



# American Botanical Council

## Inside the American Botanical Council

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### Our Story

The seed for the vision of the American Botanical Council (ABC) germinated back in the 1970s when ABC Founder and Executive Director, Mark Blumerthal, was selling bulk herbs and herbal products via his business, Sweethardt Herbs. Mark realized that his customers had little knowledge regarding the herbal medicine options that exist around the world, and this pushed him in the direction of education.

In 1977 when he was a founding member and one-time president of the Herb Trade Association, Mark began publishing Herb News, an industry newsletter that evolved six years later into *HerbalGram*. The first 17 issues of *HerbalGram* were black and white, and the first few issues were only 8-12 pages, but as the public demand for more herbal education resources grew, so did the publication. Former *HerbalGram* Managing Editor, Barbara Johnston, began working with Blumenthal in 1983 on the second issue of *HerbalGram* using an early Macintosh computer and a Daisy Wheel printer. She believes the growth of the herbal medicine movement has directly been encouraged and sustained through the exhaustive efforts and energy level of Blumenthal. “Mark has always had a passion and determination for compiling reliable, scientific herbal data that could be reviewed on a professional level.”

As the herbal industry grew in the US and began facing growing opposition from federal regulatory agencies, Mark saw a need to provide reliable, scientifically sound information about

medicinal herbs not only to professionals in healthcare industries, but also to an increasingly confused public. On November 1, 1988 the American Botanical Council was incorporated as a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit educational and research organization. Much of the attention and activity generated in the early days of ABC was demand for Mark as a speaker or as an editor and writer of herbal research articles.

In the summer of 1993, ABC received funding for a first of its kind project that would involve the testing of hundreds of Ginseng products, the Ginseng Evaluation Program. In 1994, ABC developed the *HerbClip™ Educational Mailing Service* which currently involves sending selected articles with summaries and critical reviews written by ABC writers every two weeks to industry leaders, research scientists, and healthcare professionals.

In 1998, ABC implemented yet another educational resource, internship program that brings dietitian and pharmacy students to ABC for one- through six-week rotations. As part of its educational mission, ABC started early on in its history to promote hard-to-find, scientific publications through ads in *HerbalGram*. The Herbal Education Catalog continues to be one of the best sources of a variety of well-referenced and well-researched herbal publications.

Summer of 1998 saw the completion of one of ABC's most important projects, the publication of the English translation of *The Complete German Commission E Monographs—Therapeutic Guide to Herbal Medicines*. The late Distinguished Professor of Pharmacognosy Emeritus Varro Tyler called the Commission E monographs “the most accurate information available in the entire world on the safety and efficacy of herbs and phytomedicines.” *Herbal Medicine: Expanded Commission E Monographs*, the expanded and updated version of the core Commission E material, intended to enhance the value and convenience of the monographs for quick referral and everyday use was published in 2000.

As part of its mission to educate healthcare professionals about herbal medicine, ABC leads ethnobotanical tours that provide attendees with the opportunity to earn continuing education credits in various locations around the world. ABC has also produced four continuing education modules for healthcare professionals. 2003 will see the publication of ABC's fifth continuing education module, *The ABC Clinical Guide to Herbs*.

For most of its first 10 years, ABC operated out of Mark's home. Bedrooms became offices for the various departments, shipping was done out of the garage, staff meetings took place around the kitchen table until staff grew so large it took over the living room for its meetings, and an elaborate filing system developed on the pool table. As the size and scope of ABC grew, the search began for a new, permanent home for the organization. In July of 1998, ABC moved to its new home, the Case Mill Homestead.

Thank you for reading our story. It's not over yet, so we hope you will visit again soon. If you like what you've learned so far, we hope you will consider supporting ABC in its educational mission by becoming a member today.

## Our Mission & Vision

The American Botanical Council (ABC) was incorporated in 1988 and is the leading nonprofit educational and research organization disseminating science-based information that promotes the safe and effective use of medicinal plants and phytomedicines.

