

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Walking With Roots:

Creating an Accessible, Modern Materia Medica as a Learning Tool for Everyday Users

Summary

I created a 10-herb Materia Medica journal designed to help beginners access credible, organized herbal knowledge presented in an intuitive, design-forward format, while still being useful for practitioners and enthusiasts.

My Roles Within this Project

- Researcher
- Content Creator
- Content Architecture
- Visual Design
- Illustration
- Writing
- Product Thinking

Timeline

- Initial Creation: 2025
- Case Study Development: 2026

Tools Used

- Canva: I used Canva for the visual design aspect of the project
- MS Word: MS Word was used to create a solid rough draft of the information and content.
- UpNote: Research was often done on the go. I found that UpNote was a reliable tool, and a cross-platform app. This allowed me to take down notes on my phone with the ability to pull them up on my laptop.
- Google: Initially, research relied on learningherbs.com, a well-respected resource in the herbal and practitioners' community. Google was used to search for credible studies to confirm information found on learningherbs.com. I later discovered other useful research tools for deeper validation, reshaping how I plan to approach my research moving forward.
- Pinterest: Pinterest was used as a source of inspiration to create a loose “mood board” and organize visual references.

Deliverables

- 10 – herb Materia Medica illustrated and expandable journal
- Structured Materia Medica content model
- Visual design system
- User-centered herbal reference system
- Foundation for future digital and physical products

The Problem

When trying to research herbal information online, it is often scattered, inconsistent, and not always reliable. Because of this, beginners and practitioners struggle to find trustworthy information without having to spend their time and energy collecting data and sorting through all the noise. This project aims to build an approachable, accessible, and interactive central reference system. This system organizes a vast library of herbal knowledge in a clear, structured format that is delivered through a visual experience.

The Outcome

In response to the problem, I created a 10-herb, illustrated, expandable journal that functions in both physical and digital formats. It is built on a structured knowledge system that includes an herb profile, properties, benefits, uses, and preparation sections. What makes this journal unique is its ability to grow with the user—blank pages for notes and recipes can be copied, added, and personalized, giving users the space and creative freedom to deepen their relationship with each herb through expressive, customizable design elements.

Roots:

Origin Story

As I began gathering, organizing, and designing these pages, this project started as a personal way to learn more about herbs and record what I was discovering in a materia-medica-style format. I wanted a place where I could not only store information, but also add my own notes, reflections, and recipes as my understanding grew. As a highly visual learner, I needed something that felt inviting—more than black-and-white text on a page.

When I first started researching herbs, I felt overwhelmed by the sheer amount of information scattered across countless websites and platforms. It took significant time and effort to sift through the noise, verify credibility, and compile what was actually useful. My notes were spread across tabs, apps, and notebooks, and nothing felt cohesive or grounded.

Eventually, it became clear that others like me—curious, cautious, intuitive learners—were likely facing the same frustrations. I realized there was a need for a central, trustworthy, and aesthetically meaningful way to learn about herbs: something both informative and beautiful, something that could grow with the user.

As a creative at heart, I designed this journal the way I would design something for myself—giving each page its own personality and rhythm, something that reflected the spirit of the plant. I wanted it to be a living reference: a place users could fill in, personalize, and return to again and again as they deepened their relationship with herbal knowledge.

What began as a personal journey to reconnect with nature, healing, and my own curiosity evolved into something much larger than I expected. I'm not a clinical herbalist or licensed practitioner, but I am a student of the earth—learning through careful research, credible sources, and lived experience. My intention is to share what I learn and help others through the same process of growth, exploration, and connection.

Soil

Research Approach:

Cultivating the Foundation of Knowledge

This project was designed to help users access credible, reliable herbal information in a way that honors both the content itself and the people engaging with it. I recognized that many learners—myself included—needed a centralized reference that could hold a large amount of information while still offering space to record personal notes, insights, and recipes. My goal was to create a resource that felt both structured and deeply personal, allowing users to build their own understanding while staying grounded in trustworthy knowledge.

