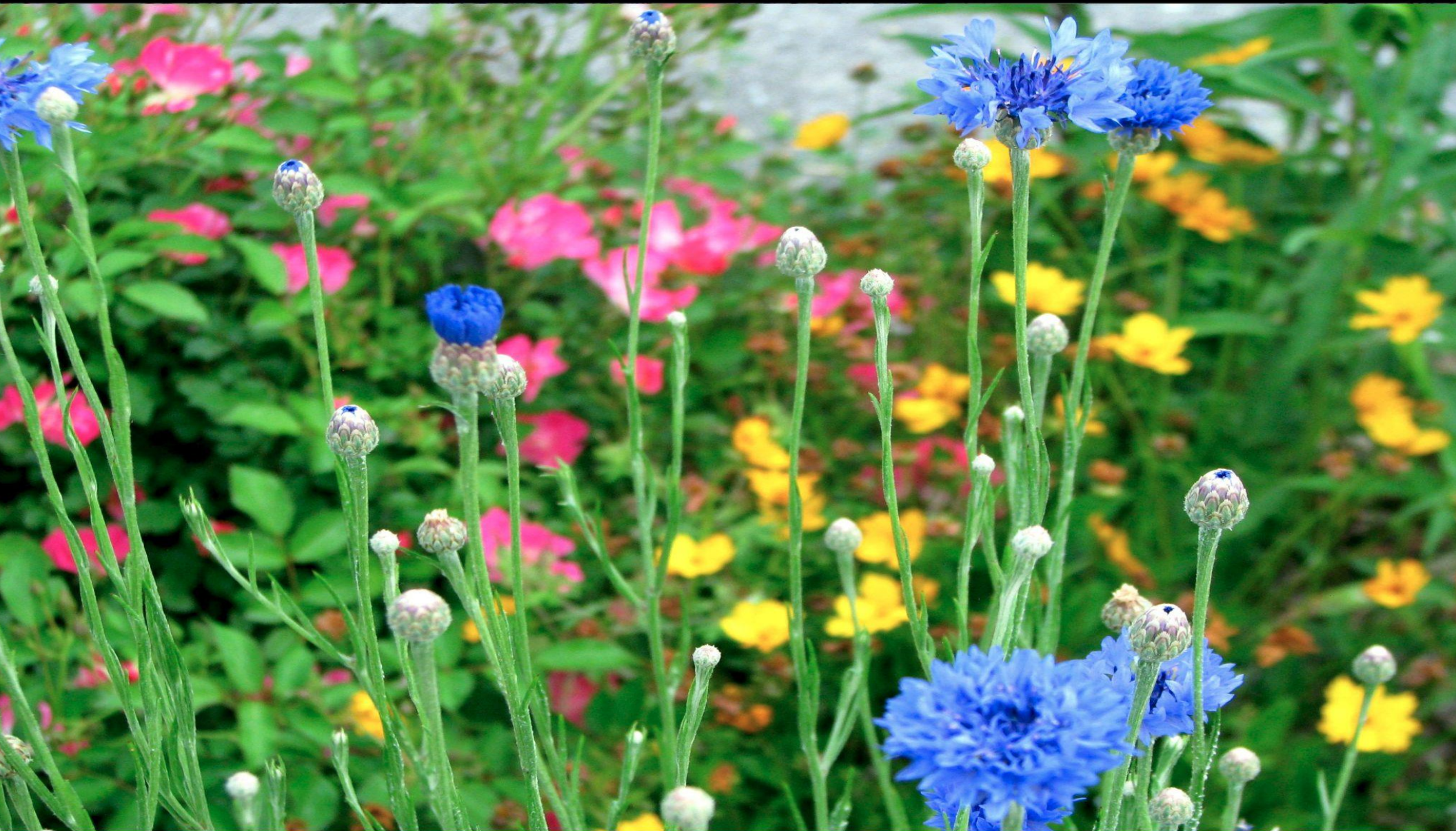


# APPALACHIAN FREE PRESS



MAY 2022 – VOLUME 1, ISSUE 6

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## Introduction

By Zeke Streetman

We've made it to the end of our first run. As I look back on the last five issues, I've asked myself if we have really accomplished anything. To be realistic, this idea is not particularly novel. In the heyday of magazines, people could live comfortably writing stories. This is fairly antithetical to our project of a free press.

So far it has not been easy. It's been exceptionally enjoyable, and Aimee and I agree, as well as the other staff, that it is necessary. Amidst divisiveness and frustration, there is very little that we can use to narrow the gap that causes people to believe themselves disparate and alone, however today we can communicate easier than ever before. We can preserve our heritage, and uncover all the roots in history.

There are many who wish to tell the tale of American life, but how much do we recognize the solitude of this era? Will our offspring know who we are and why we have done what we have done? Any history we do not pass down becomes erased.

I am proud of what we have achieved so far. Thank you all for reading and taking part in sharing the present with us, I can't wait to see what happens as we grow. I couldn't even have imagined how well we would do in our first year, but I am pleased to say that we will be continuing on with this adventure as long as we are able, and we hope that everyone is along for the ride!

So if you want to join us, we would be very pleased to have any help we can get, and we want to tell your story so it does not get lost to time. We must shepherd the future by leaving them some understanding about *who* we were.

