

American Botanical Council Announces Annual Botanical Excellence Awards

By ABC Staff

In March 2020, the American Botanical Council (ABC) announced the recipients of its six 2019 Botanical Excellence Awards. Typically, the ABC Botanical Excellence Awards are presented at the annual American Botanical Celebration and Awards Ceremony during the Natural Products Expo West trade show in Anaheim, California, in early March. However, because Expo West was canceled, the 15th annual ceremony did not occur.

The 2019 ABC James A. Duke Excellence in Botanical Literature Award was given to *Flora of the Voynich Codex: An Exploration of Aztec Plants* (Springer, 2019) by Arthur O. Tucker, PhD, and Jules Janick, PhD.

San Francisco, California-based Napo Pharmaceuticals, a subsidiary of Jaguar Health, received the 2019 ABC Varro E. Tyler Commercial Investment in Phytomedicinal Research Award. Napo specializes in the research, development, and production of novel plant-derived therapeutic agents and has successfully developed and commercialized an extract from the sap of the Amazonian tree dragon's blood, or *sangre de drago* (*Croton lechleri*, Euphorbiaceae).

The 2019 ABC Norman R. Farnsworth Excellence in Botanical Research Award was given to Rachel Mata, PhD, a pharmacist, pharmacognosist, and natural products researcher who has spent most of the past five decades investigating the quality, composition, and benefits of Mexican medicinal plants and fungi.

Mary L. Hardy, MD, received the 2019 ABC Fredi Kronenberg Excellence in Research and Education in Botanicals for Women's Health Award. Hardy is board certified in internal medicine, specializes in botanical and integrative medicine, and is a leader in integrative oncology. For more than 25 years, in both her practice and research, she has combined complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) with Western medicine.

Thomas Brendler received the 2019 ABC Champion Award. Brendler, the founder of the consulting firm PlantaPhile, has dedicated countless hours to ABC and its publications since joining the ABC Advisory Board nearly a decade ago.

Mary Blue, Katheryn Langelier, and Nicole Telkes received the 2019 ABC Mark Blumenthal Herbal Community Builder Award. These three herbalists became the face of the "Tradition Not Trademark" movement when they were sued for trademark infringement and battled in court to keep the herbal legacy product "fire cider" a generic term.



BOTANICAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS

The process of choosing and granting the ABC Botanical Excellence Awards was generously underwritten by these sponsors of the ABC Celebration: Amin Talati Wasserman, LLP; ChromaDex; Horphag; Indena; MegaFood; Natural Factors Nutritional Products Ltd.; New Chapter, Inc.; New Hope/Informa; NOW Health Group, Inc.; PlusPharma, Inc.; RFI Ingredients, LLC; RT Specialty, LLC; Terry Naturally/EuroPharma; and the United Natural Products Alliance.

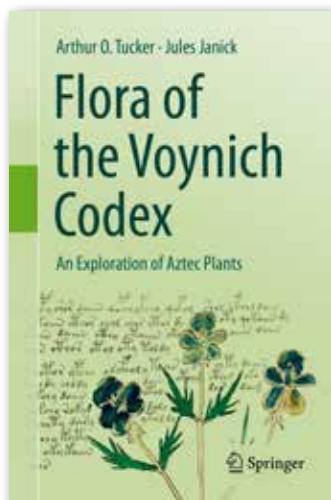
Flora of the Voynich Codex Receives ABC Duke Award

The Voynich Codex, an illustrated manuscript written in a fanciful, mysterious language, has confounded historians and botanists and inspired a dedicated community of amateur sleuths. This latest work by Tucker and Janick follows their previous book on the subject, *Unraveling the Voynich Codex* (Springer, 2018). The 2019 Duke Award was given posthumously to Tucker, who died in August 2019, when the book was in press.

ABC gives the Duke Award annually to books that contribute significantly to the medicinal plant-related literature and the fields of botany, taxonomy, ethnobotany, pharmacognosy, phytomedicine, and other related disciplines.

