becoming-Botanicals

*a post-modern liber herbalis*

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS
**becoming-Botanicals**

*a post-modern liber herbalis*

**becoming-Botanicals** is a research-creation project led by The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland: Research and Knowledge Exchange in association with the University of Wisconsin-Madison; and the University of California, Santa Cruz.

**EDITOR**  
Josh Armstrong | Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, UK

**CO-EDITORS**  
Alexandra Lakind | University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA  
Chessa Adsit-Morris | University of California, Santa Cruz, USA

To explore humankind’s complex role in natural, cultural, geo-political and socio-economic ecologies, **becoming-Botanicals** will curate a prismatic and multifaceted perspective on the uses of plant botanicals through the form of a *post-modern liber herbalis* (book of herbs). We invite contributions from anyone: herbalists; scholars; researchers; historians; scientists; poets; naturalists; artists; activists.

A Book of Herbs (or Herbal) is a published collection of entries describing the medicinal or cosmetic applications of plants along with a description or illustration of the plant for identification. The existence of Herbals has been traced as far back as 2700 BCE and from ancient civilisations including China, Greece, Mesopotamia, Rome and the Arab world. While seen primarily as medicinal and scientific manuscripts, these ancient Herbals contain esoteric, mythical, and plant-based lore as well as information pertaining to the herb-gatherers or *rhizomatists*. An Herbal does not simply identify plants and their applications, but provides insight into the complex relationships between humans and the various botanical ecologies they fostered and (re)produced. We are interested in exploring the complexities and contradictions within current human/plant relationships, particularly the ways these relationships have developed within geo-political, socio-economic post-modern times, and how they might foster ecologies of resistance and refuge, working towards envisioning radical and sustainable future relationships. This includes exploring the ways in which plants have been historically entangled in the terraforming practices of colonialism and capitalism; as well as the deep histories of indigenous practices and knowledge systems (and how the former has been utilized against the latter).

We are seeking submissions in the form of an entry which details the medicinal, cosmetic, tonic, culinary, toxic, hallucinatory, aromatic, magical, or spiritual uses of a plant species in a *post-modern era*. We are looking for diverse perspectives and voices from a variety of disciplines and cultural identities. Each entry should be between 250-500 words. Any accompanying images can be submitted with the text, and the text can be written in any form or genre.
The short entries will be curated into a designed pamphlet and accompanied by a wide-range of submitted, found, and illustrated visual imagery which disrupts, complicates, or compliments the entries.

We are looking for provocations in the form of entries on a plant species that explore any topic of your choosing, including:

- the medicinal or cosmetic use of a plant that can be foraged today;
- the medicinal or cosmetic use of a plant that is extinct;
- the imagined uses of a fossilised, future-born or hybrid plant;
- the significance of a plant in relation to the identity and spirituality of indigenous cultures and ways of being, especially in relation to post-colonial narratives;
- the linguistic etymological pathways of a plant in language;
- the historic/futurist significance of a plant in disrupting hierarchical or hegemonic structures;
- the relationship with a plant beyond or before the predominance of settler-sexualities;
- the queer, trans-, or hermaphroditic qualities of a plant and its essence;
- the psychological effects of a plant botanical's consumption;
- the use of a plant botanical in molecular gastronomy and distillery;
- the eco-sexual properties of or experiences with a plant.

Entries might consider the wider philosophy underpinning becoming-Botanicals. We are interested in exploring the reciprocal and responsive reaction to the act of becoming-Botanical. A becoming is always molecular and exists in the liminal proximities of bodies. In physically consuming or absorbing another body, this botanical becoming exists within undeniably molecular micro-proximities. Through the act of ingesting or anointing oneself with the essence of a plant, we are partaking in an act undoing ourselves and the plant—a breaking down of borders between the distinctive barriers of identity. The human is withdrawing as the botanical rises-up. We are interested in the notion that these acts are not relegated to the anatomical or chemical, but create complex rhizomes with language, history, perception, belief and imagination. We ask: In these moments of becoming-Botanicals how are we, as humans, altered by our relationship with botanicals and how are we altering the plants from which the botanicals are extracted? Have plants and their botanicals been relegated to a consumerist subordinate—something to be bought, sold, consumed, synthesised and replicated? How are botanicals still as necessary for life in a post-modern society?

The resulting pamphlet will have a limited print of 500 and exist in full online.
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SUBMISSION DEADLINE
Friday 21 September 2018 (by midnight BST)
All outcomes will be notified via email by Friday 19 October 2018

Submissions should be sent to submissions@becoming-botanicals.com using the message subject: Plant – Your Name (ie, Creeping Thistle – Josh Armstrong)

Submissions should be sent as a Word Document including:
- your name;
- position;
- institution/organisation;
- contact email address;
- any necessary credits or attributions.

*more than one entry per author is acceptable

REVIEW PROCESS
All entries will be reviewed by academics and professionals from the partner institutions. Feedback will be compiled and final decisions will be made by the Editor in line with the partner feedback. Outcomes will be sent via email by 19 October 2018.

DATA PROTECTION
Your email, name, role and institution will be stored along with your entry so that we may contact and credit you in the publication, if successful. These details along with all submissions will be archived on the server of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. You have the right, at any time, to request your submission to be anonymised, your contact details to be deleted, or your submission and details deleted in full. Further information on the RCS Data Protection Policy can be found here: https://www.rcs.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/RCS-Data-Protection-Policy.pdf

PUBLISHER
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CONTACT
Please contact the editors if you have any questions regarding the call-out, publication, or research-creation project, including any guidance or initial feedback on your submission concept.

submissions@becoming-botanicals.com