Enjoy the last issue of Volume 1.  
Volume 2 is in the works!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Zeke Streetman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a prominent loop at the beginning of the first name.

## Appalachian Superstitions

By Banjo

The other day, a friend came to visit. She knocked on the back door, and my dog Miss Emmie rushed to the door barking, excited to have some company around here, I'm guessing. Miss Emmie and I are suffering from cabin fever.

I opened the back door and welcomed my friend to come in. We had a good visit and when she went to leave she started towards the front door. I'm thinking to myself, "surely she knows she cannot go out the front door cause she came in through the back door!" Just as she grabbed for the doorknob I yelled, "No, you can't do that". I smiled and explained "It's just a superstition. Bad luck to go out a different door than you come in." Needless to say, we went out through the back door.

These and other beliefs are deeply rooted in Appalachian folklore. If you are from these mountains, hills, and hollers you were more than likely raised up on some superstitions and probably were taught to apply them in your life.

Do you own an Apple tree? Remember to leave a single apple hanging from the tree at the end of the harvest, lest you attract the Devil. Pass a cemetery and you might wanna hold your breath, to avoid inhaling the soul of someone whose body was recently interred. If a rooster crows at a burial, the one who's buried is a sinner. Don't forget that when a person dies in a home, open a door for their spirit to pass.

As you carry the body out of the house (feet forward, of course), don't be surprised if a gust of wind hits as you step out. Appalachian death superstitions have it that a mighty wind will appear to escort the soul and help it on its way. If you touch a dead person, you won't dream of them. If a picture falls off the wall for no reason, someone will die (or the house is haunted). Death comes in threes. If the person is dead because of a murder, you can use the body as a witness. It works like this – have the accused person touch the fatal wound on the body. If it suddenly bleeds, then you have found your murderer.

When it comes to taking a family photo with two of your cousins, try to be the one on either side. When you have a picture of exactly three people, the one in the middle is going to die first. It doesn't say how much longer the two on either side will live beyond that, so you might want to avoid any road trips with them for a while. If I were a rabbit hunter, I'd wait until the sun rose a little high in the sky cause unhappiness will hang over the day of those who encounter a hare or rabbit before sunrise.

An owl seen during the day or looking into a window is known as an omen foretelling early death; the ringing of an unattended church bell forewarns that someone in the parish will die, and the presence of a bat in a home means its occupants will have no choice but to leave soon, let alone one of them die.

In the early days in these parts, midwives from Scotland were said to give a newborn a pinch of ash while breastfeeding for the first time to give infants lifelong protection against witchcraft, and Irish immigrants were known to spit on their babies to bring good luck.

Another notion was that leaving washed diapers on a clothesline overnight could attract evil forces. Dream of a baby, someone you know will die. If a baby is born with a “veil,” he or she will have the gift of prophecy. If a pregnant woman is scared by something, the baby will have a birthmark shaped by what scared her. Here in Appalachia, many superstitions suggested that hair should be cut on a particular day and never after sundown. Disposal of hair was also important; many believed it was to be burned. Hair was/is sacred and could be used against you.

If a bird used your hair to create or add to its nest, lore implied that you would be stricken with headaches. The tighter the nest was weaved the worse off you could be. One granny tale suggests that if a child is ailing with asthma, you must drill a hole in a black oak or sourwood tree just above the head of the victim, and put a lock of his/her hair in the hole sealing it with wax afterward.

Once the child is taller than this spot, they will be cured. This tale also warned caretakers to be sure not to cut down the tree — I’ll leave the result of that to the imagination. Oh and don’t ever place your shoes on a bed cause if you put shoes on the bed, it heralds death for someone close to you.

Never take an old broom to a new house – old energy and dirt will follow. Salt placed in four corners and all window sills of the house will keep out evil. It’s bad luck to sweep dirt out your door. If your second toe is longer than your big toe, you will rule your partner. A woman has more ribs than a man (think Adam and Eve.) When an eyelash falls out, pinch it lightly between your thumb and forefinger, then make a wish and blow. If it sticks, the wish will come true.

The seventh daughter of the seventh daughter or the seventh son of the seventh son will be a healer, fortune teller, preacher, or prophet. Rubbing the head of a person with red hair is good luck (come see me all my red-headed friends!).

If you recite this verse, it stops bleeding: “And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live.” Ezekiel 16:6 – King James Version (KJV)

