

F E R G U S

FEATURES

Member Newsletter ♦ Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc., Lewistown, MT ♦ www.ferguselectric.coop

Homegrown Remedies

Local woman uses her garden to heal

Story and photos by
Charlie Denison,
Contributing Writer

Lindsay James smiles as she admires the arnica all around her ranch-style home at the foothills of the Moccasin Mountains, the flowers blooming brightly in her backyard.

“Look out any direction and you can see patches of golden yellow,” she said, referring to arnica, a wildflower she’s grown to love.

Arnica is “one of Montana’s best-kept secrets,” she continued. “There are a lot of plants that relieve pain, and I’ve found this is the most powerful of all of them.”

James has many plants in her garden that she uses to help the body, mind and soul.

“Plants make us better,” she said.

For the last few years, James — a self-made entrepreneur originally from northern Idaho — has been growing arnica and other wildflowers for medicinal purposes. This passion has blossomed into a business, Native Medicine, which is focused largely on providing herbal remedies from plants she grows at home.

“The remedies are simple compounds steeped for a long time, then filtered,” James said, meaning she brews them to capture the healing properties.

Products include ointments, salves (black draw salve is one of her top selling items), topical herbal tinctures, wax, teas and others.

“I do it all,” she said. “Herbs don’t care how you get them in your body, whether you soak in a bathtub, whether you rub on a salve, drink a tea or use a tincture. I just want people to use them in a way that makes sense to them.



Lindsay James and her dog, Sam, spend some time in the garden picking arnica, red clover and other plants in early August. Lindsay said Sam is a “big part of the operation,” as he goes everywhere with her and is an excellent basket carrier.

There are many options.”

James uses as many plants and herbs as she can: red clover, cilantro, dandelions, chokecherry bark, burdock, chamomile, cleavers, black walnut, wild lettuce and countless others.

According to James, almost all plants, be it flowers, clovers or weeds, have some kind of healing remedy. Such qualities have been studied and recorded, so James has made it her mission to identify plants and research the ways they can help improve human health.

“I plant, pick, identify and label,” she said. “The most important thing is making sure the plant is positively identified, and it’s not hard to identify them. It’s all written down...all we have to do is learn the plants.”

Making a difference

James said she’s seen herbal remedies heal, and is convinced this all-natural organic approach is the key to a healthy life.

“Our bodies will heal themselves if given good food and medicines,” she said.

Customers tend to agree, which James said is affirming both personally and spiritually.

“It’s great that people are healing, but, for me, the best part is revealing the truth,” she said.

“Seeing and hearing that these plants and herbs healed someone proves the truth of God’s word. In Genesis, God said he has ‘given every green herb for meat,’ and if they aren’t food, they are

Continued on page 5



MANAGER'S MESSAGE

From Scott Sweeney

Construction season

Fall is generally our busiest time of the year for members requesting new services. If you have powerline work that you want done this year, please contact the engineering department as soon as possible by calling (406) 538-3465 in Lewistown or (406) 323-1602 for the Roundup area. As of July 31, 2019, the co-op has constructed 31 new services and received \$450,000 in payment for the construction of new powerlines for 2019. This compares to constructing 29 new services as of July 31, 2018.

Our engineers have staked a two-mile reroute where the Judith River washed out the old powerline, and it was hard to access when the river was high and muddy. Our line crews are working to build the new line and retire the old line before winter weather sets in!

Metering system

Our line crews and engineers have been busy installing the new metering system. The old "turtle" metering system failed to pull meter readings from the Utica and Kolin substations, and the office had to estimate the power bills. This is not something that the co-op wants to have happen, but it does indicate that it is time to replace our old metering system, since it is no longer as dependable as we want. I want to thank members for being understanding of this short-term issue.

If you see our red service pickups in your area, there is a good chance they are working on the new metering system. First, we do a site survey in the field to make sure the marked locations on the map will work OK for installing communication equipment on the pole, and we determine if the pole is okay or needs to be replaced. After obtaining the engineers' approval, our crews will replace the pole (if necessary) and hang the metering equipment on the pole. The final step in the field is to replace the old meter with a new meter. The

co-op has approximately 6,500 total meters, so this entire process is a BIG task and it will take time, at least two years. Of course, like nearly everything we do, it will be weather dependent. If the weather condition is preceded with the word "too", the installation process will likely be slowed down, i.e. too wet, too cold, too much snow, too muddy, too dry, etc. Our line crews are set to start with the installation of metering equipment once everything is ready.

Employees

I want to acknowledge the fine work that our experienced and new employees do to keep Fergus Electric Cooperative operating efficiently and thank them for the excellent work they do all year long. Our linemen do an excellent job restoring power outages and building new powerlines! Our engineers do a super job of meeting with members to decide how to install new overhead or underground powerlines and how to reroute existing lines. Our office employees do a top-notch job of handling billing, collections, service orders, capital credits and phone calls to serve you, our members, in a manner you count on and expect from your co-op!

Member Appreciation Day — October 31

In appreciation of our membership, the Board of Directors and the employees are inviting all co-op members to come out to Fergus Electric Co-op's headquarters east of Lewistown and have a hot dog, coffee, cookies and punch on October 31st from 2 until 4:30 p.m. The event will take place in the new truck garage, which is located directly behind the office/shop.

Members will be able to enjoy goodies and conversation with fellow members, the directors and employees. This will be a wonderful opportunity to see inside the new truck garage and to see a display of the new metering system equipment. The cooperative staff

Congratulations!

Fergus Electric Cooperative congratulates board directors Cathy Kombol and Terry Frost for successfully completing the requirements for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Credentialed Cooperative Director and NRECA Board Leadership, respectively. To earn certificates, the board director attends a series of courses that focuses on basic governance knowledge and the essential skills required of cooperative directors.

