BECOMES BETTER, TOO."

"WELL, WHY DID YOU SAY THAT I DON'T KNOW ABOUT LOVE?" THE SUN ASKED THE BOY.

"BECAUSE IT'S NOT LOVE TO BE STATIC LIKE THE DESERT, NOR IS IT LOVE TO ROAM THE WORLD LIKE THE WIND. AND IT'S NOT LOVE TO SEE EVERYTHING FROM A DISTANCE, LIKE YOU DO. LOVE IS THE FORCE THAT TRANSFORMS AND IMPROVES THE SOUL OF THE WORLD. WHEN I FIRST REACHED THROUGH TO IT, I THOUGHT THE SOUL OF THE WORLD WAS PERFECT. BUT LATER, I COULD SEE THAT IT WAS LIKE OTHER ASPECTS OF CREATION, AND HAD ITS OWN PASSIONS AND WARS. IT IS WE WHO NOURISH THE SOUL OF THE WORLD, AND THE WORLD WE LIVE IN WILL BE EITHER BETTER OR WORSE, DEPENDING ON WHETHER WE BECOME BETTER OR WORSE. AND THAT'S WHERE THE POWER OF LOVE COMES IN. BECAUSE WHEN WE LOVE, WE ALWAYS STRIVE TO BECOME BETTER THAN WE ARE." - THE ALCHEMIST

How can we connect with the “Soul of the World” and learn to speak its language? For centuries, people lived closely with the land, depending on its fruits for nourishment and for the enhancement of physical, mental, and spiritual wellbeing. People depended on the land, and therefore, they cared for it. They worked with the land, spoke with it, and thanked it for its bounty. In many areas of the world, this relationship between the natural world and people has remained strong, but for others, respect for the land and knowledge of its treasures has disappeared with the passing of each generation.

What is your relationship to the natural world? Over the course of this semester, we will examine closely the relationship between plants and people, particularly your own. How much do we know about plants and their uses? What can we learn from the nature that surrounds us and from others who have maintained or developed a strong relationship to the land? Can we become better people by enhancing our understanding and connection to the world? Here is your opportunity to find out.

Over the course of this semester, we are going to learn from cultures that have and continue to live off the land. We’ll hear from community members who are working to cultivate this relationship, and we’ll develop our own understanding by taking hikes, documenting what we see and researching the uses of local plants, particularly those that can improve our well-being. You will become local “experts” and use this growing expertise to write a bilingual field guide to San Diego’s ethnobotanical plants and developing a product that makes use of one of these plant’s healing properties. Meanwhile, you will have the opportunity to compare traditional remedies made from plants and their “modern” or “western” equivalents and to consider questions such as who owns this knowledge and why is it disappearing. By the end, whether you feel a deeper connection to the natural world or not, we hope you feel you have become a better person through this project – and in turn, help the world to be a better place.

Here is a general timeline (subject to change) of our semester’s adventures: (NEXT PAGE)

- More details on expectations will be delivered as we reach each component.

Feb 27 – March 2nd

Complete Personal Legend Story & Visual

What is Ethnobotany & Research Home Remedies

(PRODUCTS: Personal Legend Story & Visual, Home Remedy Research & Visual)

March 6th – March 23rd

Latin American Case Study – Plants and People of Latin America

Read: Bless Me Ultima, Rodolfo Anaya

Construction of Herb Garden

Lab Techniques for Isolation of Active Ingredients

Debates: Ethics, Intellectual Property, Etc.

Potential Field Trips / Expert Guests

- UCSD, Center of Expertise on Health and Migration
- Walter Anderson Nursery

(PRODUCTS: Construction of herb garden, L.A. Case Study – written & visual, Debates & Labs)

SPRING BREAK-----

April 10 – May 4th

Developing Understanding of Local Plants & Uses

Read: The Hummingbirds Daughter

Potential Field Trips / Expert Guests

- Hikes (approx. 4 hikes in local area for documentation / field research) with local experts.
- World Beat Center (ethnobotanical garden) & zoo
- Possible camping trip.

(PRODUCTS: Field Journal, Research Log & Creation of San Diego Maps)

May 7 – June 1st

Local case study – plants of San Diego County

Production & publication of bilingual field guide to San Diego's ethnobotanical plants

Creation of product for use of plant's healing properties

(PRODUCTS: production & publication of bilingual field guide, development of plant-based product that enhances well-being).