How I Gathered My Data

My research began with LearningHerbs.com, which gave me a foundational understanding of each plant. From there, I used Google to cross-reference claims, locate credible studies, and verify consistency across multiple sources. I initially organized my notes in Notion, but after encountering frequent glitches, I moved everything into UpNote, which became my primary tool for capturing information quickly and syncing it across devices.

During the early stages, I also used Word to organize patterns, themes, and emerging content structures. Once my research felt cohesive, I migrated everything into Canva to finalize the journal's layout and design the visual components.

From this early research, a few patterns emerged:

- information was scattered across many platforms
- terminology was inconsistent
- credibility varied widely
- beginners lacked a clear entry point

Validating Information

How Challenges & Insights Found Through Research Shaped the Journal

Through my research, I discovered that while there was an abundance of herbal information available, much of it was scattered, fragmented, and inconsistent. Many sources repeated the same claims without evidence, exaggerated benefits, or promoted trends that made it difficult to distinguish credible knowledge from noise. Validating even a single plant often required cross-checking multiple platforms, practitioners, studies, and community discussions. This process was lengthy, confusing, and at times overwhelming — and it highlighted a clear need for a centralized, trustworthy resource.

I also recognized that these challenges weren't unique to other learners; they were challenges I personally experienced. My own notes lived everywhere — handwritten pages, sticky notes, phone memos, digital documents, spreadsheets — depending on where I was and what I had access to. Even when I tried to leave extra space in a notebook for future discoveries, I quickly ran into the same problem: **if knowledge is essentially infinite, how do you ever leave enough room to keep growing?**

This question revealed a gap I had never seen addressed: a journal that blends structured, credible information with the ability to expand indefinitely — a resource that grows with the user. This insight became the foundation of the product. The journal needed to feel organized and reliable, but also personal, flexible, and capable of evolving over time. I realized this concept could exist both as a physical product and as a digital one across multiple platforms.

Because the information landscape felt chaotic and overwhelming, I intentionally designed the journal's content to be clean, clear, and uncluttered. I used list-based sections rather than dense paragraphs to keep the information focused and digestible, preventing users from feeling weighed down by heavy blocks of text or too much detail at once. Any additional nuance or personal insight could be added by the user themselves, in a way that made sense to them. This created a personalized, evolving resource — something I haven't seen replicated in apps, online platforms, or even in bookstores.

These challenges and insights didn't just inform the journal; **they shaped it**. The problems uncovered through research became the blueprint for the solution, guiding every decision about structure, layout, content, and user experience. The result is a journal designed to support learning, exploration, and personal growth — a resource that feels both grounded and alive.

Accessibility Considerations

Because the journal is primarily text-based and structured with clear hierarchy, it is naturally accessible to users who rely on screen readers and other assistive technologies. The consistent layout, list-based formatting, and minimal visual clutter make the content easy to navigate for individuals with low vision, cognitive processing differences, or those who benefit from simplified information pathways.

This was important to me. Many herbal resources rely heavily on dense visuals, decorative embellishments, or complex layouts that can be difficult for under-represented users to access. I intentionally avoided overly ornate design elements that could interfere with assistive technology or create unnecessary cognitive load. By keeping the design clean, semantic, and text-forward, the journal supports a wider range of learners and ensures that herbal knowledge remains inclusive, approachable, and usable for as many people as possible.

Organizing the Research

I selected ten herbs and created a consistent structure for each plant profile. The first section focused on foundational identity: its botanical name, family, parts used, and taste profile. Establishing these basics gave users a clear starting point and helped ground the rest of the information.

The second section became the heart of each page: the plant's properties, benefits, and uses. This is where the research truly came together. I grouped all functional information—digestive support, respiratory benefits, metabolic effects, topical uses, and more—into a clear, scannable list. These details are presented in a structured, easy-to-navigate format so users can quickly understand what each plant does and how it supports health.

The final section outlined methods of preparation. Whether the plant could be brewed into a tea, used in meals, distilled into essential oils, or made into tinctures, this section gave users practical ways to apply what they learned. Preparation methods such as teas, tinctures, culinary uses, and topical applications are clearly listed, making the information actionable and approachable.