The Duke Award was created in 2006 to honor economic botanist and author James A. Duke, PhD, who died in December 2017. Duke's prestigious career achievements in economic botany and ethnobotany included decades of work as the lead medicinal plant expert at the United States Department of Agriculture and the authorship of more than 30 reference and consumer books. Among his many other activities and positions, he was also a co-founding member of ABC's Board of Trustees.

The Voynich Codex was named for Polish book dealer Wilfrid Voynich (1865-1930), who purchased the manuscript in



Italy in 1912. However, the provenance of the codex is as mysterious as the figures on its pages. Voynich estimated it was from the 13th century, and carbon dating performed by the University of Arizona in 2011 dated the samples from 1404 to 1438. However, Tucker and Janick maintain that the plants and animals illustrated in the codex were native to North America and point to a 16th-century origin, a hypothesis that the authors expanded on in *Unraveling the Voynich Codex* and further explore in *Flora of the Voynich Codex*, in which they identify the plants, many of which were used as traditional herbal medicines by the Aztec people of southern Mexico.

Internationally noted medicinal plant photographer, botanical author, and ABC Board of Trustees member Steven Foster, who served on the Duke Award selection committee, commented: “Since its discovery in the early 20th century, the Voynich Codex has been analyzed by religious historians, Roger Bacon specialists, early European history experts, conspiracy theorists, and space alien pundits, among others. This year’s recipient of the Duke Award has taken a morphological botanical approach to deciphering the iconic plant figures in the Voynich Codex and provides a clear linkage to the flora of Mexico. Clar-

ity of time, place, and subject matter provide foundational scholarship for further research.”

Tucker, a professor emeritus of botany at Delaware State University, published his first article on the codex in *HerbalGram* issue 100 in 2013 and began his collaboration with Janick, the James Troop Distinguished Professor of Horticulture at Purdue University, in 2015. In 2016, after they organized a symposium on the subject, it caught the attention of Kenneth Teng, an editor for Springer.

“Springer is proud to be the publishing partner of Prof. Janick and the late Prof. Tucker in their journey to uncover the secrets of what many [consider to be] the world’s most mysterious book,” wrote Teng, who facilitated the publication of both books. “This is the first and only publication that completely identifies all the plant species from the original Voynich manuscript. *Flora of the Voynich Codex*, which was meticulously researched, sheds light on the possible Mesoamerican origin of this fascinating manuscript.”

Janick said: “Arthur would have been elated by this award, since his efforts to unravel the Voynich Codex, the world’s most mysterious manuscript, consumed him for the last seven years of his life. In *Flora of the Voynich Codex*, identification [of the plants] was extended to 166 phyto-morphs, all but one [of which is] indigenous to the New World. It reinforced our mantra that there was no way that a manuscript with a sunflower [*Helianthus* sp., Asteraceae] and an armadillo could be a 15th-century European work [as both species are native to the Western Hemisphere]... The award is a final tribute to my dear friend and an indefatigable botanist.”

Napo Pharmaceuticals Receives ABC Tyler Award

Dragon’s blood grows in the Amazon basin in Peru and neighboring countries. The red latex has been used as a traditional medicine by indigenous peoples for centuries, possibly millennia. Napo Pharmaceuticals isolated and developed a botanical drug called crofelemer from this latex. Crofelemer, a naturally derived proanthocyanidin oligomer, is effective for treating several types of diarrhea. In 2012, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved crofelemer for symptomatic relief of non-infectious diarrhea in patients with HIV/AIDS on antiretroviral therapy. To date, crofelemer is one of only two drugs approved by the FDA under its special guidance for chemically complex botanical drugs.