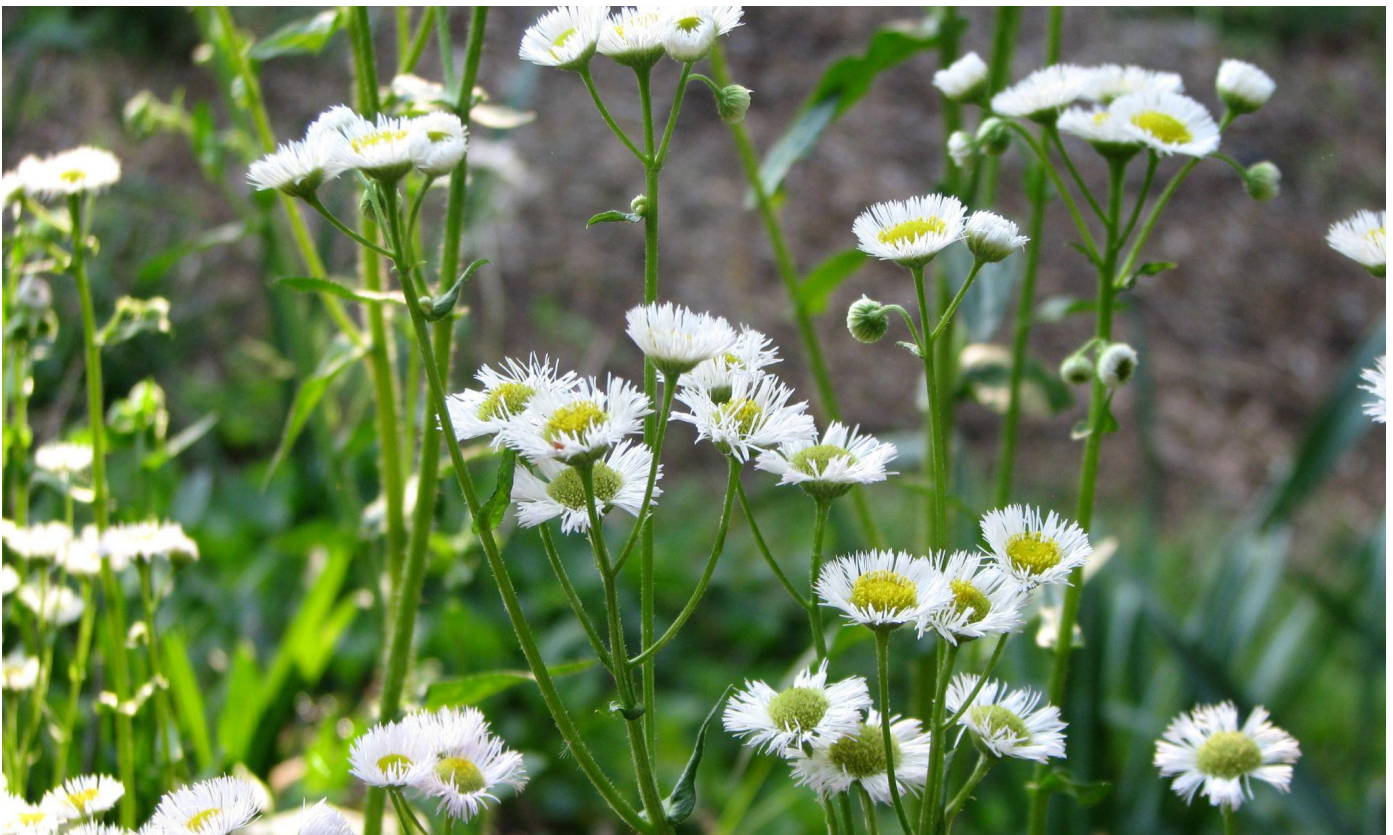
To cure a headache, apply brown paper soaked in vinegar to the head. To cure thrush, take a child to a person who’s never seen his/her father. That person will blow breath in the child’s face three times for three days, and the thrush will disappear. Brown eggs are better and more nutritious than white eggs\*

Put a spoon in your mouth while chopping onions to prevent crying.

And one last superstition, Lavender only grows for strong women. When our ancestors arrived in these spooky and sometimes dark mountains, they found many new things. These people believed that everything mysterious was the work of a spirit or of the devil.

They didn't have the science and technology we do today to explain things. These mysterious things, coupled with their fears gave way to practices and chants as a way of self-protection from the unknown. I am a spiritual person, but honestly being raised with some of these so deeply rooted in me that well, let's just say "Better off safe than sorry". I'm still going to cross an "X" on my car's windshield if'n a Black Cat crosses in front of me!

\*Editor's note, contemporary science has shown this to be not true.



## "Enjoy the Sprang Air"

By S.M. Hamilton

Oh to be the tree-

To have half my body submerged in Earth.

Toes to reach the river bank

My skin to fold and harden,

hair to fray and split,

shoulders to become a resting place for  
the birds.

Oh to be a bird-

Sing harmoniously with those around me.

To match the wind in pitch and glide,

to pry, snap, and twist away my nesting Bay,

to wallow on a wire and never fall.

Oh to be the cat -

with no ability to differ my legs from my tail.

One that can perch and pounce.

Perhaps one that chases the bird and hugs the tree.

Yellow, or black striped, or white maybe.

None of those will hack away my spirit and curiosity.

Oh to be the worm-

With no idea of frayed hair, barbed wire, or 9 lives.

To crinkle and expand among the earthy toes of trees.

To feel the water swell around me as the soil drinks.

Oh to be human-

To have a lip that is stuffed with tobacco and eyes that may be lagged.

With 10 toes and 10 fingers that grab, pull, and paddle.

To have brushed hair and weary of my smell.

Oh to be human, just for a day, I would watch the world around me play.

## Jo Anne's Corner

By Jo Ann Bullard

Good morning. Welcome to Jo Ann's Virtual Café 2022. Come on in and help yourself to a breakfast beverage. Let's talk. Miss Josie is outside smoking up a mess of Barbecue. Monday was National Barbecue Day. There's no better place than Tennessee and Appalachia for Barbeque.

