

The Master Gardeners' Herb Garden

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HERB MAINTENANCE AND HARVESTING:

In April the perennial herbs in the garden are cut back and the drip system is connected and turned on.

Each side of the garden is watered three times a week for one hour, spring and summer due to the new plants planted in late or early spring. When late summer rain comes we can water once a week. Herb Plants in the garden are fertilized in May.

The big harvest in the garden is done early in the morning late June and late August. Depending on the growth of the culinary herbs cuttings can be taken throughout the growing season. Check plant **care** after each herb.

Weeding and keeping herbs in check is done late May to October

List of Herbs in the Garden (alphabetical):

The majority of the Herbs in the garden are perennial and a few annuals.

Catmint, Catnip

Nepeta mussinii/Nepeta cataria

"Catnip" is the common name for a perennial herb of the **mint** family. It is native to Europe and is an import to the United States and other countries. The catnip plant is now a widespread weed in North America.

Given to the right cat, catnip can cause an amazing reaction! The cat will rub it, roll over it, kick at it, and generally go nuts for several minutes. Then the cat will lose interest and walk away. Two hours later, the cat may come back and have exactly the same response. Because there really isn't any **scent** that causes this sort of reaction in humans, catnip is hard for us to understand. However, it is not an uncommon behavior in animals that rely heavily on their noses. For example, there are many scents that will trigger intense hunting behavior in dogs, and other scents will cause dogs to stop in their tracks and roll all over the scent.

Although no one knows exactly what happens in the cat's brain, it is known that the chemical nepetalactone in catnip is the thing that triggers the response. Apparently, it somehow kicks off a stereotypical pattern in cats that are sensitive to the chemical. The catnip reaction is inherited, and some cats are totally unaffected by it. Large cats like tigers can be sensitive to it as well.

Care: Cut back hard after flowering to encourage a second flush. In the fall cut back after flowering to maintain shape and produce new growth.

Recipe: Catnip Cookies

1 cup whole wheat flour
1/4 cup soy flour
1 teaspoon Catnip
1 egg
1/3 cup of milk

- 1 tablespoon molasses
- 2 tablespoons butter

Preheat the oven to 350. Mix all the dry ingredients together. Add molasses, egg, oil, and milk. Oil a cookie sheet and roll mixture out flat. Cut into bite-sized pieces, then put in the oven and bake for 20 minutes. Let cool, and store in a tightly sealed container

Chives

Allium schoenoprasum

Chives, a member of the onion family and native to Asia and Europe, have been around over 5,000 years. Yet, they were not actively cultivated until the Middle Ages. The botanical name is derived from the Greek meaning *reed-like leek*. The English name *chive* comes from the Latin *cepa*, meaning *onion*, which became *cive* in French. Prized for their flavor, this smallest member of the onion family has many wild cousins growing throughout the Northern hemisphere.

Chives grow in clumps like grass, sending up graceful, hollow, thin leaves up to 12 inches. Unlike regular onions, no large bulb forms underground. Thus, it is the leaves that are the source of the onion flavor. A perennial plant, chives are perfect for the home gardener, even those with brown thumbs. If you grow your own, you will be blessed in the spring and summer with lovely lavender flowers shaped like a delicate puffball. These flowers are also edible, and make a strikingly colorful garnish for any dish. However, be aware that the flavor of chives becomes more harsh after flowering. To avoid flowering, simply keep snipping the leaves back.

Care: Remove flower stems before flowering to increase leaf production. Chives may be cut to within 1-inch of the ground 4 times a year to maintain a supply of succulent fresh leaves. The pink flowers can be used in flower arrangements or used in salads.

Recipe: Eggplant Caponata with Chives

- 1 large eggplant (about 4 cups), peeled and chopped
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil
- 1 medium sweet onion, chopped
- 2 ribs celery, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 Roma tomatoes, chopped
- 10 black olives, chopped
- 1/4 cup toasted pine nuts
- 2 Tablespoons capers, rinsed and drained
- 1 teaspoon anchovy paste
- 1 Tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 cup chopped chives

Preparation: Place eggplant in a colander. Sprinkle with salt and let moisture drain for 1 hour. Heat a heavy, deep skillet over medium-high heat. Add olive oil and swirl to coat the bottom of the pan. Saute onion, stirring often, until golden, about 8 minutes. Add celery and garlic and saute an additional 2 minutes.

Squeeze the moisture from the eggplant with your hands. Add to the vegetables in the skillet and

sauté for about 10 minutes, stirring often, until the eggplant is tender.

Remove from heat and stir in tomatoes, pine nuts, capers, anchovy paste, balsamic vinegar, and pepper until well combined. Let come to room temperature and stir in chives.

Serve eggplant chive caponata chilled or at room temperature.

Cook Time: 20 minutes Yield: about 2 cups

Dill

Anethum graveolens

Dill, a member of the parsley family, is a strong-smelling, fennel-like, annual plant reaching a height of about 4 feet. The yellow flowers develop into fruiting umbels. In appearance, its seeds are intermediate between those of parsnip and carrot. The "seeds" as we can see them are not true seeds. They are the halves of very small, dry fruits called schizocarps; these fruits split apart at maturity, with each half containing one seed.

The word "dill" comes from the Norse "dilla", meaning "to lull". Drinking dill tea has been recommended to overcome insomnia. A native to Europe, it is a Russian favorite and can be cultivated near the Arctic Circle. Both seeds and leaves are edible. It was known as a medicinal herb to the ancient Greeks and Romans, where soldiers placed burned dill seeds on their wounds to promote healing. Medieval Europe could not grow it fast enough for love potions, casting spells and for protection against witchcraft. Dill was introduced to this country from Asia and appears in the northeastern United States as a roadside weed in July and August. It is cultivated in Germany, India, Romania, England, and to some extent in northern sections of this country.