Cathy Kombol, board director District 4, serves co-op members in the Winnett Junction, Winnett, Box Elder, Grass Range and east and north Roundup areas, and Vice President Terry Frost, board director District 5, serves co-op members in the south Roundup and Musselshell areas.

Fergus Electric Cooperative is member owned. Your Board of Directors is the governing body for the co-op. They set policy, strategic direction, rates and budgets. They work hard to understand the complexities of the electric utility industry. It is the responsibility of the Board of Directors to do their best to represent the membership they serve.



Cathy Kombol



Terry Frost

will be available to answer questions that you may have about the co-op.

As it will be Halloween, I am guessing there will be treats and I know there will be a drawing to win various small door prizes. We would like to show our appreciation for your ongoing support of your co-op! We look forward to seeing you at Fergus Electric Cooperative on Thursday, October 31st!



Lindsay James collects wildflowers in her garden outside her home off Montana Highway 81. James uses 84 different Montana-grown medicinal plants.



Lindsay James sells some of her herbal remedies at the Lewistown Farmer's Market.

Homegrown

Continued from page 3

medicine...I'm guessing 95 percent of the plants out there are for our benefit."

James said there are, of course, some exceptions, which is why it's important to study the books and make sure the correct plant is identified. The number of plants that can be used for medicinal purposes constantly amazes her.

Personally, James said arnica has significantly helped her, especially when battling her own illnesses.

"The herbal tinctures and pain-relieving ointment cleaned my body and began healing it," she said. "Arnica is a miraculous plant. It increases blood circulation and brings fast relief from arthritis, bruising, cramps, headaches, soreness, injury, trauma and other ailments."

Experiencing healing inspired James to get more intentional about her mission. Now recovered from serious illness, she's using her newfound energy to sell her products all over the state.

"I have tinctures and ointments available in Missoula, West Yellowstone, Sidney, Glasgow, Glendive, Fairmont Hot Springs and locally at Lewistown's Marigold Market," James said. "I also regularly put up a booth at the Farmer's Market."

As she continues to get her products

out, James said she keeps hearing success stories from customers, and that means a great deal to her, as it provides her with more affirmation that "this stuff works."

"Herbs are very powerful," she said. "They help the body fight infection, heal the body quickly and efficiently, and boost overall body health."

'Anyone can do this'

Several of the plants she grows in her garden are Montana natives. They also flourish in the meadows near her house.

"I've found it's the plants just outside the door that are the ones we should be using," she said. "Really, wherever you are, you have plants you can use for

your own good."

James encourages others to follow her lead and find their own favorite herbal remedies.

"Anyone can do this," she said. "Try it. Get started. It's easy to do. There's nothing to it, plus it's fun."

Plants, James added, were created for healing purposes, so "we might as well take advantage of it."

"The Earth was created for man," she said, "not man for the Earth. The Earth will take care of us and provide everything we need."

For more information, call James at (406) 538-3303 or email her at 4NativeMedicine@gmail.com.

October is Co-op Month Spread the Word

Help celebrate Co-op Month! Complete this form and return it to Fergus Electric Cooperative, 84423 U.S. Highway 87, Lewistown, MT 59457 by October 31.

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Your name will be entered in a drawing for an electric credit of \$50. Three winners will be contacted in November.

Write an essay, win a trip to Washington, D.C.

Plans are underway for the 2020 Youth to Washington Tour and Essay Contest. The tour is scheduled for June 20-26, 2020, with an orientation in Great Falls on June 19. Airfare from Great Falls to Washington, D.C., is paid, along with lodging, meals and admission to events.

Contest rules are:

- The student must be a junior or senior in high school in the fall of 2019.
- The student cannot be a prior winner of the Youth Tour.
- The student and/or parent or guardian must be served by Fergus Electric Cooperative.
- The student must write an essay of 400 words or less double-spaced on the topic: *How can electricity be used to save and improve lives – especially in developing nations?*
- Essays should include a cover page with the student's name, address,

telephone number and the cooperative's name. Essays and applications are due November 29, 2019. Mail them to: Youth Tour Essay Contest, Fergus Electric Cooperative, 84423 U.S. Highway 87, Lewistown, MT 59457.



An application form must accompany the essay. Please call 538-3465 for the form. It is also available on the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association website at www.mtco-ops.com under the Youth Tour link, or on the Fergus website, www.ferguselectric.coop under community.

The Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association, headquartered in Great Falls, selects a statewide winner, and Fergus Electric also sponsors a student. For additional information, call Erika at 538-3465.

Win a trip to Washington



October is National Co-op Month.

Electric cooperatives are led by the community, for the community.

Identify Account Number* Win a \$32.50 credit

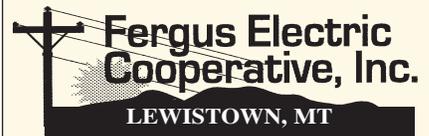
If one of the following account numbers is yours, call Fergus Electric (406-538-3465) and identify yourself and your account number.

**Account 2881 • Account 319499
Account 114850 • Account 317874**

You will receive a \$32.50 credit on next month's statement.

Carol Jennings of Moore was last month's winner!

**Numbers are drawn monthly.*



Your Touchstone Energy® Partner

FOR OUTAGES

First: Check the fuses or breakers in the building in which the electricity is off.

Second: Check the breaker below the meter.

Third: If electricity is still out, call a neighbor to see if they have electricity.

Fourth: Call 406-538-3465 day or night or:

Dale Rikala406-366-3374
Bret Ophus406-366-7523
Guy Johnson406-366-9170
Scott Sweeney406-538-7218
Don Criswell (Roundup)406-366-3465
David Dover406-366-1975
Melanie Foran406-462-5650

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