We will be having every type of Barbecue that you will ever want today on our menu. Chicken or Pork is the main thing on our menu. I know some of you from Texas like Beef, but you will have to go down the road for that at Texas Jacks. Miss Josie only cooks Chicken or Pork and some seafood.

We serve Barbecue in many ways from with a wide variety of sauces such as tomato based, vinegar, mustard, and for those of you that like western Tennessee or St. Louis style dry rub. So come on down and enjoy and eat the best Barbecue of all. We have brought in several national winners to help us celebrate the best of the best. Here's some facts about Barbecue:

- No one knows who started National Barbecue Day. But who cares, because most people just love Barbecue.
- Barbecue can also be spelled Barbeque. In Australia it is called Barbie, in South Africa it is baai and in England it is BBQ.
- It is believed that Barbecue started in the Caribbean as we know it. Columbus was the first European to see it in 1492. He saw meat being roasted over an open fire. Later the Spanish called it "barbacoa" which would become Barbecue.
- The first barbecues roasted lamb in a pit covered with leaves and coals with a pot to catch the drippings. The wood smoke gave the meat the unique smoked flavor. Now the Floridian Indian tribes would smoke alligators for a long time to give it the smoky flavor. Many people later started using long sticks over open fires to barbecue meat.
- The word Barbeque was first noted in the Southwest as the word for roasted Pork only and it still is the most popular form of Barbeque in the South.
- Barbeque is different from grilling because it uses low heat and takes hours to prepare, than the high heat of grilling, using wood to give it the smoky flavor.
- In colonial times, it is said that people barbequed to tenderize the meat and then cut it up into small pieces because people's teeth were often not in the best shape.
- South Carolina is the only state that traditionally includes all four recognized barbecue sauces, including mustard-based, vinegar-based, and light and heavy tomato-based sauces.



- North Carolina sauces vary by region; eastern North Carolina uses a vinegar-based sauce, the center of the state uses Lexington-style barbecue, with a combination of ketchup and vinegar as their base, and western North Carolina uses a heavier ketchup base. Memphis barbecue is best known for tomato- and vinegar-based sauces and dry rubs.
- In some Memphis establishments and in Kentucky, meat is rubbed with dry seasoning and smoked over hickory wood without sauce. The finished barbecue is then served with barbecue sauce on the side.
- The barbecue of Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee is almost always pork.
- Some of you like Texas Barbecue because you love Beef. Beef barbecue is more common out west due to beef being more available.
- Kansas City Barbecue uses all types of meats from Chicken to Turkey to Pork and beef. If it's meat, they will barbecue it.
- The preferred wood is usually hickory used to favor the meat but other wood such as apple, mesquite or what is available in the region.
- Today, people recognized basically four types of Barbecue: Memphis, Tenn.; North Carolina; Kansas City; and Texas. However, all over the world they barbecue and the way they do depends on their culture.

Now that's enough about Barbeque. Miss Josie makes a mean barbeque that just melts in your mouth. We especially love her smoked ribs. So, today, stop by and enjoy an American tradition. Besides, National Barbecue Day is as good of a reason to eat Barbeque as any.

Here's a different type of story from Joe.

Well, up in the Appalachia Mountains many people go there to get away from their past. People often notice when a new person moves in that don't quite look like they were born there. A man named Seth was such a man.

He was an average man except for his white hair. No man in his mid-thirties should have white hair, many people thought. He moved into the old Bennett Place up in Muddy Hollow.

It was a nice little place with a small barn and small framed white farmhouse. Seth would go to town once in a while riding in his white new car. He never said much to anyone. He would buy his supplies at the General Store and always pay in Gold pieces.

This made people curious, and many wondered if he was a bank robber or something. Once a month, Seth would go to the Post Office and mail a letter and some packages to York. Also, he carried a pistol in a shoulder holster under his coat. People would see smoke coming from his barn at all times of day. They wondered – what was he doing?

Was he making moonshine on the side? One day, Seth was cutting down a tree in the woods for firewood. He knew something was up. There was not a single sound of any animal or bird. He heard a faint noise in the woods behind him. He turned and drew his pistol in a split second.

“Now, don’t you shoot me,” said a woman with all black hair. She was dressed in jeans and an old flannel red shirt and brown leather jacket.

“You shouldn’t be sneaking up on someone out here in this wild woods,” he yelled at her. Now, Maude didn’t take kindly to having a pistol pointed at her.

“Now, point that pistol somewhere else before I get mad and take it away from you,” laughed Maude.

“How are you going to do that?” smiled Seth.

“See my right hand under my jacket? I got a gun pointing right at you,” she calmly said as she slowly opened her jacket.

“I know that you can handle yourself. Let’s both holster our guns at the same time,” said Seth very softly. They both slowly did.

“Seth, I know why you are here. I hope it works like we planned. However, that tree you are cutting up belongs to me. It’s a foot inside my property line. You own me one good Oak tree,” Maude said.

“I tell you what. If I do, I will pay for it. You come over tomorrow night and I will fix you supper and we will discuss it or maybe have a duel or something to settle it. Don’t worry, my Mama taught me how to cook,” smiled Seth.

“Ok, I will be over at just before dark,” replied Maude. “One other thing my Mama taught me. We dress properly for Supper. You do have a dress, don’t you?” smiled Seth with a big grin.