To keep the pages approachable, I organized the content into clear, list-based sections rather than dense paragraphs. This kept the information focused and digestible, preventing users from feeling overloaded by heavy blocks of text or too much information at once. I also added two additional pages dedicated to notes and recipes. These were intentionally left blank so users could duplicate them and expand their journal as their knowledge grew.

Beyond the written structure, I designed each herb's pages with a unique visual personality. I created backgrounds that reflected the plant's tone and character—warm and golden for turmeric, cool and airy for peppermint, bold and fiery for cayenne. These subtle visual cues help prime the user's senses before they even read the plant's profile, creating an intuitive emotional connection.

I also incorporated detailed botanical illustrations as visual anchors throughout the journal. These drawings give users a clear sense of what each plant looks like while creating natural pauses between information-heavy sections. This balance of imagery and text supports visual learners, reduces cognitive load, and reinforces the journal's connection to nature.

Together, these choices created a structure that is consistent, approachable, and intentionally designed to support both learning and exploration. The result is a journal that feels organized and trustworthy, while still leaving space for personal discovery and hands-on experimentation.

SEED

CONCEPT FOUNDATION:

WHERE THE IDEA TAKES SHAPE

Translating Research into Direction

As I transitioned from research into the early stages of design, the insights I gathered naturally began shaping the first concepts of the journal. My process isn't traditional or strictly linear — structure and visuals tend to emerge together for me — so this phase became a blend of intuition, experimentation, and UX-driven decision-making. The patterns I uncovered in the research started turning into early layouts, ideas, and design directions, marking the moment when the journal began taking on its first tangible form.

Combining Information With Space for Growth

From the very beginning, I knew I wanted the journal to combine structured plant information with space for personal notes and recipes. I prefer having one reliable place to store and build upon my knowledge, and I wanted users to have that same sense of continuity and trust.

But herbal knowledge is essentially infinite. Leaving only a few note pages would never be enough — they would fill up quickly, leading to loose papers, clutter, and disorganization. I needed a way for the journal to expand gracefully without losing its aesthetic or structure.

Creating an Expandable System

To solve this, I designed beautifully formatted blank note and recipe pages that users could duplicate endlessly. This approach worked for both digital and physical formats.

Digital Format

- Users can download the journal instantly
- Duplicate note/recipe pages as needed
- Add their own content directly into the file
- Build a personalized, ever-growing Materia Medica

Physical Format

- Users can print the journal
- Reprint filler pages as they need more
- Store them however they prefer:
 - binder
 - folder
 - protective sleeves
 - or optional expandable binding systems (screw-post, flex binders, post binders)

The binding systems were never required — just optional ways to keep the journal feeling book-like if users wanted that experience.

Pivoting From Home Printing to Print-on-Demand

As I continued designing, I realized the journal was extremely color-rich. Printing it at home would quickly drain an average person's ink cartridges, possibly requiring more than one set. That's when I pivoted to exploring print-on-demand options.

I researched third-party printers that could integrate with seller platforms, comparing:

- pricing
- color quality
- paper weight
- fulfillment options
- profit margins

The goal was to offer a physical version that maintained the journal's aesthetic integrity without placing a financial burden on the user.

However, print-on-demand came with its own challenges — cost, margins, and the time required to fully evaluate suppliers. It wasn't a problem I could solve quickly, and I had more pressing priorities at the time.

Later, with a clearer mind and broader perspective, I realized the journal didn't need to remain a static PDF or a printed product at all. It could evolve into an app — a living, interactive experience that supports infinite expansion and brings the Materia Medica to life in a way no printed format could.

Visual Structure & Information Flow

As I designed the pages, I realized that the information-heavy sections needed breathing room. I enlarged the botanical illustrations and used them as visual buffers — a gentle introduction that prepares the user before they dive into the content.

I structured each plant profile the same way we introduce ourselves to one another:

1. Identity

- Name
- Botanical/alternate names
- Family
- Parts used
- Taste profile

Taste became important because many herbs are used in cooking, and the journal includes recipe pages. It also helps users intuitively connect with the plant.