The ABC Tyler Award was created to honor one of the most respected US scientists in late-20th century herbal medicine and pharmacognosy (the science of drugs of natural origin, usually from plants). Varro E. Tyler, PhD, who died in 2001, was an early trustee of ABC and vice

ABC James A. Duke Award Recipients*

- 2019: *Flora of the Voynich Codex: An Exploration of Aztec Plants*
- 2018: *Ethnopharmacologic Search for Psychoactive Drugs, Volumes I and II*
- 2017: Reference/technical: *Chinese Medicinal Plants, Herbal Drugs and Substitutes*
- 2017: Consumer/popular: *Joseph Banks’ Florilegium*
- 2016: *Handbook of Essential Oils, 2nd edition*
- 2015: *Clinical Aromatherapy, 3rd edition*
- 2014: *Ancient Pathways, Ancestral Knowledge*
- 2013: *Principles and Practice of Phytotherapy, 2nd edition*
- 2012: Reference/technical: *Medicinal Plants and the Legacy of Richard E. Schultes*
- 2012: Consumer/popular: *Smoke Signals*
- 2011: Reference/technical: *American Herbal Pharmacopoeia: Botanical Pharmacognosy*
- 2011: Consumer/popular: *Healing Spices*
- 2010: *Botanical Medicine for Women’s Health*
- 2009: *An Oak Spring Herbaria*
- 2008: *Mabberley’s Plant Book, 3rd edition*
- 2007: Google Book Search
- 2006: *Medicinal Spices*
- 2005: *The Essential Guide to Herbal Safety*

*In some years, ABC presents the Duke award to two books — one in the reference/technical category and the other in the consumer/popular category.



president of academic affairs and dean of the College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences at Purdue University. He was the senior author of six editions of a leading pharmacognosy textbook that was used widely in colleges of pharmacy in the United States, and numerous other professional and popular books and academic articles. Tyler encouraged scientific and product integrity and envisioned a rational phytomedicinal health care sector that valued the proper evaluation of a phytomedicinal products' quality, safety, and efficacy.

"We are very grateful to the American Botanical Council for this recognition," said Steven King, PhD, Jaguar Health's executive vice president of sustainable supply, ethnobotanical research, and intellectual property. "We in turn would like to specifically acknowledge the intellectual contribution of local and indigenous peoples of the northwest Amazon basin for identifying the healing properties of traditional plant medicines. We would like to be sure that the international medical and patient communities know that indigenous science and ethnomedical expertise continue to provide solutions to medical challenges for humans and animals."

Lisa Conte, Jaguar Health's president and CEO, said: "We are delighted to receive this award that recognizes our focus on developing and commercializing novel, sustainably derived therapeutics to enhance gastrointestinal health around the globe. We are also pleased to be among the distinguished group of past recipients that includes our esteemed partner Indena," in reference to Indena SpA, one of the world's largest producers of clinically tested botanical extracts for the food, dietary supplement, cosmetic, and pharmaceutical industries. Indena received the ABC Tyler Award for 2008.

Research on crofelemer began in 1994, when it was investigated by the now-defunct Shaman Pharmaceuticals. The first report of crofelemer's potential to treat diarrhea was in 1995 when it improved symptoms of cholera-induced diarrhea in mice. The FDA approached Shaman to investigate crofelemer for the treatment of diarrhea, one of the most common adverse side effects in people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) who use antiretroviral therapy, which was becoming more common at the time. In addition, a significant portion of the HIV patient population, particularly the growing segment of PLWHA who have lived with the virus for 10 years or more, suffers from HIV enteropathy, which is chronic diarrhea due to the direct or indirect effects of HIV on the gastrointestinal tract.

ABC Varro E. Tyler Award Recipients

- 2019: Jaguar Health/Napo Pharmaceuticals
- 2018: GW Pharmaceuticals
- 2017: Pharmatoka
- 2016: Brassica Protection Products
- 2015: MediHerb/Integria Healthcare
- 2014: SFI (Soho Flordis International)
- 2013: Wakunaga Pharmaceutical Company
- 2012: Horphag Research
- 2011: Bioforce AG
- 2010: New Chapter
- 2009: Bionorica AG
- 2008: Indena SpA
- 2007: Dr. Willmar Schwabe Pharmaceuticals

Crofelemer's first-in-class anti-secretory mechanism of action and local activity in the gut provide a therapeutic benefit that is independent of the cause of the diarrhea. After proof-of-concept human studies in PLWHA, crofelemer was fast-tracked by the FDA, which approved it on December 31, 2012. Crofelemer was launched under the brand name Fulyzaq® and was renamed Mytesi® in 2016. Each Mytesi tablet contains 125 mg of the new molecular entity crofelemer in a delayed-release formulation.