Maude turned red, “Yes, I do, and the cooking better be good, or we will finish this in a duel.” Well, the next night, Maude showed up at Seth’s place riding in her old car. Seth was taken back with her in her beautiful black dress. Maude smiled at Seth dressed in a black suit.

Seth helped her out of her car and took her by the hand to his house. They both noticed that each of them had a gun. Seth's lay in a shoulder holster under his suit coat and she had a small derringer in her white waistband.

Maude was taken by surprise as she entered into his farmhouse. It was filled with paintings, and the furnishings were top notched. "My, Seth, you have such a beautiful place. I hope your cooking is as good," she smiled.

Seth smiled and seated her at the dinner table. Maude tasted the food. "I hope it is to your liking," Seth asked. Maude nodded her head. They both enjoyed their supper together.

It was like they were playing cat and mouse with each other. The only thing - who was the cat and who was the mouse? "What is such a beautiful and knowledgeable woman like you doing way out here?" he asked her.

"I could say the same about you Seth. Why is a handsome man like you, doing out here?" replied Maude.

"You are like me in many ways. We both have the same enemy. You know that I always loved you. That's why I am here. I knew that he would find you sooner or later. The Feds we worked for give me this land next to your father's farm. I knew you would return here. It was our job to turn him in to the Feds in New York," Seth answered.

Maude replied back, "Did you make the same deal with that mobster that I did? I saw you sending a letter. How are we going to get out of this?"

Seth replied, "Don't worry, you know what to do. I saw Mr. Blackie and one of his men following you earlier down the road. They should be outside the door by now."

Maude took out her derringer and pointed at Seth and pulled the trigger. Seth fell to the floor. The door burst open. Two big mean looking men stood at the door. They looked down at Seth on the floor. "Well, you got him. Sorry that I will double-cross you like you did me. You have only one bullet and there are two of us." A man carrying a double-barreled shotgun walked out of the kitchen.

"No Mr. Blackie, us Feds have more bullets than you. You are under arrest for what you two did in New York. Unlike you, I keep my deals. Seth get up, and go over to Maude. You two did your job. You can either stay here or come back with us to New York to your old jobs as agents for us."

Seth said, “I guess, I will stay here and make my silver and gold jewelry in the barn. It takes a lot of wood to melt the silver and gold. It pays well. It was a deal I made with Maude when we retired from the FBI, and I always keep my deals.”

Maude said, “You know the other part of the deal. We will get married.” Seth turned and kissed Maude.

“Like I said, I always keep my deals.”

Having said that, I’ll share a Native American Proverb. The Proverb of today goes like this, “A man’s word is only as good as he is.”

Thanks for coming. Enjoy your gift of today. Have a great day! We look forward to seeing you tomorrow. We will be waiting for you!



# Mountain Folk Forage: Broadleaf Plantain

By Aimee LaFon

*\*\*Disclaimer: I am not a doctor, nor do I pretend to be. This article is informative and only covers the traditional uses for edible plants commonly found in the Appalachian region. It's always best to consult a health care professional or medical doctor when suffering from any ailment, disease, illness, or injury before trying any traditional folk remedies. \*\**



Now that we are back to mowing season, it's time to turn our attention to one of the best, most versatile, and healthy weeds that almost every Appalachian yard, road median, and forest clearing have to offer – the broadleaf plantain. Whether you know it or not, you've seen it, and it is one of the most reliably good weeds to know about.

**The broadleaf plantain is a common weed from the Plantaginaceae family, and it is one of the most people-friendly plants there are. It offers many health benefits backed by historical uses here in Appalachia and worldwide.**

So, let's talk about my favorite forage, the broadleaf plantain! It's easy to find, versatile, and has a long history as a common forageable that people have loved for thousands of years. I have no idea why they don't sell it in grocery stores because it's so good for you and good to eat!

## About Broadleaf Plantain

**Folk Names:** Common Plantain, White Manfoot, Ripple Grass, Cuckoo's Bread

**Medicinal Properties:** anti-inflammatory, antiseptic, antispasmodic, anti-venomous, parasiticidal, mildly astringent

Broadleaf plantain is very common in dense, compacted soils, where it creates surface-level roots that break up the dirt, making way for other, longer-lasting plants. Because it helps aerate the ground, it is one of the best weeds to have in your yard.

As a European and Central-Asian native plant, this one has a long and rich history. It's had its name of "plantain" since the 2nd Century CE, with prominent mentions from Roman Encyclopedist Pliny the Elder. Pliny mentions that the plant has a "cauterizing" effect, making it suitable for dressing wounds and stopping bleeding. At the same time, Roman Doctors also prescribed it for various skin ailments and digestive issues, such as ulcers or gassiness.

Anglo-Saxons termed this plant the "All-heal" since it was suitable for almost any external or internal condition.

Plantain spreads quickly and very easily, and it gained its name *plantain* from the Latin word *planta*, which means "the sole of the foot." So, Europeans traveling to North America quickly spread the broadleaf plantain across the 13 colonies and beyond, where Native Americans gave it the name "White Man's Foot," indicating that everywhere the white man walked, the plantain followed.

In North America, it quickly added traction as a readily available remedy for almost any ailment, regardless of who you were or where you were from.

