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Master herbalist offers 'cookbook' of natural remedies

By **ROBIN LORD**
STAFF WRITER

PROVINCETOWN - Andrea Candee's first-aid kit looks like the inside of a kitchen cabinet. Food items like powdered cayenne and ginger, peppermint oil and garlic oil dwell there, as do other natural things like echinacea and aloe gel.



■ Herbalist Andrea Candee outside her Provincetown home.
(Staff photo by STEVE HEASLIP)

The Westchester County, New York master herbalist, who has a house in Provincetown, learned as a teenager that, if used in time and in the right situations, nature's drugs can take care of most of what ails you.

She raised her two now-grown sons treating their bruises with slices of onions and comfrey compresses, their bleeding cuts with a dash of cayenne, and their slivers and bee stings with a piece of ripened banana peel. The enzymes in the peel draw the foreign object toward the surface, allowing it to be easily removed with tweezers.

Candee now runs a busy practice, treating everything from food allergies to Lyme disease with natural remedies. She also lectures around the country.

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"The focus of my teaching has always been to bring this to the lay public. To make them understand that they can take charge of their wellness naturally," she said during a recent interview at her Provincetown home overlooking Cape Cod Bay. "This is not to turn way from the medical community, but to integrate it."

Candee has now taken her years of experience and training to the general public. Her first book, "Gentle Healing for Baby and Children," was released last year by Simon & Schuster. A 254-page paperback book, it covers everything from natural antibiotics to treating mild depression.

She is quick to advise parents to see a doctor for acute illnesses or serious injuries, but her book is a comfort zone of advice for many mild and chronic situations.

Learning natural ways

From an early age Candee had a sense that natural healing was easier on the body than many of the prescription drugs prescribed for common problems. She saw it first-hand as a teenager when her father had a major heart attack at 40 and had such difficulty handling the side affects of the drugs given to him afterwards.

"There was something in me that said there has to be something else," she said.

Her belief system in natural ways was strengthened when her father lost his battle with heart disease at 54. She realized she had been treating family and friends successfully and decided to pursue her passion.

Since there was no state license for herbalists, Candee studied at a Western Massachusetts herb center and then received a two-year certification as a "master herbalist" from the School of Natural Healing in Utah, which was founded by the late Dr. John Christopher, whom she calls the "father of modern-day herbalism."

After Candee became certified, she

began to spread the knowledge about herbs and other healing methods she had learned from her schooling and apprenticeships. She says teaching others how to keep their bodies balanced is her main focus.

"People think they have to hand everything over to the experts, and they don't realize that they're the experts of their bodies," she said.

She also teaches that often what they need to heal is "right there where you are." It could be in the pantry, in the refrigerator or in the backyard.

She teaches people how to use their natural food stores as a pharmacy of sorts, and also orders herbs, vitamins and other items from a variety of supply houses around the country. She says she has refused affiliation with any vitamin or herb company in order to remain free to pick and choose which products she likes best.

Holistic pediatrics

While conventionally trained pediatricians are not exposed to holistic therapies in their training, most recognize that there are many therapeutic approaches, said Dr. Roshann Hooshmand, a Forestdale pediatrician

She said she is apprehensive about her patients trying remedies on their own, but she is open to discuss with them the different modalities. She said she even recommends a book called

Andrea's herbal recipes

Insect Bites and Stings

- Baking soda moistened with enough water to make a paste
- Thin coating of castor oil
- Calendula gel from health food store

Bruises

- Affix a 1/4-inch slice of yellow onion using surgical tape, covering with plastic wrap. Leave on several hours or overnight.

Sunburn

- Aloe mixed with vitamin E and 10 drops of oil of lavender
- Compress of whole milk yogurt in cheesecloth
- Apple cider vinegar bath

Headaches

- Inhale the oil of peppermint or eucalyptus, or
 - Mix a drop or two of either oil into one tablespoon of nut or seed oil and apply to temples and sinus areas along cheekbones and across the forehead.
-

"The Holistic Pediatrician," by Kathy Kemper to her patients. It is her hope that parents will work with their child's pediatrician to be guided to the right resources.

Yarmouthport pediatrician Dr. Victor Cillis said he too recognizes that American consumers are dabbling in herbal and other holistic remedies and pediatricians need to be open to that fact. He encourages the parents of his patients to consult with him when they are using alternative therapies.

"There are some herbal remedies that have a good track record and others that are a problem. And there are others we just don't know," he said.

While he recommends some herbs, like echinacea for colds, he has seen first-hand the problems with using herbs with which you are unfamiliar. He says he admitted a patient to the hospital last year who was suffering from severe abdominal pain after taking an unknown amount of the herb kava kava.

"It's amazing how many people go on the Internet or hear things from a friend and take it on faith," he said.

But Dr. Cillis said it behooves doctors to educate themselves in alternative therapies as much as they can.

"A person who says 'herbal, forget it,' is not confronting what many people are really saying. It's important to take a patient's belief system into account," he said.

"Gentle Healing for Baby and Child" not only reviews which herbs and foods do what, Candee tells how to prepare teas, compresses and poultices and goes over dosages for babies and children, and frequency of intake or application.

A section on kinesiology teaches readers how to test for food allergies.

Aromatherapy, the use of the scents of essential oils in healing, is also covered, as are remedies for some of the common banes of babyhood, such as colic, diaper rash and cradle cap.

She explains how lavender oil and St. John's Wort oil can heal burns, a tea made of chamomile, oatstraw and horsetail leaves can help strengthen

bones and how a few drops of pennyroyal mixed in almond oil makes a gentle and effective mosquito repellent.

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