

Veterinary Herbal Apprenticeship and Retreat 25-26 Schedule

Module I: September 12-15, 2025

Date and Time	Topic	Description	Location
Friday, September 12 6:00 pm-?	Cocktails, Mocktails and Introductions	We will start with an informal get-together to get to know one another before the classwork starts.	Lowood Garden
Saturday, September 13 8:00-8:30	Breakfast		Breakfast Nook
8:30-10:00	Opening and Welcome, Introduction	Introduction to the Course and Lowood Educational Center	Classroom
10:00-10:30	Break	Guided stretching available	
10:30-11:15	Lecture: Introduction to Integrative Medicine	This lecture will introduce you to the concepts of Integrative Medicine as a whole, with specific emphasis on Herbal Traditions.	Classroom
11:15-12:00	Lecture: An Alternative Perspective on the Routine Exam	In this lecture, we will expand on the routine physical exam by learning how to incorporate the entire body into our findings. By applying the concepts of holistic medicine and energetics, the physical exam helps to determine an herbal prescription.	Classroom
12:00-1:30	Lunch		
1:30-3:00	Lecture: Introduction to Herbal Medicine	This lecture will go over the basics of medicinal use of Western Herbs. The concept of Evidence-based Medicine will be introduced. We will discuss how herbs can be used in terms of physiology, treatment modalities, safety and interactions. How to read a monograph will be explained, and there will be cases presented.	Classroom
3:00-3:30	Break	Guided stretching available	
3:30-5:00	Herb walk	This outdoor adventure will be an introduction to Lowood's gardens. We will learn about cultivated and native medicinal plants as well as other non-medicinal native plants.	Lowood Garden
Sunday, September 14 7:50-8:20	Breakfast		Breakfast Nook
8:20-8:30	Morning Gratitude		Classroom
8:30-10:30	Lecture: A World of Herbalism	There are a plethora of ways to look at herbal medicine in our world. Since people started living in communities, they have developed culturally unique philosophies of medicine. In this lecture, we will briefly describe TCVM, Ayurveda, Unani-Tibb, and the history of herbalism in North America.	Classroom
10:30-11:00	Break	Guided stretching available	
11:00-12:30	Lecture: Ethnomedicine	The origins of herbal medicine are from native cultures around the world. This lecture will explain how many cultures	Classroom

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		have chosen medicinal herbs throughout time, and then proceed to detail how a few specific native cultures choose their herbs. The societal examples will focus on ethnoveterinary uses of herbs. We will also briefly discuss how pharmaceuticals have coopted herbal chemicals for allopathic drugs and the pros and cons of traditional herbal use versus pharmaceutical use.	
12:30-2:00	Lunch		
2:00-4:00	MM: Cardiovascular	Monographs of 8-12 herbs for the cardiovascular system will be presented. There will also be an organoleptic component to this lecture, with tasting of the herbs dried, in tea and in tincture forms. Fresh herbs will be shared when available.	Classroom
4:00-4:30	Break	Guided stretching available	
4:30-5:30	Personal Wellness: Lecture/Lab – Breathing Techniques	We will begin with an exploration of breathing methods for health, including both relaxing and energizing approaches. Then we get to go to the beach to practice these techniques!	Classroom and Beach
Monday, September 15 7:50-8:20	Breakfast		Breakfast Nook
8:20-8:30	Morning Gratitude		Classroom
8:30-10:30	MM: Adaptogens	This lecture will start with a detailed explanation of adaptogens as an herbal group. Monographs of 8-12 herbs will be presented. There will also be an organoleptic component to this lecture, with tasting of the herbs dried, in tea and in tincture forms. Fresh herbs will be shared when available.	Classroom
10:30-11:00	Break	Guided stretching available	
11:00-1:00	MM: Antimicrobials	Monographs of 8-12 herbs that are antimicrobial will be presented. There will also be an organoleptic component to this lecture, with tasting of the herbs dried, in tea and in tincture forms. Fresh herbs will be shared when available.	Classroom
1:00-2:30	Lunch		
2:30-2:45	TA Herbwalk	The TA, who is a previous VHAR graduate, will present her/his herbwalk. This will show the students what is expected with their herbwalk presentations.	Classroom
2:45-4:45	Lab: Tea Making	Preparations of infusions and decoctions will be made, as well as methods for combining them. Beverage blending will be demonstrated. All teas will be tasted. We will also introduce students to the apothecary. Students will have an opportunity to blend their own formulas.	Kitchen Classroom and Apothecary

