

FEATURE BUSINESS

## An Interview with Marge Clark of Nature's Gift

Well what we DO is seek out the absolutely best essential oils we can find, the ones that when you smell them and get very still and let yourself "feel" them and their power gives you goose bumps.

We find them, and try to make them available to the people who will appreciate them, who will love them. My grown daughter once described what we do here "Mom, every day, you send out boxes full of joy and healing, all over the world."

I love that. It's what we are about. WHO we are varies; right now it's Debi (our resident wisewoman), Anne (our watersprite, aka "the mad pourer"), Debbie G. (who is/was, a skeptic about the power of the oils, until "this" would happen, and we'd suggest she try "that," and it made a difference), Rick, my very first assistant and all-round expert (he's the only one who knows how to do everything we do here), Linda (who answers the mail addressed to "Order Desk" because that's where she sits, mostly) and me, Marge.

But how we got here, now THAT is a story, because it's not possible to get from there to here.

I was fascinated by herbs, by their taste, their aromas, how they made me feel. At one time in my life, I was able to grow them, but that was in another place and another time.

So I bought dried ones, and tried making herbal pillows, and potpourris and such. Some book or other suggested adding Lavender essential oil, so I bought some.

Then, of course, I had to read about it, and about the others, and FIND the others. I was hooked. Every book on the topic of essential oils that was in print in the late 80's and early 90's is either in my library, or out on loan.

I started blending; our Reunite synergy for anxiety, and a WakeUp blend, and friends said "This is really good, you ought to sell it." So I did. To them. And, later, online, on an old Fidonet Bulletin Board. Meanwhile doing everyday things in a very mundane every day life.

And I would discover new, or better. And want it. And since I had no money, I had to sell what I had so I could buy more and better. I guess I'm still doing that, looking for better, and selling what we have so we can bring in better.

In the early 90's my world rather fell apart. I was told I was "permanently disabled" and would never work again. And the oils carried me through that. The worst fear had come true, and it contained the greatest gift. The disability gave me TIME. Time to study, time to explore the oils, time to learn about the Internet (I had been online since the early 80's, before there was an Internet, so I was comfortable online, but websites? What were they?) So while learning about the healing powers of the oils, I loved, I was also learning to code web pages, and what worked and what didn't work in this new venue.

I live in Middle Tennessee, a suburb of Nashville, which seems, to me, to be an aromatherapy desert. So the online aromatherapy community was a revelation for me.

There were others who were in awe of these oils, who respected and loved their healing power. There were mentors, there were friends to share this aromatic journey. I will always be grateful to the men and women in this field who so generously shared their knowledge and experience with me. They know who they are, and there aren't thanks enough.

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At any rate, three or four years ago, the business grew just enough that I couldn't quite do it all. So Rick joined me, part time. And then another friend, and another. All of them powerful, wise and loving people who pour their energy, love and prayers into the blends they create, and the orders they pack.

***Where are you located?***

The timing on your question is another example of the serendipity that has created Nature's Gift. As I type this, another friend is renovating a 70 year old house for us to move the business into. We should be moved in and up and running there by the time this issue comes online, at 316 Old Hickory Blvd East, Madison, TN. 37115.

I feel like a white water rafter...the raft is speeding ahead far faster than my comfort level allows, and there's swirls and rapids ahead. But I'm not alone in this raft.

The new building will allow us a small retail shop, in addition to the mail order/internet business that has so amazingly grown. Perhaps people will come, perhaps they won't. We'll see. However we will finally have space that every employee can work on the same day, and the business will not be in every room of my house. When clients email that they are going to be coming near Nashville and would love to come and visit, we'll be able to welcome them.

Nature's Gift grew out of my love for the oils, out of my awe of their healing power, and my passion for the best. Because I am mostly self-taught, I made mistakes, out of ignorance, and I pay the price of them today. I used the oils unwisely, because no one taught me about sensitization. So I stress safe and appropriate use of these healing essences I love. I respect their power.

***What do you feel that you contribute to the aromatherapy community?***

I think I do a lot of educating. Not in the sense of a "course" or "teaching," but a lot of sharing of information. Our website tries to inform our visitors.

Yes, of course we want you to buy our oils, we want to be able to keep on doing what we do. (And we don't think you will find better, anywhere.) But we want you to buy the right ones for you, and to use them wisely and appropriately. I spend a lot of time carrying that particular message, to massage therapists at their conferences, to soapers and toiletries makers at their gatherings, in various online venues.

I doubt I'll ever be asked to speak at an aromatherapy conference. I lack the proper credentials and the appropriate training or whatever.

However I get to introduce grieving parents to the solace of Rose and Frankincense, and help people heal their scars with Helichrysum and Rosehip, or ease their pain with Lavandin and whatever. We get to make a difference in people's quality of life.

I answer a lot of questions in the average day, probably fifty to one hundred. Sometimes in public lists, more often in private. "My husband has shingles, is there anything that will help?" and I quote my teachers or mentors.

"I'm having a really hard time because "this" is going on, can you suggest something that can help me cope?" and I share what has helped me cope. Sometimes we send express mail bottles of Helichrysum, or Rose, or special blends where the need seems desperate.

Two of the young women who work for me are amazingly powerful healers. I have never seen myself as a healer; I've always felt that was a gift that I lack. But I've been able to participate in the work of so many healers, to participate in the healing process.

"Boxes full of joy and healing." What a gift to be allowed to go on doing that.