2. Intimate Details (Properties, Benefits & Uses)

Originally, I wrote these as paragraphs, but they felt overwhelming and cluttered. So, I:

- grouped similar benefits together
- distilled the information into clean bullet points
- kept the details simple, clear, and digestible
- ensured the user could learn confidently without feeling overloaded

3. Preparation

I intentionally avoided detailed preparation instructions because I'm still learning those methods myself. Instead, I listed the preparation styles (tea, tincture, culinary, topical), inviting users to explore and experiment — validating the purpose of the notes and recipe pages that follow.

Designing for Personal Discovery

As users learn more about each plant — through research, experimentation, or lived experience — they can record everything in one centralized location. This reinforces the journal's purpose: a growing, evolving, deeply personal *Materia medica*.

Visual Personality & Sensory Experience

I used subtle visual elements to enhance the journal without overwhelming it. Each herb has its own background, chosen to reflect its “personality.”

For example: Chamomile feels warm, sunny, uplifting — so its background reflects that mood.

To keep everything cohesive:

- backgrounds were created in a loose watercolor style
- opacity was lowered over a parchment texture
- borders were chosen to complement the background and content
- the underlying structure of each page remained consistent to anchor the visual variations

This creates a gentle, sensory introduction that welcomes the user before they even read the page. It sets the tone, primes their senses, and creates a full experience rather than just a reference page.

Evolving Into an App

Returning to the project with new perspective, I realized the journal could become more than a printable product. An app version could:

- support infinite expansion
- create a living Materia medica
- offer interactive features
- enhance the visual experience
- make the journal more accessible and immersive

This shift opened the door to new design possibilities and a richer user experience.

Establishing the User’s Mental Model

I wanted the journal to feel intuitive from the moment a user opened it, even if they were brand-new to herbalism. The structure mirrors how people naturally learn: first by identifying something, then understanding what it does, and finally exploring how to use it. Each herb follows the same predictable flow — identity, properties, preparation, notes, and recipes — which helps users quickly understand what to expect on every page without needing instructions.

Alphabetizing the herbs in Volume One was intentional. Beginners may not yet know plant families, energetics, or classifications, so alphabetical order reduces cognitive load and allows them to find what they're looking for immediately. The absence of page numbers also supports this mental model; it gives users the freedom to reorder, expand, or reorganize pages in a way that aligns with their own learning style, rather than forcing them into a fixed sequence.

The four-page structure for each herb creates a steady rhythm: a visual introduction, a structured information page, and two pages dedicated to personal exploration. This consistency teaches the user how to navigate the journal simply by using it. Over time, they begin to internalize the pattern — “this is where I find the basics, this is where I find the benefits, this is where I record what I've learned.” It becomes second nature.

The illustration page acts as a cognitive buffer, giving the mind a moment to settle before absorbing information. At the same time, the gentle watercolor backgrounds serve as emotional priming — subtle cues that set the tone for each herb and help users form sensory associations that make the information easier to remember. These visual elements support different learning styles, especially visual and reflective learners, and create a sense of calm before the user engages with more detailed content.

Overall, the journal encourages users to slow down, connect with each herb, and build knowledge in a way that feels personal, grounded, and memorable. The structure is consistent enough to feel reliable, yet flexible enough to adapt to each user's unique way of thinking, learning, and organizing information.

Transition to the Next Phase

With the concept taking shape — the structure, the flow, the expandable system, and the visual personality — the next step was to build the underlying framework that would support it all.

TRUNK

INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE:

The Structural Backbone that Supports Growth

Information Architecture: The System's Structure

The journal's structure needed to feel clear, approachable, and flexible enough to grow with the user. This phase focused on designing the underlying system that organizes the herbs, shapes the user's navigation, and creates a foundation that could scale across future volumes and even into a digital app. Every decision was made to reduce cognitive load, support different learning styles, and give users the freedom to organize information in a way that made sense to them.

Organizing the Herbs for Accessibility

Many herbal reference books I've used either organize plants into categories like families, energetics, or medicinal actions, or simply list them alphabetically. Category-based systems can be helpful for experienced herbalists, but they assume the user already knows where a plant belongs. Alphabetical systems, on the other hand, are more beginner-friendly because they don't require any prior knowledge.