Care: Leaves can be picked at any time once the plant has reached maturity and can be used fresh or dried. The seeds are harvested in the fall and can be used fresh or dried. Separate the seeds from the flower heads by placing them in a paper bag and shaking them; spread the seeds on a flat surface to dry. Do not grow near fennel because the two may hybridize. The flowers attract many beneficial insects that prey on aphids.

Recipe: Balkan Cucumber Salad (From the Original Moosewood Cookbook):

- 1/2 cup very thinly sliced red onion
- 4 medium cucumbers
- 1 tsp salt
- freshly ground black pepper
- 1 1/2 cups yogurt
- 1 or 2 small cloves garlic
- 1 to 2 tsps. honey
- 2 tbs. fresh mint leaves
- 1/4 cups finely minced parsley
- 2 green scallions finely minced
- 1-2 Tbs. freshly minced dill
- 1 cup chopped walnuts lightly toasted

Soak the onion in cold water for about 30 minutes while you get everything else ready. Drain thoroughly and pat dry. Peel, unless they are homegrown or unwaxed, seed them & cut them into rounds. Place them in a medium sized bowl. Add remaining ingredients except walnuts, and mix well. Cover & refrigerate until serving time. Sprinkle walnuts on top just before serving.

Echinacea (Coneflower)

Echinacea purpurea "Ruby Star"

One of the most popular herbs in America today is the Native American medicinal plant called echinacea. Named for the prickly scales in its large conical seed head, the herb resembles the spines of an angry hedgehog (echinos is Greek for hedgehog). Results of archeological digs indicate that Native Americans may have used echinacea for more than 400 years to treat infections and wounds and as a general "cure-all." Echinacea has traditionally been used to treat or prevent colds, flu, and other infections. Echinacea is believed to stimulate the immune system to help fight infections. Less commonly, echinacea has been used for wounds and skin problems, such as acne or boils.

The root is the medicinal part, but here's the latest:

"Being sick with a cold is nothing to sneeze at, but new research finds that taking the popular herbal remedy echinacea does nothing to treat or prevent it.

The federally funded study was what fans and foes of such substances say they have long needed --- rigorous, scientific testing. It found that patients who took an echinacea plant extract fared no better than those who took a dummy treatment.

Echinacea, or purple coneflower, is sold over the counter as pills, drops and lozenges. With reported annual sales of more than \$300 million, echinacea is one of the most popular medicinal herbs used by people to treat colds.

Several animal studies and small trials on humans have pointed to the possible benefit of the herb in preventing respiratory infections.

In the newest test, researchers recruited 399 healthy patients who got one of three laboratory-made echinacea plant extracts or a dummy preparation.

Scientists found no difference in infection rates between the groups who received the herb or the placebo.

The study was funded by the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, part of the federal National Institutes of Health."

http://www.walterreeves.com/food_gardening/article.phtml?cat=1&id=774

We simply enjoy the beauty of the blooms in the garden!

Care: Flowering is at its best in full sun, although plants will tolerate light shade. Deep taproots make these plants quite drought-tolerant once established.

Plants rarely need dividing, and transplanting older plants can be tricky due to the taproot. It can be done, however, as long as you dig deeply and keep a good amount of soil around the roots. Plants may be left standing through winter as the seeds heads collect the snow in pretty little puffs. If desired, cut back to the ground after a killing frost.

Fennel

Foeniculum vulgare

Fennel has been cultivated as a vegetable and an herb. The flowers attract beneficial insects. Fennel was well known to the Ancients and was cultivated by the ancient Romans for its aromatic fruits and succulent, edible shoots. Pliny had much faith in its medicinal properties, according no less than twenty-two remedies to it, observing also that serpents eat it 'when they cast their old skins, and they sharpen their sight with the juice by rubbing against the plant.'

In mediaeval times, Fennel was employed, together with St. John's Wort and other herbs, as a preventative of witchcraft and other evil influences, being hung over doors on Midsummer's Eve to warn off evil spirits. It was likewise eaten as a condiment to the salt fish so much consumed by our forefathers during Lent.

Though the Romans valued the young shoots as a vegetable, it is not certain whether it was cultivated in northern Europe at that time, but it is frequently mentioned in Anglo-Saxon cookery and medical recipes prior to the Norman Conquest. Fennel shoots, Fennel water and Fennel seed are all mentioned in an ancient record of Spanish agriculture dating A.D. 961. The diffusion of the plant in Central Europe was stimulated by Charlemagne, who enjoined its cultivation on the imperial farms.

Care: Fennel and dill should not be planted close together since hybridization produces seedlings with an indeterminate flavor. Pick flowering heads to maintain leaf production. Pick leaves anytime during the growing season. Stems used in cooking are cut as required. Seeds are used whole or ground or distilled for oil. Fennel is good for indigestion.

