

Member Profile

Daniel Gagnon, (RH AHG) medical herbalist, CEO and owner of Herbs, Etc. : New Mexico's Finest Herb Emporium



On the way to the TWHC, I stopped in Santa Fe to visit IHA member Daniel Gagnon at Herbs, Etc. His factory at 1340 Rufina Circle and retail store at 1345 Cerrillos Road are both easily accessible from the I-25. If you're in Santa Fe, Herbs, Etc. is definitely worth a visit.

Retail experience came naturally to Daniel. "My father, my mother, five uncles, and three aunts all had businesses," he said. "I grew up hearing about employees, marketing strategies, and other business concerns." Hospitalized numerous times for eczema, asthma and allergies, by his teens Daniel began cooking his own food, searching out wholesome, additive-free, organic foods. In college, he started and ran a food coop for two years, before turning it into the first natural food store in northern Ontario, the only one within a 360 mile radius.

He moved to Santa Fe in 1979 to become a naturopath, studying medical herbalism and alternative medicine. In 1982, Daniel bought the retail store from herbalist Michael Moore, where he began creating formulas for clients. As the business grew, he needed manufacturing space. He bought half a building, another quarter, then the last quarter in 1994. Two years ago, he purchased an adjoining building and oversaw a major expansion to add a state-of-the-art softgel encapsulation machine and laser-etching equipment.

Large-scale manufacturing was a new skill for Daniel, which he learned through trial and error. "Manufacturing for retail customers is simpler than manufacturing bulk products for wholesale customers," he said wryly. Fulfilling the original goal to supply the retail store and local customers, Herbs, Etc. now ships products to online customers as well as health food stores and natural food stores throughout North America.

Daniel gave me the grand tour of the plant. First, an entire room of herbs, powdered, ground, and fresh, where, in a

training exercise, we noted the scent differences between cassia bark (*Cinnamomum aromaticum*) and cinnamon bark (*Cinnamomum verum*). To the average American, cassia smells more like cinnamon than cinnamon! Scent, taste, and color are key factors in plant identification, a necessary step since Herbs, Etc. manufactures over 250 varieties of bulk liquid herbal extracts in both single and compound formulas.

Each product starts with whole herbs from family-owned, certified organic farms within the United States, many processed while fresh to ensure that essential oils and other fragile constituents are not lost, evaporated or destroyed in the drying process. Herbs are picked from the field, shipped overnight in refrigerated containers, and arrive at Herbs, Etc. where staff test them for authenticity. The herbs are next ground and put into an alcohol/water solution for extraction, then bottled, labeled, and shipped. Some liquid extracts go into gelcaps, which are laser-etched for easy identification. The day I visited, staff were packaging free samples for TWHC participants. I also got to see 2-ounce bottles of liquid herbal extracts being labeled and sealed.

The processed, finely ground plant matter becomes instant compost. Daniel donates some compost to farmers in the Santa Fe area, but also adds buckets to the display herb and native plants gardens in front of the Herbs, Etc. retail store a mile down the road at 1345 Cerrillos Road. There friendly, knowledgeable staff and a comfortable setting make it easy for clients to find herbal information, remedies, and materials to create their own medicines. The store offers bulk herbs, herbal remedies, vitamins, supplements, essential oils, books, herbal products as well as delightful cards by local artists. Consultations are available by appointment. Through classes, promotions, and educational materials, Herbs, Etc. emphasizes illness prevention, self-healing, and and sustaining good health.

Herbs, Etc.'s best-selling products include **Deep Sleep®**, **Singer's Saving Grace®**, and **Allergy ReLeaf System™**. Located in the foothills of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains at 7,000 feet above sea level, Santa Fe is the highest and oldest state capital city in the United States. **Daniel's ChlorOxygen® Chlorophyll formula** to aid acclimatization to high-altitude, high-desert New Mexico sells locally in hotels, resorts, and drugstores. His website (Herbsetc.com) features very user-friendly tabs and offers useful information on health conditions, articles, links to herb organizations as well as his full line of products.

Daniel Gagnon received the 2007 IHA Otto Richter Award for notable engagement and achievement in the areas of herb medicine, production and processing, and teaching.

Gert Coleman