In addition to HIV-associated diarrhea, crofelemer has been studied in human clinical trials for the treatment of traveler's diarrhea, diarrhea related to irritable

bowel syndrome (IBS), and in acute infectious diarrhea. To date, 34 human clinical trials have been conducted on crofelemer. In addition, there have been three clinical trials with crofelemer in dogs for chemotherapy-induced diarrhea, two in dairy calves (for scours, a form of diarrhea that usually occurs in young calves), two in horses (for ulcers), and one specifically in foals for diarrhea.

Gafner commented: "Napo Pharmaceuticals not only has compelling science, but also an exceptional track record with its sustainability practices (its harvesting process, initiatives to conserve the habitats in which *Croton lechleri* trees grow, and benefit-sharing strategies with the countries and cultural groups with which it collaborates). This company is a role model for the entire botanical drug and dietary supplement industries."

ABC Founder and Executive Director Mark Blumenthal commented: "Professor Varro Tyler strongly believed that companies dealing with botanicals should invest in research on their phytomedicinal ingredients and products. In the 1990s, I had the good fortune to accompany him on two trips to the Peruvian Amazon, where we witnessed the traditional use of the red sap of sangre de drago. With Napo Pharmaceuticals' sustainable management of the trees for harvesting the sap and their development of an FDA-approved drug, I firmly believe that Tyler would fully support our choice of Napo Pharmaceuticals for this award in his name."

Rachel Mata Receives ABC Farnsworth Award

ABC presents this annual award, named in honor of the celebrated professor Norman R. Farnsworth, PhD, to an individual who has made significant research contributions in the fields of pharmacognosy, ethnobotany, ethnopharmacology, or other scientific disciplines related to medicinal plants. Farnsworth, who died in 2011, was a highly published and internationally renowned research professor of pharmacognosy, a senior university scholar in the College of

Pharmacy at the University of Illinois at Chicago, and one of the founding members of ABC's Board of Trustees.

Mata, professor emerita in the Department of Pharmacy, School of Chemistry, National Autonomous University of Mexico (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México), is best known for her work on the chemistry of Mexican medicinal plants, fungi, and lichens. Additionally, she has also

made important contributions to the development of analytical methods for botanical ingredient quality control, some of which have been used for the preparation of monographs of herbal remedies included in the second edition of the *Mexican Herbal Pharmacopoeia*.

For almost 50 years, Mata has been at the forefront of research in the fields of ethnobotany and ethnopharmacology, natural products drug discovery, and analytical chemistry. Besides the discovery of many new compounds from traditional medicinal plants published in, among other publications, a series of papers under the title "Chemical studies on Mexican plants used in traditional medicine," she also contributed to the discovery of numerous natural compounds of agrochemical interest, such as limonoids with herbicidal and insecticidal properties.

The impact of Mata's many scientific contributions extends beyond her more than 180 scientific papers, book chapters, and books. She has taught and mentored more than 100 graduate, master's, and bachelor's students, including prominent Mexican natural products researchers. She also served as president of the Phytochemical Society of North America in 1997.

Throughout her career, Mata has received numerous awards and recognitions, most notably the Norman R. Farnsworth Research Achievement Award granted by the American Society of Pharmacognosy in 2014. At the national level, Mata has been distinguished with the National University Award (Teaching in Natural Sciences) in 2000, the Martín de la Cruz Prize awarded by the Mexican Ministry of Health in 2002, and the Andrés Manuel del Río National Chemistry Award in 2013, granted by the Mexican Chemical Society. In 2019, the



Journal of Natural Products, the official journal of the American Chemical Society and the American Society of Pharmacognosy, published a special edition in her honor.