Recipe: Chicken & Rice Soup with Fennel

- 1/4 cup diced celery
- 3/4 cup of fresh fennel - chopped
- 1 teaspoon ground fennel seed
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1 clove garlic - minced
- 1/2 teaspoon of oregano
- 2 teaspoons dry or 2 tablespoons fresh basil
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 bay leaf
- 1/2 each of a red and green pepper - diced
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- 8 cups of chicken broth or chicken stock
- 1 cup of cooked, diced chicken
- 1/2 cup cooked rice
- 1 tablespoon of cornstarch dissolved in 2 tablespoons of water

Sauté fresh fennel, onion, and celery in 2 tablespoons of olive oil until tender. Add garlic, peppers, and wine. Cook for 2 more minutes, then add chicken stock, basil, oregano, cayenne pepper, and ground fennel seed. Bring mixture to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer for about 10 minutes. Stir in chicken and rice, and add salt to taste. Add the dissolved cornstarch to thicken the mixture slightly. Serve hot.

French Tarragon

Artemisia dracunculus

The English word "tarragon" originates from the French word estragon or "little dragon," which is derived from the Arabic tarkhun. Some believe the herb was given this name because of its supposed ability to cure the bites of venomous reptiles, while others believe the plant was so named because of its coiled, serpent-like roots. Although alluded to briefly in the 13th century as a seasoning for vegetables, a sleep-inducing drug, and a breath sweetener, tarragon did not become well known until the 16th century. French Tarragon has the superior flavor and is the most tender of the tarragons.

Tarragon vinegar is easy to make. Put fresh tarragon sprigs into a sterilized bottle of distilled white vinegar. Taste after a few days. Continue steeping until it suits your taste. Once the desired strength is achieved, remove the sprigs. You can preserve fresh tarragon sprigs in vinegar and store in the refrigerator. Rinse and pat dry before using in sauces, butters or recipes where fresh is not required.

Care: Tarragon is ready to harvest when bottom leaves start to yellow. Harvest early in July. Leave a 3-inch stem. Sprigs of French tarragon can be picked early in the season to put in vinegar for your salads. Pick leaves for use throughout the growing season. To retain the most flavor of fresh tarragon freeze the whole sprigs in an airtight baggie and you do not have to defrost before using.

The plants should be renewed every 3-years because the flavor deteriorates as the plant matures

Recipe: Baked Salmon with Mushrooms

- 2 salmon steaks, 1- 1/2 inches thick
- Oil
- 1/2 pound mushrooms, sliced
- 4 Tablespoons butter
- 1/2 pound shrimp, finely chopped
- Salt
- Freshly ground pepper
- Fennel or tarragon
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 pint sour cream

Brush **salmon** well with oil and place one steak on the bottom of a baking dish. Sauté the **mushrooms** in butter until just soft, add chopped **shrimp** and let mixture cook for 1 minute, Spread it on the steak, in the pan, salt & pepper to taste, and top with the second steak. Mix fennel or **tarragon** and 1 teaspoon salt with the sour cream and pour it over the fish. Bake 20 minutes at 450 degrees F. Yield 2 to 4 servings.

Recipe Source: "James Beard's New Fish Cookery" by James Beard

Horehound

Marrubium vulgare

A native of Europe, but now naturalized throughout North and South America, horehound is a hardy perennial of the mint family — with its telltale square stem — and, like most mints, can become invasive if not controlled. The herb can be started from seed or cuttings in the early spring. The seed should be sown just below the surface and cuttings should have about a one-foot spacing. Rings of small white flowers will appear from June to September in the second year of growth, but the leaves may be cut for use or drying in the first year.

Care: Dig up established plants and divide and replant. When the plant has finished flowering cut them off before they ripen to prevent reseeding. Leaves should be collected before flowering and dried with care.

Medicinal use is for lung congestion as an expectorant.

Recipe: Horehound Tea

1 pint boiling water over ~ 1/2 oz (or a handful) of chopped plant

Steep 10 minutes

Tea is bitter! Add honey and lemon to taste.

Hyssop

Hyssopus officinalis

Hyssop is an attractive perennial herb that makes a nice border or edging. It is cultivated mostly for medicinal purposes, but the leaves can be used sparingly in green salads, marinades and stews. The flowers can be blue, red, or white, depending on the type.

Because of its strong, camphor-like smell, Hyssop is known mainly as a cleansing herb. Interestingly, the name is mentioned in the Bible, but it is not clear whether or not this is the same plant we see today. However, the volatile oil of Hyssop is used today as a key ingredient in some liquors, including Benedictine and Chartreuse.

The leaves and flowers of Hyssop have a licorice-minty taste, and indeed this plant is related to the Mints. The leaves and seeds can be used to flavor green salads, poultry stuffings (with sage), chicken soup, and can be dried for use in teas.

Hyssop germinates rapidly and adapts readily to being grown in containers. It prefers warm and rather dry soil. After flowering, it should be cut back to ground level in the fall. It can be started from seed, cuttings, or division. Prune occasionally to remove flower heads. Harvest only green plant matter, because woody parts have little characteristic oil. Bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds love this plant, and this alone makes it a valuable addition to the herb garden.

Care: In the summer, dead-head flowers to maintain supply. Trim the top shoots to encourage bushy growth. Trim back after flowering in cold areas to maintain shape. Cut back only in mild areas. If temperature falls below 23 degrees it can freeze. The young leaves can be harvested in the summer. The flowers should be picked during the summer when they are fully opened. Scent is generally improved with drying.

Recipe: Glazed Carrots with Hyssop (serves 4)

1 lb carrots
1 c. chicken stock
1 Tbsp honey
1 Tbsp unsalted butter
Salt & pepper to taste
1 Tbsp finely chopped hyssop leaves

Combine carrots, stock, honey & butter. Bring to a simmer over medium heat. Cover and cook until carrots are tender and the liquid is a syrupy glaze, about 20 minutes. Toss carrots with the hyssop and serve immediately.