One of the most common traditional Appalachian uses for plantain was as a poultice for snakebites. Records indicate that the broadleaf plantain was a common remedy for both snakebites and bee-stings among the Cherokee, and according to James Adair in his 1775 *History of The American Indians*, "When an Indian perceives he is struck by a snake, he immediately chews some of the [plantain] root, and having swallowed a sufficient quantity of it, he applies some to the wound; which he repeats as occasion requires, and in proportion to the poison the snake has infused into the wound."

One unique recipe from North America comes from a 1750 South Carolina Newspaper, which published a story about an enslaved person called "Caesar" (his origin and pre-enslavement name are still unknown to us today), who was emancipated after creating a cure for poisoning and snake bites from the roots of plantain and horehound.

However, it is essential to note that the trial for his emancipation was ethically questionable since the court ran poison trials to test the cure. In addition, it is worth considering that "Cesar's" family was not emancipated, and he was never genuinely free since his emancipation was just a transfer of ownership to the South Carolina Commons House of Assembly.

If you are interested in learning more about the very murky and questionable legal and ethical complexities of this story, you might want to check out the *Charleston Time Machine* podcast's ["Episode 190: Doctor Caesar and His Antidote for Poison in 1750."](#)

Due to its pervasiveness and tendency to crop up wherever we, as human beings, go, plantains have always been there for us, and we have evolved to develop a healthy symbiotic relationship with these common garden weeds. After all, that's why there's probably a massive patch of these plants spread out in the bare spots on your lawn.



*Broadleaf Plantain poking up through the other weeds – from the holes in the leaves, you can see that it's a fan favorite among my garden slugs, snails, and rabbits.*

## How To Identify and Harvest Broadleaf Plantain

Right now, in May through July, is the perfect time to harvest plantain. When this plant is younger, it is much less bitter than its adult counterpart, and the leaves are much more tender and easy to digest.

Broadleaf plantain grows in low rosettes on the ground. It doesn't grow upwards like grasses, and it's more of a clumping plant than a crawling one.

In early spring, you'll notice it pushing down and choking out patches of other weeds, and it is likely to appear in the most compacted areas of your land. Plantain grows all along my

yard in sporadic clumps, but I find a lot of it right where I have mulched and around the edges of my garden bed where I do the most walking and working. It's also liable to poke up around the edges of driveways and through cracked cement when the soil is very dense.

You'll recognize this plant by its distinctly ridged leaves, which have coarse lines running through them. Most of the time, a plantain leaf has five of these lines. You'll find a tough string underneath each of these ridges that holds the broad leaves up, functioning a bit like a tent pole.

As the leaves mature, they develop a purple-like color at the base of the stems. This crimson color looks like the color of a blackberry or a beet.



*Plantain leaves can get very large. This leaf from my garden bed was 6.5 inches long!*



*Broadleaf plantain has distinctly ridged leaves with coarse, strong fibers in each of those ridges. Some leaves may be more teardrop-shaped than others, and more mature leaves have purple-red coloration at the bottom of the stem.*

When late summer hits, these plants only get more noticeable. They will start to send up seed spikes that look a bit like a tiny cattail – you'll recognize these immediately if you have ever spent any time outdoors. This plantain stalk develops tiny hairs, which are actually covert flowers, then it uses the wind to spread its seeds.



When harvesting this plant, I recommend uprooting it entirely. Since it is such a pervasive weed, gathering the entire plant once or twice a year won't diminish the plantain population. Plus, you probably remove tons of these plants when you weed your garden or mow your lawn, anyway.

However, if you only want the leaves, just take a few from each plant. The plantain will come back year after year, getting larger and healthier each time. I like to keep at least one plant in my garden to produce large leaves. It helps that this plantain is right by my back doorstep for easy harvesting whenever I want a bit.

Then wash the leaves and hang them to dry in a dark, cool place, or just eat them fresh!

## How To Prepare and Use Broadleaf Plantain

Plantain makes a fantastic addition to salads, smoothies, soups, and basically any other dishes. I like to look at it as a free alternative to spinach or kale with some additional healthy properties that make it even better than store-bought greens.

However, some specific recipes are well worth trying at home because they are so practical, and some have very interesting histories behind them.

### Plantain Burn and Itch Salve

This plantain burn and itch salve is a go-to for so many people, and I keep it in stock as my daily moisturizer. It's not just for mosquito bites, burns, scrapes, and bruises – it'll reduce inflammation from skin allergies, razor bumps, and normal wear and tear on your skin. I also make this for my mother, who has issues with cellulitis and dry skin, and it seems to offer some relief.

I absolutely love this stuff, so here's how to make it:

#### Ingredients

- ½ cup crushed, dried plantain leaves and/or roots
- ¼ cup coconut oil or beeswax
- ¼ cup olive, jojoba, grapeseed, or vitamin E oil (or any mixture of these oils – I use olive oil since I usually have some in my pantry for cooking)
- Cosmetic-grade essential oils or dried herbs (I commonly use cloves, dried sage, mint, fennel, lavender, rosemary, rose petals, cinnamon, or thyme)

## Instructions

1. Create a double boiler by filling a pot  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the way with water, then place a sturdy metal or heat-tolerant glass container inside. A mason jar works in a pinch.
2. Put your oils inside the metal or glass container and heat the double boiler over medium heat until the oils melt.
3. Turn the heat to low, then add your herbs or essential oils.
4. Let the oils incorporate (or let the herbs soak) on low heat for at least 30 minutes.
5. Turn the heat off.
6. If you use dried herbs, you can either let them steep in the oil for two to three days or strain them from the warm oil now. If you wait and let them steep, the salve will be more fragrant, but you will have to re-melt the oil in a double boiler to strain the herbs.
7. Pour your oil into a jar, tin, empty lip balm tube, or glass dish. Cover the container and let it cool.