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4:45	Closing		Lowood Garden
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Module II: October 17-20, 2025

Date and Time	Topic	Description	Location
Friday, October 17	Breakfast on your own		
8:30-9:30	Travel to Island Farm		Van
9:30-11:30	Island Farm Field Trip	On this field trip, we will be stepping back in time to experience mid-1800's farm life. We will spend time discussing the medicinal herbs in the kitchen garden and the traditional "medicine chest." We will also look at the crops and trees grown and visit a traditional cookhouse.	Island Farm
11:30-12:30	Free Time	This time will be to explore the rest of the farm, ask questions and enjoy a picnic lunch we will be bringing with us.	Island Farm
12:30-12:45	Travel to Elizabethan Garden		Van
1:00-3:00	Herbwalk	This excursion to the Elizabethan Gardens will include a guided herb walk. The Gardens start with a proper English herb garden, which includes many non-culinary medicinal herbs. We will then progress through the Gardens while learning about many native and beautiful species of plants. There will be time for personal exploration as well as plant and gift shopping.	Elizabethan Garden
3:00-4:00	Return to Lowood	There is a secret bonus stop on the return trip!	Van
Saturday, October 18	Breakfast		Breakfast Nook
7:50-8:20			
8:20-8:30	Morning Gratitude		Classroom
8:30-10:00	Lecture: Food Therapy	This lecture will discuss using food as medicine, with and without herbs. We will briefly discuss home-cooking for pets, both healthy and with chronic disease. If we have time, we will look at the origins and medicinal qualities of spices in food.	Classroom
10:00-10:30	Break	Guided stretching available	
10:30-11:30	Lecture: It's All Relative: Plant Families	This lecture will discuss the similarities of species within the same plant family. It will also highlight the differences. While each species must be taken individually, it will aid the student in thinking about plants in groups and provide clues about medicinal properties based on their familial characteristics.	Classroom
11:30-1:00	Student Herb Walk Presentations and Teas	2-3 herb walk presentations plus tea homework sampling	Classroom
1:00-2:30	Lunch		
2:30-4:30	Lecture: Organoleptics	The definition of organoleptics is "being, affecting, or relating to qualities (as taste, color, odor, and feel) of a substance (as a	Classroom

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		food or drug) that stimulate the sense organs” (Merriam Webster dictionary). In this lecture, we will explain groups of herbs and their uses based on their organoleptics. The class will discuss the 5 common flavors described in herbal medicine, and taste examples of each flavor. Students will begin to discern the quality of herbs based on their organoleptics.	
Sunday, October 19 7:50-8:20	Breakfast		Breakfast Room
8:20-8:30	Morning Gratitude		Classroom
8:30-10:30	MM: GIT	Monographs of 8-12 herbs for the gastrointestinal system will be presented. There will also be an organoleptic component to this lecture, with tasting of the herbs dried, in tea and in tincture forms. Fresh herbs will be shared when available.	Classroom
10:30-11:30	Break	Guided stretching available	
11:30-2:00	Lab: Food Therapy	In this lab, we will demonstrate the crockpot method of home-cooking for animals, with and without herbal supplementation. We will also prepare bone broth. We will explain nut butter balls as a vehicle for herbs and other medications, and students will have an opportunity to prepare their own nut butter balls with herbs.	Kitchen Classroom
2:00-4:30	Personal Wellness: Making Food Naturally	This lab will be continued with human food, in which we make fun wholesome foods, such as nut butters, herbal syrups, granola and season delights. The purpose will be to show how easy it is to prepare stock items and delicious foods healthfully and from scratch.	Kitchen Classroom
Monday, October 20 7:50-8:20	Breakfast		Breakfast Nook
8:20-8:30	Morning Gratitude		Classroom
8:30-10:30	MM: Liver	Monographs of 8-12 herbs for the liver will be presented. There will also be an organoleptic component to this lecture, with tasting of the herbs dried, in tea and in tincture forms. Fresh herbs will be shared when available.	Classroom
10:30-11:00	Break	Guided stretching available	
11:00-1:00	MM: Urinary	Monographs of 8-12 herbs for the urinary system will be presented. There will also be an organoleptic component to this lecture, with tasting of the herbs dried, in tea and in tincture forms. Fresh herbs will be shared when available.	Classroom

