



## MFC Vendor Profile:

### Herb Pharm

by Juliana O'Brien – Wellness & Outreach

The echinacea field on [Herb Pharm's](#) Oregon Tilth certified organic farm in Williams was abuzz with pollinators just before harvest late this summer. Herb Pharm is a certified Bee-Friendly organic herb farm nestled in the hills of the Siskiyou Mountains of Southern Oregon. The property is also designated as a Monarch Butterfly Waystation because of the milkweed and other plants that provide important habitat for threatened monarch populations.



*Herb Pharm's field of echinacea in bloom.*

When I visited the farm in August, colorful bursts of bright orange and yellow calendula flowers were piled high, awaiting processing. Alexis stressed how important flexibility on their part is when growing medicinal herbs. For example, the persistent smoke from the wildfires in Southern Oregon this summer has impacted the growing cycles of numerous plants, sometimes resulting in less photosynthesizing. Some plants have completed their life cycle and gone to seed faster than anticipated, so observation and adaptability is key. "We want to be sure to collect the flowers when they are at their peak strength," said Alexis, referring to the calendula. Late summer harvest is rich with flowers like calendula, milk thistle, and elderberry.

Alexis said they are currently at a unique transition time as they move into October because the harvest of the above ground portions of plants such as flowers and leaves comes to a close and the farm moves into root season. Fall and winter harvest will

## From the Board:

### Expansion Feasibility

by Kellie Hill – Board President

As we shared during our Annual Meeting, your Medford Food Co-op [Board of Directors](#) is beginning the discussion regarding a possible expansion. We are in the very early stages of the process and greatly appreciate the owners that chose to assist by completing the survey in September. With these responses, information from the round table discussions, as well as input from staff and management, we hope to generate a project vision that will help guide us as we consider the feasibility of an expansion.

To date, your Board of Directors has commissioned a market study and contracted with National Co-op Grocers Development Cooperative to evaluate the feasibility of expanding.

You may have noticed the reoccurring word "feasibility" – this is Phase 1. Just because we have grand dreams, it must be feasible to accomplish. Not just in a location site, organizational readiness, and schematic design but most critically, financially feasible. Above all else we must continue to be a sustainable and growing business providing economic, environmental, and social benefits for the Rogue Valley. This is part of Medford Food Co-op's [Ends Statement](#) that the Board of Directors will keep top of mind as we move forward.

We exist to sustain a vibrant, healthy community and a thriving local, organic food economy. Our Co-op has shown



Smoke from wildfires can affect growing cycles.

bring marshmallow, valerian, and comfrey into the drying and pressing rooms in Williams.

Over 65 herbs are grown on Herb Pharm's two properties, the majority from seed harvested on the farm, and the rest sourced through organic partners and wildcrafters with whom Herb Pharm's growers have cultivated relationships.

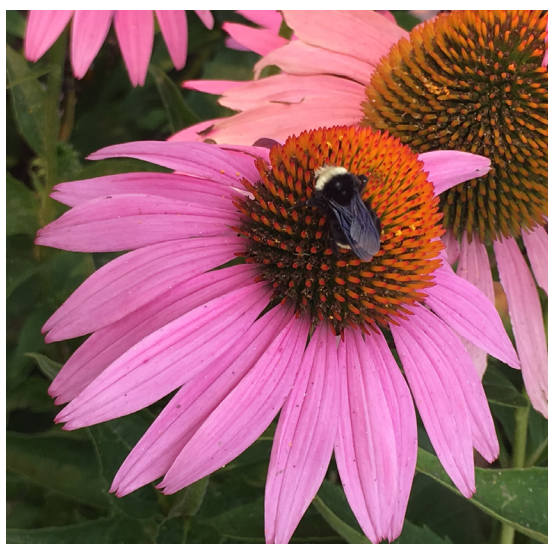
Herb Pharm's hand harvesting and extraction process is designed to be as gentle as possible on the herb itself. Each individual learns to handle the plants in a way that honors their medicinal properties.

As a founding member of [United Plant Savers \(UpS\)](#) and an official UpS Botanical Sanctuary, Herb Pharm's commitment to restoring and conserving habitat for native plants is an integral part of keeping their business sustainable. Regenerative farming practices like cover cropping, organic weed management and composting take more time, but they avoid the damaging use of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers and reduce their carbon footprint.

