



## POLLEN IN THE WIND

by Irene Lewis

**This time of year is so lovely.** Amongst the cold rainy days, we have days of warmth and sunshine. The daffodils are gifting us with their bright happy faces, the Calla lilies are rising gracefully, and trees are laden with blossoms. I find myself pulled to my garden pruning roses, pulling weeds and preparing beds for planting.

However, March winds are about to blow, and they'll bring pollen out of the flowers and into the air. For a person with seasonal allergies this means sneezes, wheezes, itchy eyes and excess mucus.

Yes, I am one of those people. Because I am allergic to much more than pollen, I can have these symptoms all year round. I find I can keep these sensitivities under control by using herbs, supplements and certain lifestyle choices. This wasn't always the case.

When I was in eighth grade I was sent to be tested

for allergies. The process of discovering them was through skin testing. A scratch was formed by taking a tiny dowel and twisting it into the skin of my forearms. The scratch was the shape of a little red dot. Two evenly spaced rows of dots were created down the inside of each arm. Every dot was touched with a dilute amount of a possible allergen. In 2 days time, if

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the area of the dot raised into a bump, then it would be determined that I had an allergy to that particular item. After the 2 day waiting period every single dot on my arms, had risen into bumps. I showed a reaction to everything I was tested for! I was then given allergy shots, one shot in each arm, starting twice a week, for the next year and a half. When I was a sophomore in high school I chose to stop taking the shots.

What is allergy anyways? Well, technically it is "reactions to harmless items where IgE is involved". IgE stands for immunoglobulin E, and is one of five types of immunoglobulins involved in immune sensitivity and response in humans.

The book *The Allergy Bible* written by Linda Gamlin, a biochemist describes an allergic reaction in detail. This gets pretty complicated but it's interesting so here goes.

The basic cause of classical allergies is an immune reaction involving mast cells and IgE antibodies.

Mast cells are plentiful in the lining of the nose, the airways, and digestive tract. They have counterparts in the blood, called basophils.

Seen under a microscope, both mast cells and basophils look very granular inside. The granules are tiny storage compartments, containing stockpiles of messenger chemicals, notably histamine.

Histamine causes several different reactions:

- Contraction of muscle around the airways. This reduces the diameter of the airway, and can produce an asthma attack
- Widening of blood vessels
- Increased leakiness of the smallest blood vessels, allowing fluid and immune cells to escape into the surrounding area. For example, the skin or airway lining
- As a result of these two effects, local swelling and irritation. In the skin, this is experienced as hives. In the nose it causes blockage, itching and sneezing
- If sufficient histamine is released into the blood, a drastic fall in blood pressure can occur due to widespread opening of blood vessels and leaking of fluid into tissues. Anaphylaxis is characterized by this situation.

Histamine is released when mast cells are activated. The cells discharge their storage granules in a process called degranulation.

Mast cells release other substances at the same time, some of which attract more immune cells that cause even more inflammation. Activated mast cells also start making messenger chemicals called leukotrienes, which are telling your body to have even more inflammation.

IgE is what triggers the degranulation of the mast cell. The allergy antibody IgE sits on the surface of

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mast cells. One end of the IgE molecule is bound to the mast cell, and the other end can bind to the allergen concerned. For the receptors to pass on a message to a mast cell there have to be two IgE antibodies specific for the same allergen on the mast cell and the allergen has to bind to both of these IgE molecules. This forms a link between them. This is the “go” signal for the mast cell to degranulate and the process of an allergic reaction to start.

The diseases linked to the allergic response are many; Hay fever, A blocked or runny nose that lasts all year round, sinusitis, asthma, eczema, hives and swelling, insect sting allergy, food allergies, anaphylaxis, celiac, candida, and more.

Only hay fever is my focus for this article. So back to the sneezes, wheezes and itchy eyes we go.

A Neti pot, a ceramic pot that looks like a cross between a small teapot and Aladdin’s magic lamp, can be a very helpful tool for sinus congestion. To use the Neti pot you would mix about 1 pint of lukewarm water with 1 teaspoon of non-iodized sea salt. Make sure that the sea salt is completely melted into the water and the pour the water into your neti pot. Once you’ve filled the Neti pot, tilt your head over the sink at about a 45-degree angle. Place the spout into your top nostril, and gently pour the saline solution into that nostril. The fluid will flow through your nasal cavity and into the other nostril. Blow your nose to get rid of any remaining liquid, then refill the Neti pot and repeat the process on the other side. The Neti pot originally comes from the Ayurvedic medical tradition. Although nasal irrigation using the Neti pot has been around for centuries, its use is on the rise in the U.S., thanks to Dr. Oz who appeared on The Oprah Winfrey Show and to a fair amount of news coverage.

If you are interested in using a nasal spray to help with sneezing and sinus pressure try bioAllers Sinus & Allergy Nasal Spray. This is a homeopathic formula that is said to be effective in all regions and in any climate.

