



BODYWORK

First Herb Day to Be Celebrated in October

Editorial Staff

By now, most of the acupuncture profession is aware of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Day. Held every October 24th, AOM Day was established by a group of leading acupuncture and Oriental medicine organizations in the U.S., Canada and Mexico. Its purpose is to serve as part of a national campaign to educate the public about the benefits of acupuncture and other forms of Asian healing.

Since the first AOM Day was celebrated in 2002, the public's interest in acupuncture and Oriental medicine has increased significantly. Hundreds of practitioners and dozens of acupuncture schools nationwide now hold open houses, provide lectures and educational seminars, and offer free treatments on and around the 24th of October. The importance of the occasion also has made an impression in the political arena, as proclamations in support of AOM Day have been signed by the governors of five states and the mayors of more than 30 cities. In Tennessee, support for the profession has become so strong that in May 2005, the state's legislature unanimously passed a bill recognizing AOM Day by a combined vote of 127-0.



Following on the success of AOM Day, five leading members of the herbal medicine industry have instituted what is now known as the Herb Day Coalition, with the idea of scheduling a day as a way of providing information on the benefits of herbs and herbal remedies to the general public. The idea for a national herb day was first promulgated at the Natural Products Expo West conference, held in Anaheim, Calif. in March 2005. After working together for several months, the coalition has announced that Oct. 14, 2006 will be the first official Herb Day in the U.S.

"We are extremely pleased to be part of this group of national organizations working together cooperatively to create such an important event," asserted Michael McGuffin, president of the American Herbal Products Association.

"We have designed a very innovative and dynamic opportunity to bring a positive message about herbs to the public in their own communities," added Wayne Silverman, PhD, chief administrative officer of the American Botanical Council. Both organizations are members of the Herb Day Coalition, along with the American Herbalists Guild, the American Herbal Pharmacopoeia, and United Plant Savers.

The goal of Herb Day, according to a press release, is to "raise public awareness about the significance of herbs in our lives and the many ways herbs can be used safely and creatively for health, beauty care, and culinary enjoyment." Increasing the public's familiarity with the benefits of herbal remedies, the creators of Herb Day believe, "will increase informed use of herbal products and build public support for maintaining personal choice in the use of botanicals."

All individuals, businesses and organizations that share an interest in herbs and herbal medicine are encouraged to participate in Herb Day. Events will be presented at herbal shops, retail stores, botanical gardens parks and other venues throughout the U.S. Each hosting venue will develop its own

activities, including:

- lectures and workshops by well-known herbalists;
- herb walks;
- cooking programs featuring selected herbs and spices;
- activities with herbal themes for children;
- in-store demonstrations of herbal beauty products and handicrafts; and
- presentations by herb company representatives.

In addition to local activities, a series of national events are tentatively scheduled to be held at the U.S. Botanic Garden in Washington, D.C. Oct. 12-14. The events may include keynote addresses from leaders in the herbal industry and appearances from state and federal legislators. While the bulk of events will be held in the U.S., the Coalition expects Herb Day to be celebrated on a lesser scale in Canada, and that it will expand to other countries as it becomes more publicized.

To help organize activities and disseminate information, the HerbDay Coalition has created an official Herb Day Web site (www.HerbDay.org). At present, the site contains a handful of releases on the announcement for Herb Day, along with the ability to contact the Coalition for more information. In the coming months, the site will add content materials for retailers, consumers and herbal manufactures, as well as a registration feature, which will allow interested parties to submit and record planned events.

Make sure to look for updates on Herb Day in future issues of *Acupuncture Today*, and to visit www.HerbDay.org for more information as it becomes available.

MAY 2006