Herb Pharm is committed to preserving (and sometimes restoring) the natural ecosystem on and surrounding their farm while supporting sustainable wild populations of native flora and fauna. Herb Pharm's land is [non-GMO](#), [Salmon-Safe](#), and certified [Bee-Friendly](#). Last year, Herb Pharm paused on selling osha wild-crafted in the Rocky Mountains so a university study of wild osha populations could obtain accurate data.

Their commitment to quality goes beyond the ecosystem and into the laboratory. Each harvest undergoes organoleptic analysis and high performance thin-layer chromatography (HPTLC) to ensure the identity and quality of each extract.

Even when they will ultimately be combined, herbs are always extracted individually because this allows the process to be customized for the best result from each herb. Each extract and blend is formulated with efficacy and taste in mind, incorporating certified organic cane alcohol and distilled water, and certified organic non-palm vegetable glycerin.



Herb Pharm's land is certified Bee-Friendly.

Our last stop on the farm was in an oasis called the Botanical Education Garden, which welcomes visitors to walk around and spend time experiencing the variety and abundance of medicinal herbs thriving right here in Southern Oregon. For more information about Herb Pharm, and to schedule a visit, check out their website at [www.herb-pharm.com](http://www.herb-pharm.com). ■

amazing growth and minimized debt. These important values cannot be overlooked just to have a newer, fancier store. We need to consider our diverse ownership spread over multiple zip codes knowing it'll be impossible to accommodate everyone's wants and needs. Rest assured, your Board of Directors is committed to financial stability first, making feasibility Phase 1.



In truth, the question of feasibility isn't near as much fun as thinking about schematic design or store decor but it is the due diligence that must happen before we look at anything else. We'll be using a sources & uses budget supported by a pro forma that shows the income statement, cash flow, debt service and balance sheet projected for five years forward for the expanded store. We will need to demonstrate the ability to repay the new debt. We will need to demonstrate compliance with our financial condition policy by the end of year three.

You have entrusted the Board of Directors to ensure the success of your Medford Food Co-op and we take that trust very seriously. We will continue working through the feasibility of expanding. We will keep you, the ownership, apprised of our progress. We will ask for input throughout the process. We will continue to have the greatest owners, vendors, managers, staff, shoppers, and volunteers... and we thank you for trusting us as we set out on this new adventure. ■



# Staff Spotlight

*Get to know the staff!*

## Joshua Bakersmith

### How long have you been cooperating?

I've been at the Medford Food Co-op for about 9 months. Prior to that I have 7 1/2 years of experience working at the Ashland Food Co-op.

### What do you do at the co-op?

I am the Floor Supervisor and Frozen Foods Buyer, along with whatever else might be needed at any given time. I make sure the registers are running smoothly and the customer's and owner's needs are met.

### What brought you to the co-op?

I came back to a Co-op to get back to my roots. Being involved with a business that is larger than itself. It is a good feeling knowing that the place I work for is striving and working with others to help foster a better community. I can feel confident knowing that the products we sell are also trying to make a difference. A place where the bottom line is not the only thing we work for.

### What do you like best about your job?

Besides the great people I work with, the thing I like best about working at the Co-op are the owners and customers I get to be around every day. Every day I come to work I learn something new. Working in this business, I feel it is part of my job to educate myself so I can be a great resource for our customers. The best part of working here is that I constantly learn things from coworkers and customers that make every day feel like a day at school.

### Tell us your co-op favorites:

Some of my favorite items at the Co-op are the [Honey Mama's](#) chocolate bars. I had never had the pleasure of trying them before I started working here and now I regret the fact that they are so close. I see them staring at me all of the time, calling to me to come on over, pick one up and take it home. Little does it know, it will probably not make it through lunch. That is the power they have over me.

### How has working at the co-op affected your life?

Working at the Co-op has affected my life by affirming my belief in the power of the collective. To watch this little business thrive in a world that is controlled by giants is a testament to all of the hard work that former workers and owners have put into it.

### Tell us something we don't know!

Something that you don't know about me is that my favorite artist collective was the one working at [La Grotte Chauvet](#).

### What do you like to do outside of work?

Outside of work, besides spending time with my wife Kim and daughter Sula, I like to hike, read, garden, and sculpt in stone and other mediums. I have been stone carving for years and would spend all of my time doing that if life wasn't there reminding me to do other things.