For Volume One, I chose to organize the herbs alphabetically to create the most accessible entry point possible. Alphabetical order reduces cognitive load and allows users to find what they're looking for immediately, without needing to understand plant classifications. This decision set the tone for the entire system: clarity first, complexity later, once the user has built a foundation.

Defining the Volume Structure (10 Herbs)

Each volume contains ten herbs; a deliberate choice rooted in learning psychology and user experience. Ten is a digestible amount of information — enough to feel substantial, but not overwhelming. This structure encourages users to slow down, spend time with each plant, and build a deeper connection rather than skimming through dozens of entries without retaining anything.

Limiting each volume to ten herbs also creates a natural rhythm: learn, explore, reflect, and then move on. It gives users space to fill their notes pages, try recipes, and research further on their own. During the early stages of creating the journal, this structure

also gave me the breathing room to research and design the next set of herbs while users were engaging with the first. Even once all volumes are complete, the ten-herb structure continues to support intentional learning, allowing users to move through the material at a steady, grounded pace. It's a system designed to grow volume by volume, **naturally and in a rhythm that feels sustainable for both creator and learner — no matter when someone begins their journey.**

The Four-Page System for Each Herb

Each herb is presented through a consistent **four-page structure**, designed to support both clarity and depth:

1. **Illustration Page** A visual introduction that sets the tone for the herb and gives the user a moment of pause before engaging with information.
2. **Informational Profile Page** Includes the botanical name, family, parts used, taste profile, properties, benefits, uses, and preparation methods — all organized in a structured, scannable format.
3. **Notes Page** A dedicated space for users to record their own observations, research, and experiences.
4. **Recipes Page** A place to collect practical applications, culinary uses, and herbal preparations.

This four-page rhythm creates predictability and helps users internalize where to find information. It also supports different learning styles: visual learners benefit from the illustration, analytical learners from the structured profile, and experiential learners from the notes and recipes.

Designing for Flexibility and Expansion

To support different learning styles and organizational preferences, the journal was intentionally designed **without page numbers**. This allows users to reorder, expand, or customize their journal in a way that makes sense to them. Some may group herbs by taste, others by medicinal action, and others by personal relevance. The structure adapts to the user, not the other way around.

This flexibility also supports neurodivergent users who may need to organize information visually, spatially, or categorically in ways that differ from traditional linear formats. Whether printed or digital, the system is designed to grow with the user — allowing

them to add new herbs, duplicate pages, or reorganize their collection as their knowledge deepens.

Building a Scalable System for the App

When imagining how this system could translate into an app, flexibility and user agency became even more important. The app would include:

- A **default alphabetical library** of all herbs the user has explored
- The ability to create custom volumes or “families”
- Multiple classification options, such as:
 - taste profiles
 - energetics
 - properties
 - benefits
 - plant families
- Drag-and-drop organization
- A drop-down menu for assigning each herb to one or more categories
- Automatic alphabetization within each user-created volume
- Infinite scalability through user-generated taxonomy

This system allows beginners to navigate alphabetically while giving more experienced users the freedom to organize herbs according to their own frameworks. It mirrors the flexibility of the physical journal while expanding its capabilities.

Supporting Different Types of Users

The structure was designed to support a wide range of users:

- **Beginners** who need simple, predictable navigation
- **Intermediate herbalists** who want to explore herbs by properties or benefits
- **Culinary users** who organize by taste profiles
- **Parents** looking for herbs that support specific needs (immunity, digestion, sleep)
- **Practitioners** who prefer organizing by energetics or medicinal actions
- **Neurodivergent users** who benefit from customizable, non-linear organization
- **Visual learners** who rely on illustrations and color cues

By allowing users to choose how they organize their information, the system becomes personal, intuitive, and adaptable to different learning styles and goals.

How the Trunk Supports the Leaves

The information architecture established in TRUNK became the foundation for the visual design system. The consistent four-page structure, alphabetical organization, and flexible categorization informed decisions about layout, spacing, color, and illustration style. With a clear structure in place, the visual system could enhance clarity, support accessibility, and create an emotional connection without overwhelming the user.