For itchy, water eyes try Allium 30c. Allium is a homeopathic remedy taken from onions. In the homeopathic theory of “like treats like” we find that onions can cause irritated, watery eyes so therefore, they may be the perfect treatment for the same.

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We'd talked about moving the piano to the barn for years before we actually did it.

It was an upright, solid and heavy, built the turn of the last century when weight didn't seem to be an issue with musical instruments or furniture. After years of taking up space in their living room - its main purpose being to set things down on like a dysfunctional coffee table - Ron realized that his kids weren't ever going to start playing it "It needs a new home," he'd say. And the social atmosphere in the converted barn turned clubhouse at our place seemed to be just the place.

During those same years that we blathered on about moving the piano, my sister Kate, who lived with her family back in Minnesota, was battling breast cancer. But back in California, on a cloudy grey Good Friday afternoon in April we finally gathered enough strong bodies to load the piano, strap it down in the trailer and haul it the five miles to the barn.

By the time we backed up to the wide barn door the light mist that floated in and out during the day had grown so heavy it darkened the mid-afternoon light. We unloaded just in time as raindrops barely began to splash it, and we placed the behemoth dead center of the barn. We all patted each other on the back as we sat around the round table in the hayloft, and Frank - an excellent piano player - played along with the Billie Holiday singing, "What's New?" on the old record player.

It was during this celebratory mood that I got the call. Kate died at home in bed with her family gathered around.

My sister was born on March 4th and that is what she did while on this planet for 53 years - march forth. She lived with cancer for the last four years of her life, but it rarely stopped her indomitable smile. Kate touched so many people, either in moments or in years, in such a positive way that the sadness her passing caused can still fill rain barrels full of tears.

Anyone who knew or met her going down this trail of life was left with the memory of a unique visit from a

rare human being. The spring funeral in Minnesota was packed with mourners. Rain showers poured from the sky. Later, at the picnic in one of her favorite parks in Minneapolis the rain stopped and a huge rainbow dominated the sky. Kate was painting the sky from heaven.

Even though we knew the Banshee was lingering outside the door, the news of her death was a blow to us all as we sat in the barn listening to the rain drops pelt the tin roof and watching it stream down the windows as the shadows of night closed in. Above the sound of the rain was the entrancing sound of the music coming from the piano, thanks to Frank's graceful fingers.

We toasted with The Waters of Life and it was as if Kate's spirit occupied the piano and she was dancing off the walls of the barn. We sat around the table on that drizzling spring night looking at photos of Kate and accepting her journey onward to the great mystery.

It's been four years since that showery Easter weekend and the sorrow of my sister's death still resides in the green shadows of spring. We named the piano after her and every time someone sits down and plays I think of her and remind myself to live each day as a holy day.

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(Pollen, continued from page 3) Another homeopathic choice is Similasan's Allergy Eye Relief. This is a formula that combines three homeopathic remedies in the form of eye drops. Both of these formulas have given me some relief for my itchy eyes. However, once I discovered that a histamine response can be tamed by applying something cold, the best remedy I have used for my itchy eyes has been ice cubes. I now have a special tray of heart shaped ice cubes in my freezer. These heart shaped cubes allow for ease of application while also reminding me to send love to my very irritated eyes.

Local herbalist Christa Sinadinos of Alpine Meadow Botanicals has a wonderful tincture compound known as Allerg-Ease. Allerg-Ease contains herbs that have an antihistamine, anti-inflammatory, and astringent effect. This formula helps to dry up mucus and stabilize the mast cells, reducing inflammation. Additionally, it contains herbs that protect the liver from circulating antigens and allergens, thus also reducing the inflammatory response.

This time of year baby nettles are sprouting up. Eating the young steamed nettles or making nettle tea can be a tasty way to help hayfever. Nettles help to maintain healthy levels of histamine in the body, they have a broad tonic effect to the upper respiratory system and are highly nutritive. Eclectic Institute's product Nettle Quercetin is a popular capsulated remedy. Fresh freeze dried Nettles contain the flavonoid quercetin but Eclectic Institute has added even more. Quercetin is a great antioxidant and bioflavonoid, it stabilizes the mast cells and inhibits inflammation. Taking bromelian along with this formula will enhance the absorption of the quercetin. Bromelian is an enzyme found in pineapple and along with helping the absorption of quercetin, preliminary studies suggest that bromelian may help reduce congestion, improve breathing and also suppress coughing. My favorite product is Allergy Rescue by Rainbow Light. This formula combines the nettles, quercetin, bromelian as well as eyebright, xanthium fruit, licorice, peppermint and several nutrients.

So get out there and prune your roses, weed your gardens and prepare your beds for planting. When those March winds blow, you'll be ready.