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1:00-2:30	Lunch		
2:30-4:00	Personal Wellness: Self-care for Veterinarians: Beyond Bubble Baths	Self-care is often equated with bubble baths or massages; what is it really and why do we need it as an intentional part of our lives? This discussion will cover what true self-care is, examine the root causes of why we may need it (such as chronic stress, perfectionism, and imposter syndrome), and why it can be vital to being our best selves and better veterinarians.	Classroom
4:00	Closing		Classroom

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Module III: November 8-10, 2025

Date and Time	Topic	Description	Location
Saturday, November 8 7:50-8:20	Breakfast		Breakfast Nook
8:20-8:30	Morning Intention		Classroom
8:30-10:30	MM: Nervines, Part I	Monographs of 12-14 herbs both for the nervous system and for mental health ("nerves") will be presented. There will also be an organoleptic component to this lecture, with tasting of the herbs dried, in tea and in tincture forms. Fresh herbs will be shared when available.	Classroom
10:30-11:00	Break	Guided stretching available	
11:00-12:30	MM: Nervines, Part II	There are so many wonderful Nervines, this is a 2-part lecture! Monographs of 12-14 herbs both for the nervous system and for mental health ("nerves") will be presented. There will also be an organoleptic component to this lecture, with tasting of the herbs dried, in tea and in tincture forms. Fresh herbs will be shared when available.	Classroom
12:30-2:00	Lunch		
2:00-3:00	Lecture: Integrative Pain Management: Balancing Quality of Life with Comfort	Pain management is an evolving discipline in veterinary medicine. The opioid crisis and lack of access to opioids now and in the future, will drive the need for alternative pain options for both acute and chronic pain. In this lecture, we will review a multi-modal approach to pain - including herbal medications, allopathic medications, joint supplements.	Classroom
3:00-3:30	Break	Guided stretching available	
3:30-5:00	Student Herb Walk Presentations	2-3 herb walk presentations plus food homework sampling	Classroom
Sunday, November 9 7:50-8:20	Breakfast		Breakfast Nook
8:20-8:30	Morning Gratitude		Classroom
8:30-10:00	Lecture: Herbal Formulation for Clinicians	In this lecture, we will go through how to put together an herbal formula. Things to consider include: type of administration, type of herb, number of herbs, specifics of patient, environment and speed of delivery.	Classroom
10:00-10:30	Break	Guided stretching available	

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10:30-12:00	Lecture: Dosing, Labeling and Marketing for Clinicians	We will discuss the determination of dosage, and the many methods to decide on a dose. There will be case examples of formula preparation. Herbal labeling will be detailed. Lastly, we will discuss marketing and pricing as a veterinary herbalist.	
12:00-1:30	Lunch		
1:30-2:30	Personal Wellness: The Wellness Wheel	We will go through the Wellness Wheel, which is a self-assessment of our lifestyle and wellbeing. We will explain all the pieces and how the assessment brings awareness to many aspects of our lives.	Classroom
2:30-2:45	Break		
2:45-3:15	Drive to Nags Head Woods Preserve		Van
3:15-4:45	Herb Walk	The Nags Head Woods Preserve, a Nature Conservancy site, has a plethora of native plant species, some medicinal, some edible and some part of the ecosystem. This park also has wildlife, and we will be able to examine animal signs and discuss the ecosystem as a whole.	Nags Head Woods Preserve
4:45-5:15	Return to Lowood		Van
Monday, November 10 7:50-8:20	Breakfast		Breakfast Nook
8:20-8:30	Morning Gratitude		Classroom
8:30-10:00	Lecture: Herbs as Part of a Rehabilitation Plan	Rehabilitation is becoming increasingly popular in veterinary medicine. Rehabilitation is more than just recovery from surgery. It includes numerous disease processes; treatment is based on the goals of the client as well as the needs of the pet. This lecture will look at the conditions and goals seen in a rehabilitation practice and how we can incorporate herbs into the plan.	Classroom
10:00-10:30	Break	Guided stretching available	
10:30-12:00	MM: Musculoskeletal – Part I	Monographs of 8-12 herbs for the musculoskeletal system will be presented. There will also be an organoleptic component to this lecture, with tasting of the herbs dried, in tea and in tincture forms. Fresh herbs will be shared when available.	Classroom
12:00-1:30	Lunch		
1:30-3:00	MM: Musculoskeletal – Part II	Monographs of 8-12 herbs for the musculoskeletal system will be presented. There will also be an	Classroom