This phase created the backbone that the visual design would grow from — steady, grounded, and ready to support the next stage of the journal's development.

LEAVES

VISUAL DESIGN SYSTEM

The Sensory Identity that Brings the Structure to Life

When I began designing this journal, I knew it needed to feel like the plants it was inspired by — grounding, earthy, ancient, and welcoming. The visuals had to evoke the same sense of wisdom and calm that herbs offer us in real life. This meant creating a design system that was warm, intentional, and uncluttered, supporting the structure rather than competing with it. Because the journal is primarily text-based, the visual goal was to elevate the content through gentle sensory cues, guiding the user into a slower, more reflective pace of learning.

Defining the Visual Tone & Aesthetic

I chose a warm, nature-centered aesthetic because the journal itself is rooted in plants, healing, and tradition. The diluted, sepia-toned parchment background evokes the feeling of ancient herbal scrolls — knowledge passed down through generations, enduring like the plants themselves.

Watercolor backgrounds layered over the parchment added personality without overwhelming the page. Cooler herbs used silvers, blues, and greens, but always with the parchment's warmth subtly visible beneath. Each herb's "personality" guided its color palette and border style, creating gentle variation while maintaining a cohesive tone and structure.

Small watercolor illustrations in the bottom corner of each informational page offered a moment of softness — a visual exhale after reading. These elements reinforced the journal's message: *come in, sit down, stay a while*.

Notes and recipe pages carried subtle icon variations to match the tone of each herb, while maintaining structural consistency. Short guiding prompts on these pages invited users to record observations, intuitions, and personal discoveries, supporting both learning and reflection.

Typography played a key role in the journal's personality. The primary font has an apothecary-inspired charm — slightly playful, slightly antique — but remains clean and readable. Section headers use a complementary typeface to add depth and visual distinction without breaking cohesion.

Every visual choice was made to slow the user down, invite curiosity, and create a sense of warmth and welcome.

Botanical Illustrations as Anchor Points

The botanical illustrations function as a natural introduction — the way we meet a person by seeing their face before learning their story. Originally placed at the top of the informational page, the illustration felt cramped, so I moved it to its own dedicated page.

This change gave the illustration room to breathe and allowed the user to study the plant's physical characteristics without distraction. It also created a visual buffer before the text-heavy profile page, giving the mind a moment to settle and prepare. The illustration page became a gentle threshold between curiosity and learning.

Creating a Clear Visual Hierarchy

A strong visual hierarchy guides the user's eye and reduces cognitive load. Each herb chapter begins with a “resting page” — the full-page illustration — followed by the profile page where the common name appears centered at the top in the largest and most stylized font in the journal. This immediately establishes focus and importance.

Beneath the name, the botanical details (botanical name, family, parts used, taste profile) are grouped tightly and centered, forming a clear introductory section.

The two main content sections: Properties & Uses and Preparations — use all-caps headers paired with small icons. These icons act as visual cues, gently pulling the eye toward the next section and helping users navigate the page intuitively. The stylized leaf-and-flower icon marks the properties section, while the mortar-and-pestle icon signals preparations.

Information is presented in short, grouped lists to maintain clarity and breathing room. This structure keeps the page approachable, scannable, and beginner-friendly.

Designing for Accessibility & Clarity

To avoid overwhelming the user, I chose list-based formatting over dense paragraphs. Similar properties and benefits are grouped together, with one to three lines of clear, direct text. This approach supports beginners, reduces cognitive fatigue, and makes the content easy to revisit.

Accessibility was a priority. No decorative elements overlap or obscure text, ensuring compatibility with assistive technologies. Visual embellishments remain in the margins and corners, adding personality without interfering with readability.

Color, Typography & Iconography

The color palette needed to feel warm, grounded, and inviting. Earthy tones dominate, with cooler hues softened by the parchment's underlying warmth. Brighter colors appear sparingly and intentionally — either to reflect the herb's personality or to add subtle contrast.