## Hay Fever Allergy Resources & Products

**Book:** The Allergy Bible written by Linda Gamlin

**Neti pot:** A ceramic pot that can be a very helpful tool for sinus congestion

**bioAllers Sinus & Allergy Nasal Spray:** Nasal spray to help with sneezing and sinus pressure

**Allium 30c:** Allium is a homeopathic remedy taken from onions for itchy, watery eyes

**Similasan's Allergy Eye Relief:** Another homeopathic choice in the form of eye drops

**Allerg-Ease:** A wonderful tincture compound by local herbalist Christa Sinadinos of Alpine Meadow Botanicals. Allerg-Ease contains herbs that have an antihistamine, anti-inflammatory, and astringent effect.

**Nettles:** Eat them fresh or try Eclectic Institute's product Nettle Quercetin

**Bromelian:** An enzyme found in pineapple, bromelian may help reduce congestion, improve breathing and also suppress coughing

**Allergy Rescue by Rainbow Light:** This formula combines the nettles, quercetin, bromelian as well as eyebright, xanthium fruit, licorice, peppermint and several nutrients

## Hayfever Relief Tea

- 1 part Nettle leaf
- ½ part Peppermint
- ½ part Mullein leaf
- ¼ part Licorice root
- ¼ part Rosehips

Bring 1 quart of water to a boil.  
Add one ounce of herbal combination. Steep at least 1 hour then drink 2-3 cups a day.

Enjoy!



# Schedule of Upcoming Classes & Events

## FERTILITY AWARENESS METHOD

with Monika Rosicka

Monday, April 19th from 7-9pm

You will learn: To chart your cycle accurately; Predict fertile times, ovulation, menstruation and non-fertile times; Enhance cooperation, communication, and connection in intimate relationships; Non-hormonal contraception during the fertile times; Greater awareness of your body and its marvelous design; Lactation Amenorrhea Method (LAM) as pregnancy prevention for new mamas. This method is based on scientific research that is up to 98-99% accurate in preventing pregnancy. Class includes samples of fertility charts and hand-outs.

## WHAT IS QUANTUM ENERGETICS THERAPY?

with Sandra Freeman

Wednesday, April 28th from 7-8:30 PM, FREE

This informative and experiential presentation will focus on a gentle and powerful structured system of health care that very effectively uses subtle energy to trigger the body's innate healing processes. We will also explore specialized kinesiology testing, working with the innate wisdom of the body, and what exactly is unique about Quantum Energetics Therapy.

## ACCESSING BODY WISDOM

with Sandra Freeman

Three Wednesday evenings, May 5th-19th from 6:30-8:30pm, cost is \$54

This practical, hands-on workshop is an introduction to specialized kinesiology testing, a way to access the innate wisdom of the body. Sandra will demonstrate how an individualized assessment of the client can be made and how it can help us to save resources, time and money when choosing therapies, herbs and/or supplements. We'll develop basic skills with muscle testing to use for more than one simple application in the field of natural therapies.

## THE POWER OF PLANT NUTRITION

with Sandra Freeman

Monday, May 10th from 7-8:15 PM, cost is \$9

In this class we'll look at startling info about the nutritional status of Americans, the rate of chronic degenerative disease, and what this means for our children. We'll also discuss scientific discoveries since the 90's about the power of plant nutrition and the resulting paradigm

shift. What are phytonutrients and why are they good for us? What is the rainbow diet? Our focus will be on simple steps to become more proactive about prevention and health.

## HERBAL SPA DAY

with Irene Lewis

Sunday, May 16th from 12-4:00 pm, \$40 workshop fee

In this fun and creative class you will learn how to make herbal lotions & lip balms and indulge in an herbal facial & footbath. Come let the essence of the plants relax and refresh you. Bring a bowl and two towels. Samples of the lotion and lip balm made in class, and many wonderful recipes will go home with you. This class is limited to 10 participants.

## EIGHT WEEK INTRODUCTION TO AYURVEDA

with Traci Webb

Wednesday evenings, July 14th - Sept 1st from 6:30-9pm, cost is \$249

In this class you will explore your body & mind, mother nature & the world around you in unique & exciting ways. You will learn about: Five-Element Theory; Ayurvedic Nutrition; Color Therapy; Aromatherapy; Three Doshas—Vata, Pitta, Kapha; Meditation & Chanting; Home Remedies & More!

## HERBAL SUMMER CAMP for Kids aged 8-13 years old

with Irene Lewis

Monday July 26th -Thursday July 29th from 10am-2pm, cost is \$75

Three fun filled days of botanically creative activities. Learn to create lotion, lip balm, cough syrup and more. Make and eat some Lemon verbena ice cream and go on an herb walk. For more information please email Irene@moonriseherbs.com or call Moonrise to pre-register. Limited to 12 participants.

## TINCTURES AND ELIXIRS

with Irene Lewis

Tuesday, May 4th from 7-9 pm, cost is \$25 and includes samples

Ever wondered how to make tinctures and elixirs? Join us for this hands-on class. We will discuss the different methods of making herbal extracts, and we will each make a tincture or an elixir during the class.