

# HERBALISM & STATE VIOLENCE



PRACTICAL HERBAL MEDICINE FOR SURVIVING STATE REPRESSION

N I C O L E   R O S E



# HERBALISM & STATE VIOLENCE



Edited by Nicole Rose



Herbalism and State Violence, Edited by Nicole Rose

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**Legal Disclaimer** - The publisher and editor of this book do not intend to provide specific medical advice. The content of this book should be used as a source of information and not a basis of diagnosis or choice of treatment. All content contained in this book is provided for this purpose only and no part of this book is intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, care, diagnosis or treatment. Plants should be identified accurately before any consumption. The reader's use of the content, for whatever purpose, is at their own risk.

*For Taylor and everyone who has been  
killed by state violence*

*This book is dedicated to you.*

## WELCOME & HOW THIS BOOK IS STRUCTURED

Thanks so much for picking up a copy of the Herbalism and State Violence book and giving it your time and energy. I'm so grateful that you're here.

I want to share a bit about how it is structured. I invite people to jump ahead to sections that take their interest and not feel the need to read it in a linear way.

### **The book contains different kinds of content:**

**Introductions:** The start of each section aims to introduce that particular aspect of state violence, so we can understand the larger context of this form of organised oppression.

**Remedies and recipes:** These are recipes for different medicines, including ingredients lists of particular blends and why certain plants have been chosen, or detailed instructions on how to make medicine to a specific quantity.

**Herbal solidarity in practice:** These are examples of herbal solidarity in action, with descriptions of different projects around the world. Some projects have already ended, while others are ongoing. I've tried to include a variety of different projects for inspiration.

**General articles:** These are texts I've written on particular themes. Some are pulled from texts I've already written before, while the majority are new for this book.

**Contributions:** These are articles that people have contributed to the book from around the world. They are not edited, aside from the occasional spelling and grammar point. You can find a bit about each contributor at the end of their articles.

**Plant Allies:** These are plant profiles sharing more details about a number of herbs found in the book. All of them are nervines: herbs with an affinity for the nervous system which resurface over and over again in many of the sections.

**Resources:** I've shared a link to an online resources section to accompany the book. There are also medicine making guidelines for different kinds of plant medicines, as well as a glossary to help clarify any unusual terms.

### **About the different sections**

**Part One - State Violence and the Body:** This section introduces the

state and some of the many expressions of state violence around the world. I introduce how trauma affects the body and some of the ways the body expresses distress - from nightmares to muscle pain. We then look at the importance of collective care and solidarity in responding to traumatic stress. Finally, we begin to explore the roles of plant medicines in supporting our bodies enduring trauma, with a particular deep dive into nervines.

**Part two - State Repression:** This section looks at various state tactics including police raids, arrests, dragging people through the courts and other mechanisms of repression and surveillance to repress dissent and control populations. We explore herbal support for shock and panic attacks, as well as long-term chronic stress. We also look at the role of nutrition and gut health in building resilience.

**Part three - Police Violence:** We explore explicit police violence and the arsenal of weapons at their disposal. Tools are shared for herbal medic responses at demonstrations, protests, uprisings and riots, with herbal protocols on chemical weapons exposure, solidarity on the frontlines of occupations and more.

**Part four - Prison:** We talk about the functions and features of the prison system, why prisons are so traumatising, and herbal allies for those surviving the impacts of incarceration inside and out. We look at herbal support for prison visits, phone calls, anger, rage, heartbreak and grief. There is a large part about healing from incarceration written for people who have been in prison themselves.

**Part five - Border Violence:** This section introduces the border regime - the many institutions, people, systems and processes involved in trying to control migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. It is here that I share experiences of organising a mobile herbal clinic in solidarity with more than ten thousand people on the move over half a decade, with many recipes from our project, as well as top tips for people wanting to do similar work. There are also examples from different projects working with people using plant medicine as a tool of solidarity.

**Part six - Genocide, Occupation and War:** Some may not be aware that herbalism can play a role in such contexts but we explore how herbalism has supported armed struggle for freedom over the span of human history, for example through herbal wound care or the use of plants in helping people maintain 'steadfastness' such as the fierce resilience of the Palestinian people. I share my experiences organising Ukraine Herbal Solidarity and give examples

of other herbal solidarity in action.

**Part seven - Plant Allies:** Ten plant profiles of my most beloved and frequently worked-with plant medicines that support the nervous system and recovery from trauma.

**Part eight - Resources:** Includes medicine making instructions and a glossary to help understand any unusual terms, especially those from herbalism.

### **Accessibility**

I want to make this book as accessible as possible. There are different types of content which will appeal to different people depending on your learning style. There are long-form articles where I've tried to introduce state violence and there are recipes and remedies, which I've tried to structure in bullet points and clear instructions.

I find a lot of writing about herbalism to be very ego-driven with lots of abstract ideas and what I call 'fluffy padding'! That can be beautiful for some, but I'm all about the bullet points. I have included links to documentaries and podcasts, including episodes of my own podcast where I discuss many of the subjects from this book.

I want to say thank you to my friend Amani who has drawn the beautiful illustrations scattered through the book. I've also tried to include some graphics where possible. They are all my own unless stated.

For those who prefer audio-visual content over books, my *Herbalism PTSD and Traumatic Stress* course is all video content with lots of slides, graphics and charts. I also have various other workshops available on my website, on subjects like herbalism and incarceration, state violence, burnout and repression. Feel free to check out the whole ecosystem of offerings to find what suits you.

### **Content Warning**

Throughout the book there are references to state violence that many readers will find distressing. This includes, but is not limited to, forms of violence that are more highly felt by populations that are racialised, classed and gendered and people who experience many other forms of oppression. There may be explicit references to violence including forms of arrest and captivity, police raids, police violence on demonstrations, police killings, violence from bailiffs, the courts, prison conditions, suicide and self-harm, sexual violence in prison, loss and death. There is also explicit content around conditions for refugees and