Gafner said: "I have become familiar with Prof. Mata's work through her many presentations at the annual meeting of the American Society of Pharmacognosy. In my opinion, through the quality of her impressive body of work and her collab-

orative spirit, she has become the face of pharmacognosy research on Mexican medicinal plants. I consider her one of the giants in the field of botanical natural products research and believe that she is most deserving of this award."

Mata wrote: "I am very pleased and grateful to receive

the 2019 ABC Norman R. Farnsworth Excellence in Botanical Research Award. I would like to thank ABC for honoring me with this award. I accept this award in honor of my mentors, colleagues, and students, who over the years have shared their scientific work with me in the area of pharmacognosy. To be recognized by ABC is a true honor, because this organization really endorses the rational use of medicinal plants, which, for many years, has been one of the main goals of my research at the National Autonomous University of Mexico in Mexico City. The fact that this year the award turns to Mexico reflects the worldwide inclusion of ABC.

"To receive an award named after the late Professor Norman R. Farnsworth is overwhelming," Mata added. "Professor Farnsworth's legacy to the world of modern pharmacognosy is invaluable. He was an inspiration for many generations of pharmacognosists, including me. I feel even more honored to be placed in such distinguished ranks as those of the past honorees, most of whom have been colleagues at one time or another and who have made important contributions to the world of medicinal plants."

ABC Norman R. Farnsworth Award Recipients

- 2019: Rachel Mata, PhD
- 2018: Otto Sticher, PhD
- 2017: Raphael Mechoulam, PhD
- 2016: Ameenah Gurib-Fakim, PhD
- 2015: John T. Arnason, PhD
- 2014: Harry Fong, PhD
- 2013: Gordon Cragg, PhD
- 2012: De-An Guo, PhD
- 2011: Djaja Soejarto, PhD
- 2010: A. Douglas Kinghorn, PhD
- 2009: Rudolf Bauer, PhD
- 2008: Ikhlas Khan, PhD
- 2007: Hildebert Wagner, PhD
- 2006: Edzard Ernst, MD, PhD
- 2005: Joseph Betz, PhD

Mary L. Hardy Receives ABC Kronenberg Award

The ABC Fredi Kronenberg Award was created in 2018 and named in honor of distinguished researcher, educator, and longtime ABC Board of Trustees member Fredi

Kronenberg, PhD, who died in April 2017. Kronenberg dedicated her professional life to the study of medicinal plants and phyto-medicines for women's health conditions. She was particularly interested in phytoestrogen-containing botanicals, such as black cohosh (*Actaea racemosa*, Ranunculaceae), for the treatment of menopause symptoms.



Mary Hardy, MD

Kronenberg was a champion of integrative medicine and co-founded the Richard and Hinda Rosenthal Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine at Columbia University, the first CAM program at an Ivy League school and the first government-funded CAM research and educational center. For 10 years, she also co-directed an on-site five-day continuing education course for physicians and other health care providers interested in botanical medicine.

"I am very touched and honored to be given this award and doubly honored for the sisterhood I find myself in," Hardy said. "This is a lovely way to remember my dear friend Fredi, and it is a great privilege to be included in the company of two of the leaders in women's health: Aviva Romm and Tieraona Low Dog, the prior recipients of this award."

Hardy earned an MD at Louisiana State University in her hometown of New Orleans. In 1998, she co-founded the Cedars-Sinai Integrative Medicine Medical Group (one of the first integrative medicine clinics in the United States) at the Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles. From 2000 to 2004, Hardy was a research associate at RAND Corporation in Santa Monica, California, which develops solutions to make people safer and healthier. There, Hardy evaluated the safety and efficacy of CAM therapies and received sponsorship to evaluate alternative cancer practices and concerns about the safety of the traditional Chinese herb ephedra (*Ephedra sinica*, Ephedraceae).