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		organoleptic component to this lecture, with tasting of the herbs dried, in tea and in tincture forms. Fresh herbs will be shared when available.	
3:00-3:30			
3:30-5:00	Lab: Tinctures	This lab will cover making tinctures with a variety of menstrua, including glycerites, vinegars and alcohols. The preparation of simples and formulas will be covered. We will also demonstrate blending premade simples into formulas for specific patients.	Kitchen Classroom
5:00	Closing		Kitchen Classroom

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Module IV: March 14-16, 2026

Date and Time	Topic	Description	Location
Saturday, March 14 8:00-8:30	Breakfast		Breakfast Nook
8:30-9:00	Morning Intention, Rejoining after break		Breakfast Nook
9:00-10:00	Lecture: Dermatology is More Than Skin Deep	This lecture will review the structure and function of the skin. Common clinical presentations will be discussed. How we can utilize herbs in treatment of these disease states will be explained.	Classroom
10:00-10:30	Break	Guided stretching available	
10:30-12:00	MM: Dermatology – Part I	Monographs of 8-12 herbs for the skin will be presented. There will also be an organoleptic component to this lecture, with tasting of the herbs dried, in tea and in tincture forms. Fresh herbs will be shared when available.	Classroom
12:00-1:30	Lunch		
1:30-2:30	MM: Dermatology – Part II	Monographs of 8-12 herbs for the skin will be presented. There will also be an organoleptic component to this lecture, with tasting of the herbs dried, in tea and in tincture forms. Fresh herbs will be shared when available.	Classroom
2:30-3:30	Lecture: Phytopharmacology I	This 2-part lecture will go through the chemistry of herbs and their constituents. It will help the student identify the use of an herb by its taste and energetics. Students will sample herbs that embody each constituent group. Lastly, we will talk about the chemicals that make foods certain colors and the health benefits of each.	Classroom
3:30-4:00	Break	Guided stretching available	
4:00-5:30	Student Herb Presentations and Tinctures	2-3 herb walk presentations and tincture homework sampling	Classroom
Sunday, March 15 7:50-8:20	Breakfast		Breakfast Nook
8:20-8:30	Morning Gratitude		Breakfast Nook
8:30-10:00	Lecture: Introduction to Botany	Immerse yourself into the plant world and become reacquainted with major plant families and key characteristics for identification. Hone your botany skills by observing and recording leaf, flower, and fruit types. Discover the role these plants play in the daily lives of those who use them. This will be a tactile lecture in the Garden.	Lowood Garden

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10:00-10:30	Break		
10:30-12:30	Virtual Herb Walk: Wild Weeds Cooking	This virtual herb walk will teach us about the many nutritious and cleansing early spring greens. In this lab, we will learn about these fresh herbs and then learn to prepare them in a variety of ways. Bring your appetite!	Kitchen Classroom
12:30-2:00	Lunch		
2:00-4:00	Lecture: The Scent of the Plant: Essential Oils	This lecture will discuss Essential Oils. Essential Oils are a concentration of specific phytochemicals from plants. We will discuss their chemistry, extraction, safety and uses. There will be case examples.	Classroom
4:00-6:00	Dinner Break		
6:00-8:00	Movie Night	<i>Juliette of the Herbs</i> – with desserts	Kitchen Classroom
Monday, March 16 7:50-8:20	Breakfast		Breakfast Nook
8:20-8:30	Morning Gratitude		Classroom
8:30-10:30	MM: Respiratory	Monographs of 8-12 herbs for the respiratory system will be presented. There will also be an organoleptic component to this lecture, with tasting of the herbs dried, in tea and in tincture forms. Fresh herbs will be shared when available.	Classroom
10:30-11:00	Break	Guided stretching available	
11:00-12:30	Lecture: Integrative Hospice and Palliative Care: An Introduction	This lecture will be an introduction to Hospice and Palliative Care, including definitions, history, the hospice and palliative care team concept, and applications in veterinary medicine. We will discuss why integrative medicine options, such as herbal medicine, are a natural fit for the goals of the hospice and palliative care patient, and can improve quality of life.	Classroom
12:30-2:00	Lunch		
2:00-3:30	Lab: Oils and Salves	In this lab, we will start by making herb-infused oils. Demonstrated methods to prepare oils will include solar infusions, the crockpot method, and the double boiler method. Other methods will be explained. The lab will continue with salve-making from the herbal oils. We will also create lotion, lip balm, lotion bars and salt scrubs. Lastly, we will demonstrate adding tinctures to lotions for topical use.	Kitchen Classroom
3:30-5:00	Personal Wellness: Herbal Skin Care	Part of self-care is caring for our physical bodies. Our skin is both our largest organ and also a major organ of detoxification. Therefore, good skin care is a big part of	Kitchen Classroom