From The Encyclopedia of Herbs Spices & Flavorings, a Cook's Companion

Lavender

Lavendula grosso, munstead, hidicote

Grosso is used for aromatherapy oils because of its fragrance.

Munstead is used in sachets and perfumes.

Hidcote is strongly scented and used in sachets and perfumes.

The *English Lavenders* (*Lavandula angustifolias*), include **English, Munstead, Hidcote, Hidcote Pink, Jean Davis, Sarah,** and **Vera** and flower in mid to late spring. These **second-round bloomers** are finished by late spring or early summer. These look great when they flower, and, after pruning, remain a compact ball or hedge with exotically fragrant leaves the rest of the year. These Lavenders are hardy to Zone 5 but, like all Lavenders, will not tolerate poor drainage or high humidity.

The *English Lavender Hybrids*, sometimes referred to as Lavandins; come in **third in the bloom cycle**, starting just as the English Lavenders are finishing, and continuing to mid summer.

These are the workhorses of Lavender. They do it all: bloom lots, grow just the right size, and smell like a million bucks. **Provence** and **Grosso** are the best known of these, but there are many others, including **Abriali, Fred Boutin, Dutch Mill, Grappenhall, Seal, Hidcote Giant** and **White Grosso**. These are the ones to line the drive or border the garden with.

Care: Lavenders are among the most popular plants for the herb garden for their coloring and delightful fragrance. The way to maintain a lavender bush is to trim to shape every year in the spring. In the summer trim after flowering. Cut back in the early fall but never into the old wood because it will not re-shoot. Harvest lavender flowers just as buds start to open, when their color and fragrance are greatest. Leaves can be harvested at any time. In the early fall trim again before the first frost. The bush is kept neat and it encourages new growth therefore stopping it from becoming woody.

Recipe: Lavender Cookies (from Sunrise Herb Farm):

2 eggs
1/2 cup margarine
1 cup sugar
1 teaspoon lavender leaves

1 1/2 cups flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
confectioner's sugar
rosewater

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Put eggs, margarine, sugar and lavender into blender and run on low until well mixed. Sift flour, baking powder and salt into a mixing bowl. Add other ingredients and stir until well blended. Drop dough a teaspoon at a time onto ungreased cookie sheets. Bake until lightly browned. Blend enough rosewater into the confectioners sugar to make a smooth frosting. Ice the cookies and let them set until frosting is firm.

Lemon Balm

Melissa officinalis

Thomas Jefferson grew Lemon Balm in his garden at Monticello. This upright plant (24 inches) has hairy, square, branched stems. The dark green leaves are used in meat sauces, fruit dishes and drinks. It grows best in full sun, preferably with midday shade. The bees love the flower of the Lemon Balm. An excellent plant around beehives or orchards to attract pollinating bees.

The easiest way to propagate Lemon Balm is through divisions from another plant. It is somewhat invasive and giving "pieces" of the plant to friends is a good way to keep it under control. Lemon Balm will recover quickly from shearing. Cut back severely 2 to 3 times throughout the season. Harvest leaves before the plant flowers. The tender, young leaves have the best flavor. Cut the entire plant about 2 inches above ground. Dry quickly or the leaves will turn black and lose flavor. Place on a wire rack to dry and store in an airtight container. The dried leaves scent potpourris. It also is used in teas, beers and wine. The flowers attract bees to the garden.

Care: Trim established plants. Cut back after flowering to prevent self-seeding. Divide established plants or any that may have encroached on other plants. Keep plant trimmed around the edges to restrict growth and encourage new shoots. The plant is very invasive but it is not difficult to uproot if things get out of hand. Pick the leaves throughout the summer for fresh use. For drying pick just before the flower begin to open when flavor is best.

Recipe: Lemon Balm Salad Dressing

1 cup of lemon balm, shredded coarsely
1/2 cup red wine vinegar
1 cup olive oil
Salt & Pepper to taste

Combine all ingredients in a bowl. Cover tightly and chill for 1 hour until flavors have blended. Use as a dressing for green garden salads.

Lemon Grass

Cymbopogon

Until recently, lemon grass, or *Takrai* as it is known in Thailand, was primarily grown in India, Indonesia, and South East Asia. But as the popularity of Thai cuisine grows around the world, the demand for it has increased. It is now grown in Florida and California as well. Lemon grass has an intriguing, lemony perfume without the bite that lemons can add to a dish. The taste is refreshing and light, with a hint of ginger. These qualities make it blend well with garlic, chiles, and cilantro -- ingredients common to the cuisines of Indonesia and Thailand. It is most often used in curries, marinades, stews, and seafood soups as it needs liquids to bring out its essential oils. Its citrus taste helps to lighten some of the richer tasting dishes. Lemon grass is also used as the basis of a popular drink in the tropics, and as a tea.

Lemon grass can be used either fresh, dried or powdered. The fresh stalks can be found in Asian markets and now in many health food markets. Be sure to buy ones that have plump bases and long, blade-like green leaves: these will be the freshest ones. When using it fresh, strip off the tough outer leaves and cut off the bottom root portion. Slice the bulbous end into rings about 1/4" in size on a diagonal. Cut into longer strips if you are not going to strain your dish so you can remove these coarse pieces before serving. Bruise the pieces before adding to release the flavors. Lemon grass freezes well which is a good thing, since it is usually sold in large bundles, far more than I can use at once. It can be stored whole in the refrigerator in plastic for up to two weeks, but usually I'll just go ahead and prep it at the moment and place it in a plastic bag in the freezer. It holds well for up to five months. If using dried lemon grass, soak in hot water to reconstitute. The powder, called *sejeh*, is mostly added to curry pastes and used in beverages.

