Motherwort for Resilience—
By: Dre Wakely

During my first week as a new employee, I wandered the park identifying plants and exploring the forest along the river. Since winter was fast approaching, I was surprised that I kept finding the same vibrant green leaves growing around the nature center. I whipped out my plant identification app and discovered it was Leonurus cardiaca, Motherwort. I tore off a few leaves, boiled some water, and made a quick herbal infusion. YUK. The taste was so bitter that I started to panic, imagining I had confused this plant for a poisonous look alike. After double checking the internet and consulting with an herbalist, I discovered that Motherwort is indeed a very bitter plant.

Plants protect disguise themselves as bitter to ward off hungry animals like us. Physiologically, bitters send a chemical signal preparing our bodies to begin digestion, eliminate waste (and in the case of Motherwort), to let go of stress. Continued on pg. 2

Volunteer Spotlight:
Barb Andersen

How do you spend your time volunteering at CRD?
I’ve done Dragonfly Monitor and Feeder Watcher. I loved the old Carp Fest Days, and the more recent River Festivals. I have demonstrated ways to melt and use snow to make hot drinks for people who dropped by and Mussel dissection with the school kids. For my Master Nat project, I sorted Kodachromes (slides), and discovered many images of the Dam construction; one surprise was pictures of the blueprints on fabric. Imagine building a dam using shovels and horses!

What is your favorite part about volunteering at the Dam?
Learning and working with the Naturalists along the Mighty Mississippi River.

What’s your favorite thing to do in your free time?
My Gentleman Friend and I travel throughout the neighboring states going to museums, parks, and visiting family. In the winter, I take watercolor classes.

What is one area of nature you want to learn more about?
Everything. It was Dragonflies and Rivers, now the top of my list is Fireflies and how do animals navigate?

What’s your favorite tree?
The Silver Maple in my backyard has been one of my best friends since 1977.
Volunteering Opportunities

March Public Programs

- Saturday March 7 (10am-12pm) - Animal Tracks and Signs
- Saturday March 21 (1pm-3pm) - Survival Skills: Fire and Shelter Building

***If you are interested in volunteering for any of these, email Ashley or call the front desk to let us know! 763-694-7790***

Motherwort for Resilience, Cont.

Can you recall the last time you were so exhausted and you wished you could lay your head on someone’s lap while they rub your back? Motherwort provides relief in downtrodden times. It’s a plant that can “mother” us all. It is heart supporting, nervous system calming; a therapeutic herbal hug.

Last year the American Psychological Association published a report on Climate Change’s Effect on Mental Health*. “Gradual, long-term changes in climate can also surface a number of different emotions, including fear, anger, feelings of powerlessness, or exhaustion”. Consider Motherwort as one of the plant allies we can turn toward when confronting physical or emotional stress of climate change.

The APA concludes the report with a list of actions people can take. Some of these include: learning resilience interventions, connecting with groups, and starting a community resilience project.

Many herbalists believe that motherwort and other adaptogens are designed to provide the resilience support we need; plant based therapy and nourishment. I can’t think of a better time than now to seek out motherwort for personal and collective existential stress.

Embrace the North Festival

Our Second Embrace the North Festival is coming up on Saturday February 15th from 12pm-4pm. We had such a blast last year and we are looking forward to another great year.

We will be needing a ton of help and we hope you will be interested in putting on another great event this year. Some of the volunteering opportunities will be:

- Helping attendees with snowshoes
- Collecting forms for the dogsledding and Fat Bikes
- Tending campfires
- Helping with winter games and more

Check out the link in the email sent with this newsletter.

Save the Date!

Our Volunteer Appreciation Dinner is coming up on February 26 from 6:00-8:00pm, so put it in your calendars now! An invitation will be attached with this newsletter.