From 2002 to 2005, she was the associate director of the Center for Dietary Supplement Research in Botanicals at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), where she led the scientific management of the center and research design process, established seminar programs for fellows, and qualified botanical materials for research. From 2005 to 2009, Hardy was the co-director of the Health and Wellness Program of the Venice Family Clinic, the largest free clinic in the United States.

She has served on expert committees of the United States Pharmacopeial Convention, including a panel to develop methods to assess risk for multi-component dietary supplements, including botanical products. She also has served as a botanical medicine and clinical trials expert on committees of the Natural Health Products Directorate of the Canadian government. Hardy has been considered an integrative medicine expert by the US National Institutes of Health's Office of Dietary Supplements, the Medical Board of California, the American Medical Association, the American Pharmacists Association, *National Geographic*, CBS, NBC, Discovery Channel, and *The Los Angeles Times*.

She co-authored a book, *Reader's Digest Best Remedies: Breakthrough Prescriptions That Blend Conventional and Natural Medicine* (The Reader's Digest Association, 2006), and has been on several editorial and advisory boards. She has received grants to study the effects of manuka honey (produced from the nectar of *Leptospermum scoparium* [Myrtaceae]) during radiation for breast cancer and the effects of black cohosh on normal mammary gland and mammary tumor development. Currently, she is the director of Wellness Works, a consulting and educational company in Los Angeles that she founded in 2012.

For the last 20 years, Hardy has taught in medical schools at the University of Southern California and UCLA and

been on faculty for integrative medicine fellowships at Georgetown University in Washington, DC, and the Academy of Integrative Health and Medicine (AIHM) in San Diego. Her areas of expertise include the safety of botanical and dietary supplements, botanical medicine, and patient-provider communication.

Romm, who received the ABC Fredi Kronenberg Award for 2018, endorsed Hardy for the award. In her endorsement, Romm praised Hardy for working "tirelessly and selflessly behind the scenes with no thought of fame or glory, only the advancement of the work," adding that Hardy has pushed successfully "for the integration of evidence-based botanical medicine into medical and scientific settings.

"Mary is an inspiration to work alongside," Romm added. "She often asks the most incisive questions ... and has a command of the literature.... Yet she shares with the most admirable qualities of confidence, humility, collegiality, and generosity. I cannot think of anyone more deserving, or fitting, to receive this award. I am quite confident that Fredi would agree."

ABC Fredi Kronenberg Award Recipients

- 2019: Mary Hardy, MD
- 2018: Aviva Romm, MD
- 2017: Tieraona Low Dog, MD

Thomas Brendler Receives ABC Champion Award

The ABC Champion Award was created to recognize individuals who have been outstanding supporters of ABC and have helped the organization promote and achieve its nonprofit research and educational mission, whether through monetary support or contributions of

time. The generosity of ABC's friends and members is vital to the nonprofit's continued success and growth.

"I feel very honored to receive this award, as much as I feel honored to join the ranks of previous recipients," said Brendler. "As my friend and colleague Josef Brinckmann once pointed out, we don't do what we do with awards in mind. We find satisfaction and gratification in the opportunity to contribute to the shaping of the herb, botanical, and phytomedicinal industry. Nonetheless, as this award acknowledges my personal and professional dedication to improving the world of herbs and natural products, I am deeply grateful for the recognition."

For 10 years, Brendler has contributed to ABC publications by serving as an expert reviewer, editor, and author. Since 2010, Brendler has worked as an HerbClip consulting editor, helping ensure the accuracy of ABC's biweekly research summaries. In 2011, Brendler joined the ABC Advisory Board, and he frequently has volunteered his time as a peer reviewer of articles related to his numerous areas of expertise, which includes African medicinal plants, commercialization and regulation of medicinal plant ingredients, phytochemical analysis, and traditional and historic plant use, among others. In 2017, Brendler co-authored the Botanical Adulterants Prevention Bulletin on cranberry (*Vaccinium macrocarpon*, Ericaceae) for the ABC-AHP-NCNPR Botanical Adulterants Prevention Program.