Lemon grass has been used for centuries in Indonesia and Malaysia by herbalists and in Ayurvedic herbalism. It is used in teas to combat depression and bad moods, fight fever and as well as nervous and digestive disorders. Studies show that lemon grass has antibacterial and antifungal properties. The oil is used to cleanse oily skin, and in aromatherapy it is used as a relaxant. Valued for its exotic citrus fragrance, it is commercially used in soaps, perfumes and as an ingredient in sachets.

Lemongrass has insect repellent properties and is an ingredient in citronella

Care: Lemongrass is easy to grow from seed, but if you find some at the grocery or specialty store, choose a stalk with a few roots still attached and you can put that in water and root it there to be transplanted into the garden later. Lemongrass prefers a sandy-type soil, but likes the soil evenly moist, so a good layer of mulch is a must for this plant. A bog type situation also works well for Lemongrass.

Lemongrass is not frost-hardy, so in the colder climates it should be dug and potted to be grown indoors in a sunny window for the winter. Use it in chicken and seafood dishes, curries, casseroles, soups, and stews. Ground stalks can be added directly to dishes. It can be frozen, dried, or used fresh.

This is a tropical herb so I am not sure how it will do in the garden. The soil should be relatively moist with frequent watering. The plant itself can be used fresh or dried. The top grassy part can be dried or used fresh as a tea. The soft part of the base can be sliced and added to curries, meats, and other dishes. The fresh leaves are peeled, sliced or chopped for culinary purposes.

Recipe: Lemongrass Rice

2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1/4 teaspoon turmeric
2/3 cup finely chopped onion
3/4 cup water
2 stalks Lemongrass, cut into 2 inch pieces
1 large green onion
1 cup of long grain white rice
Salt & Pepper to taste

Put 1 1/2 tablespoons of the oil in a saucepan and turn heat to medium. Add onion and tumeric. Saute 5 minutes or until tender, then add rice and mix. Add the water, lemongrass, and salt to taste, and bring to a simmer. Cover and reduce heat and cook until the rice is tender and the liquid is absorbed - 15-20 minutes. Remove from heat and let stand for about 10 minutes. Remove and discard the lemongrass. Heat remaining oil and add green onion. Sauté just to heat through, and add to rice mixture. Serves 4.

Lovage

Levisticum officinale

Lovage is a plant, the leaves and seeds of which are used to flavor food, especially in South European cuisine. It is a tall (3 to 9 ft) perennial that vaguely resembles its cousin celery in appearance and in flavor. The fruit of the lovage plant can be used as a spice, but what appears in the trade as lovage seed is usually ajwain, not lovage. On the other hand, what is sold as 'celery seed' is often partially or entirely ground lovage seed.

Lovage is considered a "magic bullet" companion plant; much as borage helps protect almost all plants from pests, so lovage is thought to improve the health of almost all plants.

Care: Cut plant to 2-inches above ground. If Lovage is raised for its leaves, do not let it flower. Leaves can be cut three times during the season, cut only the outside leaves, not the tender heart. Once the plant has flowered the leaves tend to have a bitter taste so harvest in early summer. The seeds can be harvested and used like celery seed for winter soups.

Recipe: Cream of Lovage Soup

3 Tbsp. butter
1/4 c. chopped onion
2 cloves minced garlic
1/4 c. flour
5 c. chicken broth
5 c. potatoes, peeled & sliced
Pepper to taste
4 Tbsp. chopped fresh lovage leaves
1 1/3 c. half & half cream

Melt butter. Sauté onion and garlic until soft. Remove from heat and stir in flour. Slowly stir in broth. Return to heat and bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Add potatoes and pepper. Simmer 30 minutes.

During the last 15 minutes, add lovage. Potatoes should be tender. Puree in blender in small batches. Return to pan and add cream. Heat gently and serve. Garnish with a few lovage leaves.

Mint

Peppermint, Mentha piperita

Spearmint, Mentha spicata

Greek mythology tells of two weary travelers who could find neither help nor hospitality on the road. Finally an old couple took them in, scoured a modest dining board with mint to refresh it, and prepared for the strangers a meal. The travelers turned out to be gods in disguise, who rewarded the old folks by remodeling their little hut into a glorious temple. Thereafter mint was considered a symbol of hospitality.

Peppermint is very scented and is the main medicinal herb of the genus. Spearmint prefers partial shade, but can flourish in full sun to mostly shade. Spearmint is best suited to loamy soils with plenty of organic material, however, both mints are hardy in almost any soil. Mint leaves can be used whole, chopped, dried and ground, frozen, preserved in salt, sugar, sugar syrup, alcohol, oil, or dried.

Spearmint or peppermint planted near roses will deter aphids. In the summer give the plants a hair cut to promote new growth. Control the spread of unruly plants.

Care: Harvest is judged by flowering tendency or yellowing of lower leaves. Whole plants are cut as flowering begins, and leaves are cut during the growing season and used fresh or dried. The leaves lose their aromatic appeal after the plant flowers. Dry it by cutting just before, or right (at peak) as the flowers open, about 1/2 to 3/4ths the way down the stem (leaving smaller shoots room to grow). There is some dispute as to what drying method works best; some prefer different materials (such as plastic or cloth) and different lighting conditions (such as darkness or sunlight).

Recipe: Southern Mint Julep

2 cups granulated sugar
2 cups water
Fresh Mint
Crushed Ice
Kentucky Bourbon (2 ounces per serving)

Make a simple mint syrup* by boiling sugar and water together for 5 minutes; cool. Place in a covered container with 6 or 8 bruised mint sprigs. Refrigerate overnight.