### Where did you grow up/where have you lived in your life?

I grew up outside of Portland. I spent time traveling around the country with my wife. We came back to Oregon and moved into Portland for a while before coming down to Ashland to go to school. I lived there for several years, then moved to Eugene. Living in Eugene, I had the opportunity to work at a little vegetarian café that introduced me to a more healthful way to live. After that, I moved back down to Ashland, living there for several more years before getting a place here in Medford. ■



# Eat, Buy, Love Local

by Halle Riddlebarger – Marketing Manager

You probably hear the word “local” a lot these days. What does it bring to mind for you? Maybe businesses owned by your neighbors? Or small family farms? Most of us have an idea of what local means – a *personal* definition. When we go shopping we might take for granted that the store we’re in has a similar definition. A few years ago, when we started looking at what local meant for our Co-op, we found definitions varied widely from grocery store to grocery store, and even from one food co-op to the next. While a locally owned grocer might consider local items to be made in the Rogue Valley, larger chains tended to go bigger with their definitions, even going as far as defining local as a tri-state area.

We know our shoppers expect honesty and transparency from their Co-op. And we wanted to try to honor those smaller, *personal* definitions of local as much as possible, all while maintaining good relationships with area vendors by making sure not to exclude anyone with an arbitrary boundary. After a lot of discussion amongst staff, we ultimately decided that local goods at Medford Food Co-op would be sourced within 100 miles of our Co-op. Not only is 100 miles easy to remember, but when we look at the map, it *feels* honestly local.

We hear you when you tell us how important local is to you. Since defining what local means to us, we’ve been working to make it easier for you to find local products on our shelves. Over the last several months, you might have noticed signs with a blue splash and the words “EAT•BUY•LOVE LOCAL” popping up around the store. By labeling each local product we carry with this signage, we hope to encourage our shoppers to do just that: eat local, buy local, and love local. Just look for the blue signs!

Shopping local makes a big impact on our community. Supporting businesses owned by our friends and neighbors helps keep dollars circulating in our local economy instead of sending



A new sign illustrating MFC's definition of local greets you in the produce department. To discover local products, look for blue local signs around the store.

profits out of state. This is best explained by the “multiplier effect” – studies show that money spent in independently-owned businesses re-circulates or flows through the local economy more times than money spent in chain stores. In regards to food co-ops, it has been calculated that for every \$100 spent here at MFC, \$160 is generated in the local economy.

Our [Ends Statement](#) says: “Medford Food Co-op exists to sustain a vibrant, healthy community and a thriving local, organic food economy.” And that means local is at the heart of what we do. Our buyers are always looking for more local products to offer, and you can help. If you have a favorite local product you’d like to see on our shelves, please let us know and we’ll see what we can do. We have a [product request form](#) available on our website and paper versions at each checkstand.

We realize that our local definition might make our list of local products seem short compared to some of our competitors, but we value local too much to dilute it. 100 miles excludes a lot of our favorite regional vendors like Bob’s Red Mill and Toby’s

Family Foods in Eugene and Honey Mama’s in Portland. But as much as we love these products, Eugene and Portland don’t feel local, and instead are distinct communities of their own. We define these items as “regional” products, or items sourced within 200 miles or within the state of Oregon. We certainly encourage our shoppers to support regional products, too. But in this discussion about shopping local and boosting our local economy, we think it is important to differentiate between local and regional.

October is the perfect time to eat, buy, love local in the Rogue Valley. Harvest season is upon us, and the produce department is bursting with local flavor and color. Pick up your favorite seasonal fruits and veggies and take a spin through the rest of the store to discover more local goodies to love. ■

## Important Dates

### Holiday Hours & Closures

Nov. 22 - Thanksgiving Day - CLOSED  
Dec. 24 - Christmas Eve - Closing early at 6pm  
Dec. 25 - Christmas Day - CLOSED  
Dec. 31 - New Year’s Eve - Open regular hours  
Jan. 1 - New Year’s Day - Open regular hours

### Thanksgiving Turkeys

Reserve your holiday bird beginning in mid-October! Choose from natural, heirloom, or certified organic Diestel turkeys in a range of sizes. NO deposit required.

### Board of Directors Meetings

Third Monday of each month 5:30pm-7:30pm Medical Eye Center. Please check our online calendar for any location and/or time changes. If you are an owner planning to attend a meeting and would like a specific topic to be addressed, please email the General Manager: [gm@medfordfood.coop](mailto:gm@medfordfood.coop).