## Celsus' Plantain Remedies

Celsus, 2nd century Greek philosopher and medical encyclopedist, wrote of several medical remedies including plantains. While some are complicated and contain ingredients that we now know can be toxic when ingested in larger quantities, some recipes make delicious snacks using some everyday grocery store items. Here are some highlights:

- Crush plantain leaves and mix them with blackberries for a healthy simple syrup (perfect for smoothies – it's delicious!).
- For digestive issues, cook a simple lentil soup by adding chopped plantains, one endive (or substitute with next month's forageable chicory), one minced onion, and minced garlic to a pan and fry them in olive oil for around 10 minutes. Then, add the veggies to 1 cup of lentils and 4 cups of vegetable broth in a pot and simmer for 30 minutes. Season to taste. I like to add some feta and olives on top.

## Caesar's Cure For Poison

Although I can't recommend taking this remedy as a cure for poisoning (if you suspect that you are poisoned or have been bitten by a venomous snake, seek a professional, accredited doctor immediately), it does make an excellent remedy for minor stomach ailments and joint inflammation, and the ingredients are safe to consume by modern medical standards. So, I recommend giving it a taste, at least for historical purposes. It's pretty good!

## Ingredients

- Plantain Roots
- 3 ounces of fresh or dried horehound (a variety of mint)

- Two quarts of water

#### Instructions

1. Boil 2 quarts of water in a pot.
2. Once the water reaches a rolling boil, add the plantain and horehound.
3. Boil the water and herbs until the water level has reduced by about ½.
4. Strain the tea to remove the plant matter.
5. Place the tea in an airtight container such as a jar with a lid and refrigerate it.

In similar contemporary recipes for this “cure,” other ingredients such as rum, sugar, and sassafras may be added to enhance the flavor and make a pleasant health tonic.

Then, according to Kay Moss, author of *Southern Folk Medicine, 1750– 1820*, here’s how you should take the antidote:

“Let the patient take one third part three mornings fasting successively, from which if he finds any relief it must be continued till he is perfectly recovered.” I don’t recommend following the fasting part, but I recommend mixing this tea with some sugar and drinking it on a hot summer day as an iced tea. It’s the perfect refreshing beverage with an added health kick.

#### Sources

- [Brooklyn Botanic Garden: Weed of The Month: Broadleaf Plantain.](#)
- [Loeb Classics: Pliny The Elder, Natural History, Book XXV.](#)
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## The Dance of the Magnolia

by Paradis Perdu

I love to watch a magnolia tree  
Dancing with the wind,  
Applauding her partner while they dance.  
Hardly a word or sigh passes between them.  
The wind leads and the magnolia boughs follow  
In an undulating pas-de-deux.  
When the dance has ended,  
They part without regret,  
Certain that they will dance again  
And again until death does them part.  
Then the widowed wind  
Will other partners find  
To begin the dance anew,  
Different, neither better nor worse.  
If I have returned to dust by then,  
I trust that someone else  
Will watch with equal rapture that timeless dance  
In which only one partner can be seen,  
Moved as he is by the other.

## Reflection on Identity

By Michael Coleman

I can still remember my high school history teacher pleading with the students in the room to consider their Appalachian identity. Impassioned, Dr. Banker strongly believed that young people not understanding the history of the region would eventually lead to its absorption into the surrounding cultures. Dr. Banker understood the precarious situation Appalachia was in as a region primarily comprising portions of states. Am I an East Tennessean, or Appalachian?

Do I hail from the rolling hills of the Tennessee Valley, or the Appalachian Mountains? Within the answer to those questions lied the balance of Appalachia's future. As Dr. Banker's lecturing intensified, so too did the urgency in his speech. "You've been othered! You've been absorbed! You're out of sight and out of mind!" he would say with an escalating intensity.

As he reached his crescendo, pit stains growing, his voice reaching a near fever pitch, he would make an emotional appeal, "Do you love your Papaw and Mamaw? Who will tell their stories? Your ancestors depend on you to tell their stories."

Like so many of us in high school, I rarely paid attention at the time. Though I found Dr. Banker's passion intriguing, my privilege kept me from understanding the damaging role stereotypes can play on a visceral level. I had never really left the region, never understood that terms like "hillbilly," "redneck," and "squid," were used to derogatorily define our region.

Rather, I believed these terms, though often depicting aspects of my culture that I did not agree with, were ultimately terms of endearment. More importantly, as there was little to no national narrative about my region, my privilege prevented my identity from being fully encapsulated by any of these terms.

If I wanted to hunt, fish, drink cheap beer, play football, and not be associated with the bigotry that many spoke about when discussing the residents of the region, so be it. Stereotypes need not apply in defining who I was, because my privilege allowed me to be identified as an individual. Given this simplistic view of identity afforded to many white people, I was rarely concerned with what it meant to be "Appalachian" into my 20s.