Make a julep by filling a julep cup* or glass with crushed ice, then adding 1 tablespoon of mint syrup and 2 ounces of bourbon. Stir rapidly with a spoon to frost outside of cup or glass. Garnish with a fresh mint sprig.

Oregano

Origanum heracleotium

Greek Oregano is growing in the garden. It may grow two feet tall with a rounded, sprawling spread of 18 inches. White or pinkish-purple flower spikelets appear in mid to late summer. The cultivar 'Aureum' has golden yellow leaves and develops into an 8–10 inch mound.

Oregano was originally grown extensively in Greece and Italy. The word "Oregano" is Greek, derived and translated means "Joy of the Mountain". Oregano was popular in ancient Egypt and Greece as a flavoring for vegetables, wines, meats and fish. It has been used with meats, fish, poultry, vegetables, cheese and sausage.

Care: Leaves can be picked whenever available for fresh use. Clip fresh sprigs as needed for fresh use. As soon as flowers start to appear it is ready to harvest. Cut to 2 1/2-inches above ground.

Oregano dries easily and retains good flavor. Hang-dry stalks before blossoming. As soon as flowers appear it is ready to harvest. Cut to 2 1/2-inches above ground. Oregano is a hardy perennial that may need winter protection to survive in colder zones.

Recipe: Green Chile Chicken Stew

- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 /2 white or yellow onion, diced
- 1-3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 med. Potatoes cut in 1/2" cubes
- 4 cups water
- 1 rounded teaspoon or to taste of Better Than Bouillon Chicken Base
- 2 cooked chicken breasts, shredded
- 1 can diced tomatoes
- 2 cups peeled and diced green chile
- Large pinch oregano
- Small pinch of thyme
- Shredded Jack or Cheddar cheese
- Flour tortillas (warmed)

Heat oil over medium heat in large pot. Add onions and garlic, cook stirring until onions are translucent. Add potato cubes and continue stirring for 5 minutes. Add water and stir in bouillon, green chile, diced tomatoes, chicken, oregano, thyme and continue cooking over medium heat until boiling point is reached. Cover pot, reduce heat to low and simmer for 30 minutes. Ladle into bowls, sprinkle grated cheese and serve with tortillas on the side.

Instead of Chicken you can use ground beef or cut up a round steak and Better Than Bouillon Beef Base.

Rosemary

Rosmarinus officinalis

Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*) is a woody, perennial herb with fragrant evergreen needle-like leaves. It is native to the Mediterranean region. It is a member of the mint family Lamiaceae, which also includes many other herbs.

The name *rosemary* has nothing to do with the rose or the name Mary, but derives from the Latin name *rosmarinus*, which literally means "dew of the sea", though some think this too may be derived from an earlier name

Care: Leaves can be cut for use fresh at any time. When harvesting for drying their flavor is best just before the plant blooms.

Since it is attractive and tolerates some degree of drought, it is also used in landscaping, especially in areas having a Mediterranean climate. It is considered easy to grow for beginner gardeners, and is pest-resistant.

Rosemary is easily pruned into shapes and has been used for topiary. When grown in pots, it is best kept trimmed to stop it getting too straggly and unsightly, though when grown in a garden, rosemary can grow quite large and still be attractive. It can be propagated from an existing plant by clipping a shoot 10–15 cm (3.9–5.9 in) long, stripping a few leaves from the bottom, and planting it directly into soil.

Recipe: Steamed Salmon Fillet

- 1 Salmon Fillet
- Salt & Pepper
- Sprig of Rosemary, French Tarragon, Thyme
- Sliced rings of small onion
- 1 Lemon

Four (4) cups of water in steamer, bring to boil. Place salmon fillet on rack. Salt & pepper to taste. Cover with herbs and sliced onion rings. Steam for 20 minutes or until fillet flakes when pierced with a fork.

Instead of steaming you can wrap salmon fillet in foil and place in a 400 degree heated oven and bake for 30 minutes or until fillet flakes when pierced with a fork.

Rue

Ruta graveolens

The Common Rue (*Ruta graveolens*), also known as **Herb-of-grace**, is a species of rue native to southern Europe. Stems were used to sprinkle Holy Water on congregations during religious ceremonies.

It is sometimes grown as an ornamental plant in gardens, especially because of its bluish leaves, and also sometimes for its tolerance of hot and dry soil conditions. It also is grown as both a medicinal herb and as a condiment.

Medicinal Action and Uses---Strongly stimulating and antispasmodic - often employed, in form of a warm infusion, to induce vomiting. In excessive doses, it is an acro-narcotic poison, and on account of its emetic tendencies should not be administered immediately after eating.

Rue does have a culinary use if used sparingly, however it is incredibly bitter and severe gastric discomfort may be experienced by some individuals. Although used more extensively in former times, it is not a herb that typically suits modern tastes, and thus its use declined considerably over the course of the 20th century to the extent that it is today largely unknown to the general public and most chefs, and unavailable in grocery stores. Rue leaves and berries are an important part of the cuisine of Ethiopia and rue is also used as a traditional flavoring in Greece and other Mediterranean countries. The plant produces seeds that can be used for porridge. The bitter leaf can be added to eggs, cheese, fish, or mixed with damson plums and wine to produce a meat sauce.

Most cats dislike the smell of it and therefore it can be used as a deterrent to them.

Care: Mature rue should be trimmed back to half its size every other spring to encourage full, bushy growth. Cut back after flowering to maintain shape. Plant can cause allergic reactions so be careful.