Most recently, in late 2018, Brendler became a regular contributor to ABC's quarterly, peer-reviewed journal *HerbalGram* as co-author of its in-depth Herb Profiles. Joining forces with Traditional Medicinals' Josef Brinckmann, who received ABC's Champion Award for 2016, Brendler is primarily responsible for the "Modern Research" and "Current Authorized Uses" sections of the profiles. His first Herb Profile, on black cohosh, appeared in *HerbalGram* issue 121, a special women's health-themed issue published in early 2019. Since then, Brendler has co-authored profiles on tongkat ali (*Eurycoma longifolia*, Simaroubaceae), copalchi (*Hintonia latiflora*, Rubiaceae), guayusa (*Ilex guayusa*, Aquifoliaceae), birch (*Betula* spp., Betulaceae), and bulbine (*Bulbine* spp., Xanthorrhoeaceae syn. Asphodelaceae).

HerbalGram Managing Editor Tyler Smith acknowledged Brendler's ongoing contributions to the publication. "For years, Thomas has been one of our most reliable peer reviewers and contributors, and he took this commitment to another level when he signed on as co-author of



Thomas Brendler

ABC Champion Award Recipients

- 2019: Thomas Brendler
- 2018: Jim Emme
- 2017: Dick Griffin
- 2016: Josef Brinckmann
- 2015: Ed Smith
- 2014: Terry Lemerond

HerbalGram's Herb Profiles. Each profile takes dozens of hours to produce, and he and Josef regularly submit drafts before assigned deadlines. Thomas not only has expertise in a wide range of medicinal plant-related fields, but he also is a skilled writer and editor, and genuinely a pleasure to work with."

Brendler added: "For my entire professional career of soon-to-be 30 years, the trinity of quality, efficacy, and safety has been my guiding principle when assisting clients with product or supply-chain development. A significant part of this effort consists of researching, assembling, and disseminating reliable information on herbs and their functions, not only to my industry and academic clients, but also to the general public and consumers.

Inasmuch as this very much aligns with ABC's nonprofit mission, it has always been both an honor and a pleasure to contribute to ABC's endeavors as an advisor, editor, and author."

In addition to his consulting work with PlantaPhile, Brendler is the principal scientist in the research and development department at Traditional Medicinals. He is also a co-founder of the Association for African Medicinal Plants Standards (AAMPS) and has served as its director since 2005. He is affiliated with the Department of Botany and Plant Biotechnology at the University of Johannesburg, South Africa. Brendler has co-authored numerous books, book chapters, and scientific articles, and is on the editorial boards of *Phytotherapy Research* and the *Journal of Ethnopharmacology*. In addition to being part of the ABC Advisory Board, he is a member of multiple organizations and committees, including the US Pharmacopeial Convention's Botanical Dietary Supplements and Herbal Medicines Expert Committee, the Society for Medicinal Plant and Natural Product Research (GA), the European Scientific Cooperative on Phytotherapy (ESCOP), the International Society for Ethnopharmacology, and the American Herbal Pharmacopoeia.

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'Fire Cider Three' Receive ABC Herbal Community Builder Award

This annual award is given to individuals who have played a significant role in creating a sense of community among herbalists, botanical researchers, members of the herb and natural products communities and industries, and others who work in the area of medicinal and aromatic plants.

Herbalist and author Rosemary Gladstar originated the modern iteration of fire cider, an apple (*Malus* spp.,



Nicole Telkes, Katheryn Langelier, Mary Blue, and Rosemary Gladstar. Photo ©2020 Nicole Telkes

Rosaceae) cider vinegar-based tonic that contains various fiery herbs, including cayenne pepper (*Capsicum annuum*, Solanaceae), garlic (*Allium sativum*, Amaryllidaceae), and horseradish (*Armoracia rusticana*, Brassicaceae), as a part of her herbal education course in the winter of 1979-1980. Gladstar also received the first ABC Mark Blumenthal Herbal Community Builder Award for her many efforts and activities in the North American herbal community. She praised the efforts of Blue, Langelier, and Telkes to keep the name “fire cider” generic.