### Our Vision:

The public makes educated, responsible choices about herbal medicine as an accepted part of healthcare.

### Our Mission:

Provide education using science-based and traditional information to promote responsible use of herbal medicine — serving the public, researchers, educators, healthcare professionals, industry, and media.

## Our Logo

The Logo of the American Botanical Council depicts the Purple Coneflower (Echinacea, pronounced ek-i-NAY-see-a), a North American plant group used by the Native Americans of the Plains for more medicinal purposes than any other plant.



Echinacea was so highly regarded as an herbal remedy that by the late 19th and early 20th centuries it had become the most predominant American medicinal plant used by Eclectic medical physicians in the United States.

Today, dozens of Echinacea products used for a wide range of applications are sold in Europe and the U.S. *Echinacea tennesseensis*, a rare member of this group, was one of the first plants to receive Federal listing as an endangered species. The urgent need to protect this and other threatened plants, particularly for their potential medical value and in order to maintain biological diversity, is one of the most critical issues of our time.

## Our Home

The Case Mill Homestead in Austin, Texas, is now the home of the American Botanical Council (ABC). This facility is the first of its kind in the U.S. and expands ABC's mission to increase public awareness and professional knowledge of the historical role and current potential of herbs and plants in medicine. ABC moved into the Case Mill Homestead in July of 1998. ABC chose the Case Mill Homestead because of its beauty, established gardens, commercial zoning, city-approved site-plan permitting expansion, and proximity to the city center. Two other factors influencing our choice were:



### Neighborhood Stabilization

The Case Mill Homestead, which the previous owners opened for weddings and other gatherings, was in danger of being razed to make way for a strip mall or an apartment building. ABC is committed to improving and maintaining the site as an attractive, integrated, and welcoming feature of its East Austin neighborhood.

### Historic Preservation

Out-of-town visitors to Austin will be drawn to the attractive three-story, 150-year-old home and beautifully landscaped 2.5-acre grounds, built in the 1850's by one of Austin's first millers.

### Case Mill Homestead Capital Campaign

The purchase and renovations of the Case Mill Homestead has been made possible by a visionary group of individuals and industry leaders. ABC thanks them for their support and confidence in our organization.

### ABC Thanks the Following Supporters of the Capital Campaign

The following companies and individuals have made and pledged contributions toward The Case Mill Capital Campaign

#### Visionaries, \$500,000 and Greater Global Health Sciences

#### Builders \$50,000 to \$99,999

GNC  
ExtractsPlus  
Enzymatic Therapy

Naturex/Pure World  
Botanicals

Connie and Julian  
Whitaker

**Planners - \$10,000 to \$49,999**

AllHerb.com  
 American Ingredients,  
 LLC  
 Bio Botanica  
 Botanicals International  
 Capsugel  
 Cosmopolitan Trading

East Earth Herbs  
 Indena USA  
 MotherNature.com  
 Nature's Bounty  
 Nature's Herbs/  
 IdeaSphere  
 Nature's Way

Pharmaton Natural Health  
 Products  
 Stryka Botanics Co.  
 Traditional Medicinals  
 Vicus.com, Inc.  
 Whole Foods Market

**Supporters - \$5,000 to \$9,999**

AK Equipment  
 Mark Blumenthal  
 City of Austin  
 Euromed  
 Fetzer Foundation

Franklin Publications, Inc.  
 Haworth Press  
 Henkel Corp.  
 Lichtwer Pharma US Inc.