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		good health. We will be using the products made in the oils and salves lab along with others provided to detoxify and nourish our faces. There will be a brief presentation on other skin care products and their uses.	
5:00	Closing		Classroom

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Module V: April 11-13, 2026

Date and Time	Topic	Description	Location
Saturday, April 11 7:50-8:20	Breakfast		Breakfast Nook
8:20-8:30	Opening and Intention		Classroom
8:30-10:30	Lecture/MM: The Magic and Materia Medica of Mushrooms	Mushrooms are a valuable part of our world and powerful medicine. Learn how to incorporate mushrooms into your clinical practice. Materia Medica of select mushrooms will be presented.	Classroom
10:30-11:00	Break	Guided stretching available	
11:00-1:00	MM: Endocrine	Monographs of 8-12 herbs for the endocrine system will be presented. There will also be an organoleptic component to this lecture, with tasting of the herbs dried, in tea and in tincture forms. Fresh herbs will be shared when available.	Classroom
1:00-2:30	Lunch		
2:30-4:00	Student Herb Walk Presentations and Oil/Salves	2-3 herb walk presentations and exhibition of oil and salve homework	Classroom
4:00-4:30	Break	Guided stretching available	
4:30-6:00	Lecture: Meditations in Nature	In this lecture, we will discuss the benefits of spending time with plants in their natural environment. This can be as simple as sitting your porch or in a park learning about the plants around you. Observation of plants throughout the year not only enhances our knowledge of the plant, but also provides vital self-care time.	Classroom/Lowood Garden
Sunday, April 12 7:50-8:20	Breakfast		Breakfast Nook
8:20-8:30	Morning Gratitude		Classroom
8:30-9:30	Lecture: Phytopharmacology: Part II	This 2-part lecture will go through the chemistry of herbs and their constituents. It will help the student identify the use of an herb by its taste and energetics. Students will sample herbs that embody each constituent group. Lastly, we will talk about the chemicals that make foods certain colors and the health benefits of each.	Classroom
9:30-10:00	Break	Guided stretching available	
10:00-12:00	Lecture: Cancer Theory with Herbal Support	The herbal approach to cancer therapy focuses on helping the body to heal itself through immune and antioxidant support in addition to using the anti-neoplastic properties of many plants. Creation of individualized supportive herbal formulas using traditional and scientific knowledge will be covered. Classic anti-neoplastic	Classroom

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		formulas will be discussed with a Materia Medica-based explanation of the herbs in the formulas. Cases using classic and individualized treatment protocols will be presented.	
12:00-1:30	Lunch		
1:30-3:00	Drive to Wild Woods Farm		Van
3:00-4:30	Herb Walk	Wild Woods Farm is Vickie Shufer's herbal center, where she grows herbs, makes medicine and teaches. She focuses on medicinal natives, and will lead the class on an herbwalk around the Farm. There will also be a tour of her apothecary and products available for purchase.	Wild Woods Farm, Virginia Beach
4:30-6:00	Return to Lowood		Van
Monday, April 13 7:50-8:20	Breakfast		Breakfast Nook
8:20-8:30	Morning Gratitude		Classroom
8:30-10:30	Forum: Cases	Students send their cases in advance and we will work them up and discuss	Classroom
10:30-11:00	Break	Guided stretching available	Classroom
11:00-12:00	Quiz: Name That Herb	This will be a fun way to review what you have learned about herbs over the last 6 months! There will be prizes!	Classroom
12:00-12:30	Break	Students will prep for Medicine Show	Classroom
12:30-3:00	Catered Lunch, Student Medicine Show and Graduation	Student Medicine Show and Graduation Ceremony	Classroom
3:00-5:00	Final Party	Families and friends welcome	Lowood