



# Creating a Botanical Sanctuary

United Plant Savers' vision is to see UpS Botanical Sanctuaries established in people's backyards, farms and woodlands, creating a living greenway of native medicinal plants across the landscape of America. A sanctuary can be any sized piece of land, offering a sacred place where one can find protection and the peace and renewal of nature.

Once you decide to establish your own botanical sanctuary, start with these practical steps to help it grow and flourish focusing in these four areas: **identification, restoration, preservation, and education.**

**Learn to identify plants.** Before this century, herbalists were also botanists. Begin by identifying as many plant species on the land as possible. Invite a friend over who knows some of the plants, and buy several identification guides. As you recognize the plants, one by one, begin a list then watch it grow as you grow in relationship with the plants, bioregion or state.

**Learn where plants come from and where they are going.** Pay special attention to whether a plant is a native plant to your area, an ornamental from some exotic place, or a weedy species. Many weedy plants, though valuable and often lovely to look at,

tend to take resources like water and light that native plants require to live. In establishing a botanical sanctuary, you will want to limit the number of weedy species that thrive on your land, especially

**Allow your sanctuary to become the educational center it naturally is.** Teaching and learning about the land is a lifetime study. Within every community you'll find knowledgeable people who are willing to share. Invite them to your land and always be willing to share with others what you have learned about land management, wild plants, and the importance of biodiversity. You can also create a medicine trail on your land as part of your educational efforts, which can be as simple as a path through your front yard. Make signs or have them made that give the Latin binomial, common name, origin, and uses of the plants on the trail. You can invite the public and lead herb walks through your sanctuary when you have become knowledgeable of the plants.

**Last but not least – Remember . . .** to help create and preserve serene places among the plants and trees for communion with the green spirits and devas.