Sage

Salvia officinalis

Sage is an evergreen shrub with a distinctive fragrance that may grow to a height of almost three feet, and it thrives in rich, well-drained soil in sunny locations. It is native to the Mediterranean region and was introduced to North America in the seventeenth century, where it continues to grow throughout the temperate regions. Sage is a member of the multi-species *Salvia* genus, and despite the fact that any herb of this genus may be called Sage, there are significant differences in medicinal components in the tops and roots that influence their uses.

Russian botanist, Alexander von Bunge (1803-1890), gave the plant its botanical genus, *Salvia*, which is translated from the Latin word, *salvere*, meaning "to save" or "to cure," as Sage enjoyed the reputation of being able to cure a multitude of ills, and many varieties of Sage possess virtually all the same properties. The Romans, who named this robust herb, held it in the highest regard and thought it to be the herbal savior of mankind. Those ancients considered it a sacred herb and believed that its growth in one's garden would promote immortality. An old Arab proverb asked, "How shall a man die who has Sage in his garden?" - a reference to the plant's power of immortality. Native Americans massaged their gums and teeth with Sage and also used it for healing skin sores. It was so valued in China in the seventeenth century that Dutch merchants discovered the Chinese would trade three chests of their China tea for one chest of Sage leaves.

As a cooking herb, Sage is considered to have a slight peppery flavor. In western cuisine, it is used for flavoring fatty meats, cheeses (Sage Derby) and some drinks. In Britain and Flanders, Sage is used for poultry or pork stuffing and sauces and is the dominant flavor in English Lincolnshire sausage. In France, Sage is used for white meat and vegetable soups, and Germans often use it in sausages. Sage is also common in the healthy diets of Italians and sautéed in olive oil and added to pasta.

Care: Each spring, cut back the previous year's growth by half and every four or five years, as plants get woody, divide the clumps of roots in the early spring and reset them in soil enriched with compost or manure. In the summer trim back after flowering. Never prune in the fall as this can kill the plant. Best to use the fresh leaves. Plants tend not to be long-lived, so plan to replace them every 3 or 4 years.

Recipe: Mushroom Soup with Barley & Wild Rice

2 Tbsp butter
3/4 c. finely diced onions
3/4 c. sliced leeks
3/4 c. scrubbed & diced carrots
3/4 c. peeled & diced parsnips
1 tsp. minced garlic
1 lb. cleaned & sliced mushrooms
1 1/2 tsp. kosher salt
1/4 tsp. freshly ground pepper
2 tsp. finely chopped fresh sage leaves
1/4 c. dry Madeira
1/3 c. wild rice
1/4 c. pearl barley
5 c. vegetable stock or water
1 scallion thinly sliced

Melt butter over medium heat in a 3 quart saucepan. Sauté the onions, leeks, carrots, parsnips, and garlic until softened, about 5 minutes. Add mushrooms, salt, pepper, & sage. Cook till mushrooms softened. Add Madeira and reduce by half over high heat. Stir in rice, barley, and vegetable stock. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer covered for 50 minutes or until rice tender. Serve garnished with scallions. To store overnight: strain broth from solids and refrigerate separately.

Purple Sage

officinalis purpurea

One of the ornamental sage plants and very attractive. Sharing its color for three to four weeks in early spring, it is one of the prettiest of all *Salvias*. It makes a great informal hedge.

Care: Each spring, cut back the previous year's growth by half and every four or five years, as plants get woody, divide the clumps of roots in the early spring and reset them in soil enriched with compost or manure. In the summer trim back after flowering. The plants are pruned back beyond the flowers when the bloom is finished, but care should be taken not to prune into wood that has no growth showing. Never prune in the fall as this can kill the plant.

Sweet Woodruff

Asperula odorata

Use sweet woodruff plants as a ground cover for shady areas in the landscape, as this plant will spread out to form a mat and choke out weeds. However, sweet woodruff's use doesn't end when the growing season ends. In former times, sweet woodruff herbs were commonly harvested and used for medicinal and culinary purposes. E.g., the fresh leaves were used medicinally to heal wounds.

Nowadays, we more often enjoy this herb for its aromatic quality. It lends a fragrance to linens, sachets and potpourris. The intensity of the fragrance of sweet woodruff's foliage increases when dried, and its aromatic quality lasts for years. It is, consequently, a favorite in potpourris and wreaths. The fragrance of sweet woodruff herbs has been variously described as resembling new-mown hay or vanilla.

Care: In the spring take root cuttings before flowering. Summer dig up plants before flowers have set to check spreading. Harvested in late spring just before it blooms or while it is still in flower, when its new-mown-hay smell is most intense.

Recipe: Sweet Woodruff Wine Cooler

- 1 bunch of woodruff
- 2 bottles of white wine
- 1 bottle sparkling wine
- Sugar to taste

Wash a small bunch of woodruff and shake off most of moisture. Tie the stems together and hang in a punch bowl. Pour the wine over the woodruff to cover and let stand in the refrigerator for 30 minutes then remove woodruff, sweeten to taste and add sparkling wine.

Thyme

Thymus (Mother of thyme) Thymus citriodorus (Silver thyme), Thymus vulgaris (English thyme)

Perennial Hardy Thymes grow in a soft compact mound about 12 inches across and 8 inches high. Plant Thyme in full sun, in moderately rich and very well-drained soil. Feed lightly once a year in spring. Plants are quite hardy; in very cold winter areas, give winter protection with straw, salt hay, or oak leaves. Thyme is a non-fussy plant and usually grows disease- and pest-free.