Watercolor backgrounds layered over parchment create depth and calm, helping the user slow down and absorb information. The organic nature of watercolor reinforces the journal's connection to the natural world.

Typography balances personality and clarity. The apothecary-inspired primary font adds character, while generous spacing ensures readability. Section headers use a modern complementary font that blends seamlessly with the old-world aesthetic.

Icons serve as gentle navigational aids, marking sections without overwhelming the page. A final icon at the bottom center of the profile page signals closure — a small visual outro before the user moves on.

Cognitive Pacing & Emotional Flow

Each herb chapter follows a four-page rhythm: illustration, profile, notes, recipes. This structure mirrors the natural flow of learning.

The illustration page offers a sensory introduction — a moment to observe, breathe, and prepare. The profile page delivers the core information. The notes page invites reflection, letting the user process material in their own words. The recipes page encourages creativity and application, allowing the user to blend knowledge with personal experience.

This rhythm creates a cycle of introduction, absorption, reflection, and application. It prevents cognitive overload by giving the mind information in digestible amounts, time to rest and integrate information. The pacing feels natural, intuitive, and grounded — moving at the pace of nature rather than the pace of urgency.

Translating the Visual System into Digital

The journal's visual system translates naturally into digital formats because it is clean, intentional, and uncluttered. The watercolor textures, warm palettes, and gentle typography can be adapted to screens without losing their emotional tone.

List-based content and short text blocks fit well on mobile devices, requiring only minor adjustments to spacing and font size. Icons may need slight simplification for smaller screens, but their function remains the same.

Maintaining the journal's warmth digitally means preserving its color palette, textures, and sense of calm. Subtle interactive elements — like a blooming flower cursor on hover — can add delight without distracting from the content.

The digital version becomes an extension of the printed journal: familiar, warm, and intuitive.

How the Leaves Prepare the Way for Bloom

The LEAVES phase is where the journal finally took on its full sensory identity. Everything built in the earlier stages — the structure, the research, the pacing — became visible and emotionally grounded through color, texture, illustration, and hierarchy. The visual system didn't decorate the journal; it revealed it, giving warmth and personality to the framework beneath.

The watercolor backgrounds, parchment textures, and botanical illustrations created a rhythm that mirrors how we naturally learn: pause, absorb, reflect, apply. Typography and iconography guided the eye gently, making the journal intuitive to navigate while still feeling handcrafted and alive. Each page became a small ecosystem of clarity and calm, supporting the user without overwhelming them.

This phase also laid the foundation for future growth, including digital expansion. Because the visual system is clean, intentional, and grounded in warmth, it translates naturally across mediums while preserving the journal's emotional tone.

With the visual identity fully realized, the journal is ready to bloom — to be experienced as a complete, cohesive whole. LEAVES gives the journal its expressive form, preparing the way for BLOOM to showcase the final product in its full maturity.

BLOOM

The Final Expression of the Journal

The BLOOM phase is where the journal stands fully formed — the moment when structure, research, pacing, and visual identity come together as a complete, living product. Everything that began as scattered ideas, sketches, and early concepts has grown into something cohesive, intentional, and deeply rooted in the experience I wanted to create.

Seeing the journal in its final form is like watching a plant open after months of tending. The structure built in TRUNK, the clarity shaped in SEED, and the sensory identity developed in LEAVES all reveal their purpose here. The journal feels warm, grounded, and welcoming — exactly the atmosphere I hoped users would feel when they sit down to learn, reflect, and create.

Each herb chapter flows with a natural rhythm: a visual introduction, a clear and approachable profile, space for personal reflection, and room for creativity through recipes and blends. The pacing feels gentle and intuitive, guiding the user without rushing them. The visuals support the content, the content supports the learning, and the learning supports the user's personal journey with each plant.

What BLOOM represents is not just a finished design, but a finished *experience*. A journal that feels alive. A companion that grows with the user. A resource that honors both tradition and personal discovery. A product that can expand into future volumes or digital formats without losing its warmth or identity.

This is the moment where the journal becomes what it was always meant to be — a place of knowledge, curiosity, and connection. A place to slow down. A place to learn. A place to grow.

And with that, the journal blooms.