Nutrilitte, a division of  
 Amway  
 White River Hardwoods  
 Janet Zand and Michael  
 Marcus

**Other Contributors**

Donald J. Brown, N.D.  
 Celestial Seasonings  
 Chai-Na-Ta Corp.  
 Chemco Industries, Inc.  
 Flora Manufacturing &  
 Distributors  
 Steven Foster  
 Fruitful Yield  
 Healthnotes Online  
 Herb Pharm  
 Herbs for Kids  
 Hilary's Distribution  
 Indiana Botanical Gardens  
 Interweave Press  
 Jason Natural Products

Dr. and Mrs. Steven R.  
 King  
 Laboratories Mixim  
 M.W. International  
 Metagenics  
 Natural Business  
 Communications  
 Nature's Pantry  
 NOW Foods  
 Pharmanex/NuSkin  
 International, Inc.  
 Pharmavite  
 Pharmline, Inc.  
 PhytoMed International  
 Mark Plotkin, Ph.D.  
 Prince of Peace Enterprises

Procter & Gamble  
 Pro Pac Labs  
 Pure Gar  
 QBI - Quality Botanical  
 Ingredients  
 Quaker Oats Company  
 Swedish Herbal Institute  
 Triarco  
 Trout Lake Farm  
 Tsumura  
 Wakunaga of America,  
 Inc.  
 David Winston, Herbalist  
 & Alchemist  
 Xylomed Research, Inc.

## History & Highlights

<b>1983</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>HerbalGram</i> launched.</li> </ul>
<b>1988</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ABC incorporated.</li> </ul>
<b>1992</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HerbClip™ launched.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiated the Pharmacy Continuing Education Program.</li> </ul>
<b>1993</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ginseng Evaluation Program initiated to review North American ginseng products in order to increase consumer confidence by determining if product contents meet label claims.</li> <li>• Undertook the translation and publication of the German Commission E monographs.</li> <li>• Created an extensive mail-order catalog offering a large assembly of scientifically-based and difficult-to-find medicinal plant books, videos, audiotapes, CD-ROMs, databases and more.</li> <li>• Offered first on-site Pharmacy Continuing Education Program courses on herbal medicine.</li> <li>• Began cosponsoring ethnobotanical tours for continuing education credit.</li> </ul>
<b>1995</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Published the first in a series of Herbs &amp; Health pamphlets.</li> <li>• Offered first Pharmacy Continuing Education Program home study courses.</li> </ul>
<b>1996</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launched Capital Campaign to purchase Case Mill Homestead and create ABC's Herbal Education and Research Center.</li> <li>• Initiated Traditional Medicine Research Project to document regulation and approval of herbal medicines in six industrialized nations. The Executive Summary was presented before the President's Commission on Dietary Supplement Labeling.</li> <li>• Contracted to produce proceedings of the National Institute of Health's Office of Alternative Medicines, 1994 "Botanicals: A Role in U.S. Healthcare?" Conference.</li> <li>• Produced Pharmacy Continuing Education teleconference modules commissioned for Wal-Mart pharmacists nationwide.</li> </ul>
<b>1997</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchased the 140-year old Case Mill Homestead in Austin, Texas.</li> <li>• Received national attention through the media by addressing two major stories on adulterants in herbal products including plantain and a product labeled kava which contained no kava.</li> <li>• ABC website launched.</li> </ul>
<b>1998</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moved ABC headquarters to the Case Mill Homestead.</li> <li>• Hosted 450 people at industry and local community inaugural events of ABC's new Herbal Education and Research Center.</li> <li>• Published <i>The Complete German Commission E Monographs</i>.</li> </ul>

