



Interview in the Jan/Feb 2005 issue of *The Essential Herbal* magazine.

This past October I attended an herbal business conference in Tennessee. Now one of the very best parts of attending conferences is that you get to meet the most amazing people who inspire and lead? just by being themselves. Marge Clark of Nature's Gift is such a person. I'd heard a bit about Marge's story, and have read her posts on various internet lists, but I wasn't ready for who the lady turned out to be in real life. A soft spoken woman who speaks with great care, she fairly floats through her environment.

The conference entailed several round tables where attendees shared information. They were all quite informative, but a round table with Marge was somehow enchanted, because she sees the world from such a clearly positive aspect.

Following is a short interview.

**TEH: Tell a little about how you got started with essential oils. Were you a crafter? What kind of crafts?**

MC: For awhile I did a lot of potpourri type things...grape vine wreaths.. scented goodies to put in with linens and undies...that sort of thing. When we moved to Tennessee I developed a black thumb... couldn't grow ANYTHING ...buying dried got difficult. Then one day I bought some lavender oil (health food store only brand available back then) to freshen potpourri... and read about it...all it could do... and I was hooked.

**TEH: How did that turn into a business?**

MC: Started making blends for friends. "this is really good, you should sell it." and then I would find a better oil, or a different one...and had to sell what I already had to buy more/better/different. (I think I'm still doing this).

**TEH: How would you like to see your business described?**

MC: this is a HARD one. (Thinking of all the descriptions I've written for search engines...but that's different.) Dedication to uncompromised quality and integrity...superb service.... The BIG thing is that we aren't just selling gizmos or can openers (apologies to all the can opener manufacturers out there!). The products that we make available really DO make a difference in people's lives. We get a LOT of feedback about that... ways that our oils have helped either physically or emotionally... we've improved the quality of life of so many people. We get to participate in so very many people's healing processes. That's a GIFT!!!

**TEH: Was there ever a moment when you knew that your business was going to be successful?**

MC: Probably the year I got hit with HUGE taxes, because I had built a big inventory, and was still a sole proprietor. The business was founded as a hobby, something I loved doing to give ME access to the oils I loved. Its success was a total shock!

*(continued on next page)*

**TEH: What is the best part about having your own business—besides having one of the best collections of oils to play with....?**

MC: The oils, of course. For me, it's the absolutely WONDERFUL staff that I get to work with. They truly are family and, as owner, because I have the world's VERY best assistant, I get to come and go as I please. After years of 18 hour days, this is a gift. (I sometimes get reminded that I'm not quite as young as I was when I was working those 18 hour days!)

MAJOR... the knowledge that we do make a difference in peoples lives... see above ;) this is SUCH a gift!!! The sheer amazing JOY of knowing that you created this entity, that is it YOU or, perhaps an "extension of YOU." For someone who never thought of herself as creative, it is amazing to think that I created Nature's Gift. It's like the company is my fourth child, and I can take a lot more credit for how IT has grown than for how they have grown. Also freedom...freedom to explore new directions, to learn. And—not having to try to please a difficult employer.

**TEH: What part of being in business do you dislike the most?**

MC: I am outspoken, and visible enough online to have rubbed some people the wrong way. People don't always remember that they are really speaking to other humans when answering posts on lists, and can be downright mean. Also answering the same question for the 40th time when it is answered on the website in four different places ;). AND trying to understand profit and loss statements... I'm NOT an accountant and have no business training, so I never really know where we are. That's a GOOD one! ;) In the past, I'd have to have said it was, occasionally, dealing with difficult employees. None such in my life right now, but in the past it was difficult and stressful.

**TEH: Is there an oil that you consider overused or over-rated?**

MC: Lavender. It is useful for so many things but not the BEST for anything, so that's one (the others are normally just ones that I personally don't care for!).

**TEH: Is there one that should be better known?**

MC: Yes, Helichrysum italicum, from Corsica. (Accept no substitutes, the Corsican is different). It is without a doubt the most healing oil I have ever experienced. Expensive, but worth it. There is nothing like it for inflammation, for pain relief, for some types of skincare. I'll get off my soapbox now ;).

**TEH: What changes do you see in the future of the essential oil industry?**

MC: I think there are bound to be. From the point of view of safety, especially, and we have to walk SUCH a knife edge. We KNOW these oils are healing — if you mix this and that, it will do a wonderful job of easing the pain of \_\_\_\_ etc? But we can't SAY that, then we are making a medical claim.

**TEH: Will they ever be controlled?**

MC: We see the government encroaching on people's right to use herbal products. The essential oils are so much more powerful than the herbs they are distilled from, I think it's only a matter of time. In some places in Europe you can only buy the oils from a pharmacist.

**TEH: I'll bet you have some pet peeves. Care to share?**

MC: Well...a prominent multilevel marketing company that hypes the oils and promotes potentially dangerous methods of using them. (I love the oils, but I respect their power...anything powerful enough to heal is also powerful enough to do damage....) That would be the first thing. Then there are the websites that say "all natural products, made with pure essential oils...and list...let's say...Mango-Peach, and Spiced Plum and...so on. False advertising, false labeling.

Thanks for today's lesson Marge, and here's wishing you continued success!