



Junior Herbalist Club Training Sarah Hunter's Testimony



1. Can you introduce yourself and tell us a little about your background in naturopathy?

My name is Sarah Hunter, I completed my BHSc Naturopathy in 2020 at Endeavour College in Sydney. For the last 6 years I have been the owner of my health food store and naturopathy clinic, Blackwood Apothecary. From there I held workshops, maintained a busy clinic and enjoyed connecting with the community wherever possible. I closed the physical business in Oct 2023 and embarked on my JHC training the same week!

2. What inspired you to join the Junior Herbalist Club training program?

I am passionate about community health, client education and passing on herbal wisdom so when I saw the course was being offered in Australia I was elated. I excitedly entered the NHAHA sponsored competition to have tuition fees covered and was absolutely ecstatic to learn I won!

3. How were you supported during the training to implement your program in the community?

Mel and NHAHA were very supportive, and continue to be. The course provides everything necessary to begin promoting the classes; as well as detailed material lists. The group chats with practitioners across the UK and here in Australia provide an ongoing wealth of knowledge and Mel has been so supportive every step of the way, fielding all manner of questions as they arise.

4. How has the Junior Herbalist Club program influenced your naturopathy practice and business?

Being a JHC leader has connected me with the wider community, particularly homeschool communities. It has helped me gain more confidence in working with children and families and understanding their needs. It has afforded me a flexible working model that I can fit in alongside my Naturopathy practice and being a Mum to a 5 year old.

5. In what ways has the program helped you expand your business and reach new clients?

It has made me more "visible" in the local community, leading to more referrals and an increased sense of trust in my practice and offerings.

6. How many students have you enrolled in your JHC program? And how many do you need to enrol to cover the training investment?

I have 13 children across 2 groups so far and another new group of 6 starting next month..

7. In what ways has the Junior Herbalist Club training program benefited you personally?

The personal benefit of JHC has been enormous. I have gained confidence in both workshop delivery and working with children. I immensely enjoy leading the workshops and watching the children excitedly absorbing all the information. I feel so fortunate to be paid to deliver such a valuable course, to empower future generations.

8. Can you share a success story or a memorable moment from implementing the program with kids?

It feels like every session I have a wonderful story. Most of my favourites include the children excitedly reporting on how they use their JHC training to help other children and to pass on their new found herbal knowledge.

One child told me she picked some Plantain to help a friend at the park with a cut. Another tried calming her chickens by adding Lavender, Chamomile and Lemon Balm to their nests.

9. What were the initial barriers you encountered when you started the Junior Herbalist Club, and how did you address them?

It was initially daunting seeking out participants although I decided to go ahead even if the groups were small to begin with as I trusted it would gain momentum- and it has!

10. Have there been any unexpected or surprising benefits come from your participation in the Junior Herbalist Club program

I feel my manufacturing skills have improved as I am more frequently making herbal products now. I am also a lot better at workshop instruction and teaching children; understanding how to balance the classes and keep them engaged. Finally, I find I really enjoy the sense of fulfilment that comes with educating enthusiastic, budding herbalists.

11. Would you recommend the Junior Herbalist Club training program to other naturopaths, and why?

100%. It is such a rewarding course and it is so valuable to share herbal wisdom with future generations so they can take the skills with them throughout their lives.

12. What feedback have you received from the kids and their parents about the program?

The kids and parents have all been extremely happy with the course. The most common feedback is that the adults wish they could do the course too!

13. What advice would you give to other practitioners who are considering joining the Junior Herbalist Club training program?

Go for it! You will gain so much valuable information, an additional revenue stream, a flexible and very rewarding vocation and the ability to empower future generations to incorporate herbal medicine into their everyday life with confidence.

14. In what way do you think the Junior Herbalist Club influences the profession longer term?

The course really highlights the importance of education in herbal medicine. This plays a huge role in the holistic model of care, allowing children to feel confident to help themselves throughout their lifetime. As children who have an understanding of herbal medicine, they will grow to be adults that look to a Naturopath or Herbalist to care for their health and that of their family and/or pursue a degree in health science or herbal studies.