Thyme's origins are in the Mediterranean area where it was much loved by the Greeks and Romans. Thyme is a natural pair with any chicken dish, a perfect herb for seasoning rice and grain dishes, and adds a delightful lift to vegetables and casseroles. It makes a delicate herb butter.

Care: Trim back after flowering to promote new growth and stop plant from becoming woody and sprawling in the wrong direction. Leaves can be picked at any time. Take only one harvest. Leave 2 to 3-inch stems.

Recipe: Zucchini with Fresh Thyme (Serves 4-6)

- 2 lbs. small zucchini
- 4 Tbsp unsalted butter
- 2 Tbsp chopped fresh thyme leaves

Cut zucchini into 1-inch slices. Blanch in boiling salted water for 5 minutes. Drain well. Heat butter in a saucepan and then add drained zucchini and thyme. Season to taste with salt & pepper. Stir gently to mix, cover & cook over low heat until zucchini is tender, about 5 minutes. Serve hot or at room temperature.

From The Encyclopedia of Herbs Spices & Flavorings, a Cook's Companion

Winter Savory

Satureja montana

Savory has a strong aromatic flavor very similar to thyme. It is an herb so bold and peppery in its flavor that since the time of the Saxons it has come to denote not only the herb itself, but also a whole segment of cooking. It is synonymous with tasty and flavorful foods. Winter savory is less delicate than summer savory.

Most commonly used as a seasoning for green vegetables, savory's special affinity is for beans. Use summer savory, with its more delicate flavor, for tender baby green beans, and winter savory to enhance a whole medley of dried beans and lentils. It is no coincidence that the German word for the herb is Bohnenkraut, meaning bean herb, as one of the components of the herb naturally aids the digestion of these sometimes problematic legumes. They are best used for dishes that require long cooking, such as stews, or added to the water when cooking dried beans so that there is enough heat and moisture to break them down. This not only releases the flavorful oils, but also softens the leaves so that they are palatable. Winter savory is often used in stuffing, with vegetables, as a seasoning for fowl, and in making sausages. In fact, it is used today in the commercial preparation of salami.

Winter savory was used as a hedging plant in knot gardens of the Tudor era. It is a dense perennial shrub that grows to a height of 15 inches in well drained soil and full sun. The plant produces fragrant white to lilac colored blossoms that are attractive to bees. Virgil encouraged the planting of savory near one's beehives because of the wonderful flavor it adds to the honey.

One of the most interesting claims concerns savory's reputation as an aphrodisiac. It was the Roman naturalist and writer Pliny the Elder who, in the first century AD, gave the herb its name "satureja," a derivative of the word "satyr" (the half-man, half-goat with the insatiable sexual appetite). According to lore, the satyrs lived in meadows of savory, thus implying that it was the herb that made them passionate.

Care: Can make a good edging plant and is very pretty in the summer. Can be grown in a container. Trim it from time to time to maintain shape and promote new growth. Harvest before flowers bloom. Leave 3 to 6-inch stems when cutting

Recipe: *Asian Bean Salad*

serves 4

Colorful and filled with lively flavors, this salad is a perfect match with grilled chicken or fish.

1/2 cup Adzuki Beans
4 sprigs Winter Savory
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 clove garlic, minced
1 tablespoon olive oil
1/4 teaspoon toasted sesame oil
1 tablespoon rice wine vinegar
1/8 teaspoon Asian chile sauce
1/2 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
3 tablespoons celery, chopped
4 tablespoons red onion, chopped
3 tablespoons red bell peppers, chopped

3 tablespoons snow peas, blanched and chopped
1/8 teaspoon black pepper
1/4 teaspoon ground cumin
1/4 teaspoon salt

Cover the beans in four times the volume of water and let soak overnight. Drain off the water and place the beans in a pot. Cover with five cups of water, add the salt and garlic. Bring to a boil and cook until the beans are soft but still retain their shape. Remove from heat, drain and rinse briefly with warm water. When drained, place in a mixing bowl, add the remaining ingredients, and toss gently until everything is evenly blended.

A word of warning.

Some herbs can be toxic in large quantities so do some research on the plants in your garden. For example the FDA has banned Sweet Woodruff for use in herbal remedies, though it is considered ok for flavoring wine if used in small quantities. Also, make sure you know exactly what type of plant you are growing. For example, the pennyroyal oil found in some mints is toxic. You may also want to research the claimed medicinal properties of various herbs and see if they work for you *after talking with your doctor.*

Making an Herbal Tea:

Pick your favorite herbs (no pesticides) in the morning after the dew has dried, but before it gets too hot. This is the time when the oils will be the strongest. If you do not wish to enrich your tea with other things like dirt and bugs, rinse the herbs in cold water after picking them.

Prepare the plant by pulling off the pieces you want to use and rubbing them gently between your hands to bruise them, releasing the oils. You will need approximately a tablespoon of fresh plant materials for each cup of water, but don't stress too much about this, as a too strong tea can be diluted with water. Heat a pot of water to a simmer, then turn off the heat. Add your plant components. Let them steep for about 5 minutes. At some point the tea will become bitter if you let the plant pieces stay too long in the water so don't let them sit on the stove all day. Strain the liquid using a tea strainer or use a coffee filter if you prefer a "cleaner" tea.

Drink warm, refrigerate until cool (for a stronger ice tea) or pour over ice for immediate iced tea.

Thank you to all the volunteers that have given of your time and talent to the Herb Garden this year. Without your help the garden would not look as beautiful as it does.

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