<b>1999</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Complete German Commission E Monographs</i> ranked #2 by Doody Publishing, the leading reviewer of medical titles. Chosen from more than 3500 published during 1998; the first alternative medicine book to qualify for this award.</li> <li>• Published HerbClip-on-CD 1996–1998.</li> <li>• Hosted 600 people from Austin at a city-wide Rainwater Harvesting System demonstration.</li> <li>• Initiated <i>The ABC Clinical Guide to Herbs</i>, a continuing education module.</li> <li>• Initiated <i>Herbal Medicine: Expanded Commission E</i>.</li> <li>• Established herbal workshop series for local community.</li> </ul>
<b>2000</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Published <i>Herbal Medicine: Expanded Commission E Monographs</i>.</li> <li>• HerbClip-on-CD 1996-1999 is published using greatly expanded search engine.</li> <li>• Established Herb-Ed-Web™ Content Licensing Program, to enable others to use ABC materials on their web sites.</li> <li>• Doody Publishing gives <i>Herbal Medicine: Expanded Commission E Monographs</i> a four star rating.</li> <li>• ABC publishes its 50th issue of <i>HerbalGram</i>.</li> <li>• Initiated manufacturer display advertising in <i>HerbalGram</i>.</li> </ul>
<b>2001</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New website launched.</li> <li>• ABC becomes a member-based organization with new Charter Membership Program.</li> <li>• Media Education Campaign launched. ABC distributes 3 North American Precis Syndicate (NAPS) releases for ginkgo, saw palmetto and St. John's wort.</li> <li>• Mark Blumenthal is inducted into the Natural Health Hall of Fame with 30 international leaders.</li> <li>• Mark Blumenthal is listed among the top 10 innovators by Nutraceuticals World.</li> </ul>
<b>2002</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ABC Launches HerbClip Online and <i>HerbalGram</i> Online.</li> <li>• Thieme Medical publishers selected as the exclusive international distributor of <i>The ABC Clinical Guide to Herbs</i>.</li> <li>• Media Education Campaign continues with major press releases on kava kava and St. John's wort.</li> <li>• Added HerbMedPro™ to Herb-Ed-Web™ content licensing program and as benefit of membership.</li> <li>• ABC receives North American Precis Syndicate certificate of excellence for superior achievement in media relations.</li> </ul>

2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The ABC Clinical Guide to Herbs</i> is published.</li> <li>• Entered advertising-printing agreement with Rector-Duncan &amp; Associates for <i>HerbalGram</i>.</li> <li>• First Annual Medicinal Herb Fest held.</li> <li>• Donated the American Botanical Council Heber Youngken Sr. Medicinal Plant Herbarium to Botanical Research Institute of Texas (BRIT).</li> <li>• First herb products bearing labels in ABC's Safety Labeling Program (based on ABC's Safety Information Sheets) reach the consumer.</li> <li>• Media Education Campaign generates 90 million impressions in national media coverage.</li> <li>• Aveda sponsors fundraiser to launch <i>The ABC Clinical Guide to Herbs</i>.</li> </ul>
2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launched the ABC Herbal Information Course online with the collaboration of Virgo Publishing.</li> <li>• Launched HerbalEGram, ABC's electronic newsletter for members.</li> <li>• In 2004, the Safety Assessment Program (SAP) was expanded to offer companies marketing herbal dietary supplements the use of ABC's peer-reviewed Safety Assessment Reports.</li> <li>• The average number of visitors per month at <a href="http://www.herbalgram.org">www.herbalgram.org</a> through direct access and our licensees exceeds 85,000, an increase of 59% over 2003.</li> <li>• Herbal Body Care dataset added to website.</li> </ul>
2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HerbClip™ launches FasTrak articles to deliver more timely studies and articles from the literature to recipients.</li> <li>• HerbClip™ launches HerbClip News.</li> <li>• The average number visitors per month at <a href="http://www.herbalgram.org">www.herbalgram.org</a> through direct access and our licensees exceeds 165,000.</li> <li>• Introduced Healthy Ingredients online database.</li> <li>• Launched ABC Herbal Information Course 2.</li> <li>• Virtual Garden Tour completed and posted on website.</li> </ul>
2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First annual American Botanical Celebration, a banquet held at a national convention, thanking Sponsor Members and recognizing excellence in botanical research through the Norman R. Farnsworth Award and excellence in literature through the James A. Duke award.</li> <li>• Published new book with the Missouri Botanical Gardens, <i>The Identification of Medicinal Plants: A Handbook of the Morphology of Botanicals in Commerce</i>.</li> <li>• First HerbDay, October 14, 2006, launched with great success. ABC plays major role as part of a coalition of 5 nonprofit herbal organizations planning grass root activities nationwide.</li> </ul>