However, I can remember nearly the exact moment this changed. I must first admit, I am hesitant to rehash much about Hillbilly Elegy, and its author, J.D. Vance. People far smarter than me have discussed the problems with the book, and spending any ink on Vance seems like a double-edged sword.

Regardless, I was given the book by an in-law from Colorado, with the excited endorsement, "I felt like I was reading about you!" Intrigued, I read the book quickly, with anger and frustration quickening the pace of every turn of the page.

There are a vast number of aspects of the book that frustrated me, but something about seeing it come alive on the big screen made it worse. While my in-law felt like Vance spoke for the region, all I could see is someone trying to distance himself from us, seemingly saying, "Look at how dumb, lazy, and ignorant these people were. I overcame it all." Given Vance's Senatorial bid, his claims that he can fix all the problems he has defined for Appalachia, and his increasing comfort with acting as a spokesperson for the region, a retrospective on the book and film seems necessary.

Vance's political ascendancy, Senator Joe Manchin's political positioning, the popularity of Beth Macy's *Dopesick* and the ensuing Hulu miniseries, have brought the limelight back to Appalachia. With this increased occupation in the minds of Americans not from the region, it seems essential to examine the media that is coming to define us.

Hillbilly Elogy contains one scene in particular that warrants interrogation. The scene in question is derivative, as almost all scenes that explore social mobility must include the vaunted "fancy dinner" scene. In Elogy's version of the scene, our protagonist sits at the dinner table panicked, furtively glancing around the table. Vance has just been served the first course of a multi-course meal; in front of him sit multiple forks, and he has to choose the fork that corresponds to the course.

The others at the table idly talk back and forth, presumably steeped in the sort of cultural capital that makes the choice of which fork to use an anxiety-free dilemma. The viewer is led to believe that if Vance chooses the wrong fork, his opportunity for social mobility will evaporate, despite a law degree from Yale. The film is suggesting that social mobility in America is dependent on having both the intelligence and work ethic to thrive at an institution like Yale, while also possessing enough familiarity with the mores of the elite to pass a hidden pop-quiz like Vance is confronted with at the dinner table.

While this commentary seems nearly impossible to argue with, I often find myself arguing with people about the commentary Hillbilly Elogy seems fairly content to not make. While Vance sits at the table, anxiety riddled and sweating, no one is paying attention to him.

The others at the table are talking to one another, blissfully unaware that Vance does not possess the knowledge to properly navigate a multi-course meal. Vance has time to get up, call his girlfriend, receive some coaching, and resume the meal armed with the knowledge to successfully navigate the unspoken aspect of this quasi-job interview. The others at the table did not immediately assume that Vance lacked the knowledge to choose the correct fork. The notion that he may not know what to do in that moment never crossed their minds.

In this moment, Vance was afforded the time to solve the problem with no additional pressure placed on him by others. What bought him this time? His skin color.

There are an untold number of benefits to my privilege, but time seems like one of the

most valuable and underexplored. As a white man I have time to figure out who I am, time to recover from mistakes, time to be a kid, time to grow into adulthood; society affords me time to do all of this at my own pace.

I am almost positive we have all grown up with caregivers expressing to us the importance of time. My best friend's dad was fond of reminding us that time is the only resource we cannot give back, no matter how hard we try. The simple elegance of this phrase was always thought-provoking to me, and as I unpack the phrase, I realize how much more time privilege often affords many of us.

As Vance's Senatorial bid continues, there will doubtlessly be a multitude of critiques hurled his way from both sides of the political aisle. The celebrity attached to his name will likely invite enhanced scrutiny; particularly from those of us he claims to be a spokesperson for. I can confidently say I likely disagree with Vance on every political issue that he will be forced to take a stand on. However, my distrust of his representation for Appalachia runs deeper than political ideology.

As our world is confronted with global problems, we will very likely need to shape global solutions. As a lifelong resident of an economically depressed region, I feel intimately aware that isolationism is rarely capable of solving complex problems. Vance's narrative is filled with simplicity. Here is a white man, claiming to have the longest odds of success possible, who single-handedly overcame those odds, despite his depraved roots. His own analysis lacks nuance, and shows an inability to understand systemic advantages that helped him along the way.

Maybe even more revealing is the glee with which he paints Appalachia with a broad brush, depicting the region as full of lazy, entitled people. As we are confronted with a time in history where collective efficacy feels vital, Vance's simplistic, selfish, analysis of his own region demonstrates his inability to grow collective efficacy within his own community. At my age, a certain level of navel gazing seems to come with the territory. Oddly, I find myself returning to Dr. Banker's impassioned plea.

Essentially, he argued that we needed to tell the stories of our ancestors to preserve our ancestral heritage. Embedded in his argument is how our history shapes our identity. Equally embedded in his argument is the importance of the past.

Though I do not disagree with his notion, I do question its focus on the past. Today, with the COVID Pandemic, January 6th Insurrection, and Russian war in Ukraine, there is a salient feeling that we are living in a historically important time. There is no doubt that the 2020s will be examined and seen as important by future historians. Those who we elect to tell our stories will reflect something about us on the historical record. I hope our region will choose leaders filled with nuance, empathy, and a strong commitment to reflecting the values of our community.