“We realized early on that we were committed and willing to fight for this,” Gladstar wrote. “We felt it was important to take a stand for these traditional herbal products that are part of a shared legacy... [Blue, Langelier, and Telkes] were fully committed to what they believed in, and so fully committed to the herbal community that they would risk everything to stand up for their herbal traditions.”

In 2012, the Pittsfield, Massachusetts-based company Shire City Herbals filed for a trademark for the name “Fire Cider” for its own version of the blend. The three herbalists started an online campaign to bring the trademark to the attention of herbalists and consumers and exhorted them to make their own “fire cider” on the basis that the term was generic and thus not eligible for trademark.

In 2015, Shire City Herbals sued Blue, Langelier, and Telkes for trademark infringement and trade disparagement following their efforts to cancel the “Fire Cider” trademark and boycott the company. The company initially sued them for \$100,000; however, these charges were dismissed before the trial began. At that point, the defendants had to decide whether to pursue their attempt to cancel the trademark.

“There was this moment when we all paused to wonder what we should do next,” wrote Gladstar. “It made perfect sense for them to quit while they could. They had a lot at stake to lose and nothing to win except

a name they wanted to give back to the herbal community. I can’t recall who spoke first, but one of them said, ‘Heck no, I’m not going to quit now. I’m in this to the end.’ And then the other two chimed in, and just like that, they were ready to press forward.”

During the nine trial days in 2019, many members of the herbal community lent their support to the Fire Cider Three at the US District Courthouse in Springfield, Massachusetts. Supporters attended the trial and provided food for the defendants, families held picnics on the courthouse lawn, and many herbalists brought samples of their own fire cider to share. Blue, Langelier, and Telkes risked their livelihoods on the outcome of the lawsuit, and the community rallied around them in response. In September 2019, United States District Judge Mark G. Mastroianni ruled in favor of the defendants and canceled the trademark.

Blumenthal was an expert witness for the defense, providing extensive market data on herbal dietary supplement sales that were used to invalidate the testimony of Shire City’s expert witness, who claimed that the name “Fire Cider” was not generic.

“The Fire Cider Three took an important stand for traditional herbalism and its nomenclature and pushed back against expropriation by a commercial entity,” said Blumenthal. “I believe that it was in the best interest of the herbal and medicinal plant community for ABC to use its resources to support the defendants and their laudable position, and now, to honor them publicly with this award.”

Telkes thanked ABC for the recognition after a tough five years, saying: “I am extremely grateful and honored to have been chosen as a recipient of the Community Builder Award from the American Botanical Council.”

Blue commented: “The American Botanical Council was an integral force in our victory and continues to honor and support our work to defend herbal traditions with this award. We are deeply humbled and honored to be recognized by ABC this way. Thank you for this continued support and acknowledgment.”

Langelier added: “It’s a great honor to receive this award and recognition from ABC. I have so much gratitude for the overwhelming support we received from the herbal community, Rosemary Gladstar, and our lawyers. Nikki, Mary, and I were a force that stood up for what we believed in: Protecting other herbalists from being sued and for fire cider to be recognized as a generic term.

An article on the Fire Cider lawsuit is available in *HerbalGram* issue 125. HG

ABC Mark Blumenthal Herbal Community Builder Award Recipients

- 2019: Mary Blue, Katheryn Langelier, and Nicole Telkes
- 2018: Linnea and Larry Wardwell
- 2017: Jon Benninger
- 2016: Ikhlas Khan, PhD
- 2015: Michael Tierra
- 2014: Loren Israelsen
- 2013: Sara Katz
- 2012: Rosemary Gladstar