

Welcome to your Free SilverBroom E-Book

The herbal survival guide - unlocking the secrets of Nature



What tools would we ideally need in our kitchen?

A Good mortar and Pestle



One of stone or metal is preferred. If wood is used you will need two, one for inedibles and one for edibles - make sure they do not look identical, as you do not want to accidentally poison anyone!

Containers

Although you can buy dried herbs over the counter in many places these days, do not store them in the plastic bags they come in, as these are usually neither reusable nor perfectly airtight. Rubbermaid style plastic containers are good, but ex Labels, This is vital! None of us in this day and age can possibly recognise each herb in its various forms simply by sight. Always label your containers as you fill them, and if possible date them when they were filled so you don't keep spoiled stock.

Tea Ball

A good metal teaball of the single cup size can be very useful in the long run when your are experimenting, and when you are making single person doses of teas and tonics.

Cheesecloth

Useful for straining a partially liquid mixture and occasionally for the making of sachets.

A Good sized tea kettle

Preferably one that will hold at least a pint of water.

A Good teapot

For simmering mixtures. We use one from a Chinese store that does the job well.

A good cutting board and a SHARP cutting knife, for just herbal work.

A notebook

Of some sort to record the information in as you go its a good idea to record both your successes and your failures. Always record anything new you try that may or may not work, and also and research information you get from various sources.

An eyedropper.

Helps to be accurate when measuring small amounts

White linen-style bandages

Some ace bandages are also useful in the long run.

A metal brazier

Of some sort, or a metal container that can withstand heavy usage and heat from within or without, useful for several things including the making of your own incenses.



Herbs Keeping and growing them indoors

Many herbs will grow well in pots on sunny windowsills, in window boxes, hanging baskets and in tubs or barrels in a sunroom or on a balcony. There should even be enough space on one large, south-facing windowsill to grow a selection of the basic flavouring.

Light and Temperature

The first necessity is light. Few herbs suitable for indoor growing will thrive in the shade. Most need sunlight for at least half the day so set them in a south-facing window, if possible, otherwise one facing east or west.

Temperature is also important. It is useless to attempt to grow herbs directly above a radiator or stove in an airless kitchen that is often steamy and full of fumes. Ideally, there should be warmth during the day, lower temperatures at night and some humidity.

Clay and Plastic Pots

Plastic pots are often used today, being cheaper, lighter and less likely to break than clay. But there are some advantages in using an unglazed clay pot; the most important being that excess water will evaporate through the clay walls.

Boxes and Barrels

Wooden boxes or barrels make good containers if you have the space. Boxes should be at least 10 inches deep. Saw barrels in half and use them as tubs, or cut several holes about 2 inches across in their sides and grow a herb from each hole.

Hanging Baskets

To make the best use of all available space and light, plant a hanging basket with herbs, the upright species in the centre and trailing mints and thyme, nasturtiums or ground ivy round the edge. Special clay bowls or wire baskets can be bought. A large, unglazed, terracotta bowl with 6 or 7 2-inch holes bored in it will make an ideal hanging onion pot, if you can buy one or have one made. Fill it with earth, plant chives in the top and press the bulbs of Welsh onion into the holes.

Soil, Water, Food, and Care

Put a layer of broken crocks or stones in the bottom of large containers before filling them with soil and sprinkle a few spoonfuls of granulated charcoal over them to prevent the soil souring. Then, fill with a standard potting compost bought from a shop be careful not to over-water, especially during the winter when plants are resting and should not be stimulated into unseasonal growth. It is best to water in the morning so that excess moisture can evaporate during the day and to use only tepid water. During Each spring, spread a little well-rotted compost over the earth in the herb container and water well. If any other food is needed, use an herbal fertilising tea. Although the restricted light and space will prevent herbs from growing as large indoors as they would outside, they will need regular cropping or trimming to keep them compact and controlled. Pinch out the centre shoots to encourage bushy growth.

What to Grow

Many people will want to grow culinary herbs indoors that cannot be bought fresh and do not dry well. Three large pots, 12 inches in diameter, filled with the annuals, chervil, basil, and coriander, will provide a good mixture with strong, distinctive flavour. Sweet marjoram and summer savoury also grow well indoors and are both annuals. For a basic supply of perennial, evergreen culinary herbs, plant thyme species, winter savoury, a clump of Welsh onions and the prostrate rosemary.

Another series of pots or a large box could be used for growing herbs for tisanes. Plant peppermint and lemon balm (whose roots may need confining), the annual German camomile, and the little rock hyssop, lady's mantle and trailing ground ivy. Herbs grown for their scent might include dwarf lavender species, clove carnation, dwarf santolina and upright and trailing pelargoniums. There are literally hundreds of pelargonium varieties, each with leaves of a different scent and shape.



There are several ways of preparing your herbs before use.

Notes: Always keep a record of the work you do. If using herbs for healing, remember you are *NOT* a doctor; use them only for adjuncts not replacements for medical treatment. The traditional Herbal Craftsperson will meditate as the work is done and after it The Water in the following preparations is brought to boiling then poured over the herb, the herbs are *NOT* boiled in the water, for that would cause a breakdown of

the vitamins and minerals in the herbs that are so vital to the healing process.

Making an Infusion

This process draws the properties you want out of the herb for healing. An infusion is basically a strong tea. The normal mixture is 1 pint of water to « ounce of herb. It takes experience to learn how long each herb needs to steep some take longer than others. This is the easiest method.

Making a Decoction

This is much the same as an infusion (tea) except you are working with a much more solid herb such as thick pieces of root or bark which can't be ground up or the remedy calls for a much stronger dose. This is the one case where you should **BOIL THE HERB**. In fact that's the whole process. Make sure that no steam escapes or the vital oils will go away with it. Also (of course) never use any metal when doing ANY herbal remedies. If you will have more than one ingredient in the decoction begin by boiling the toughest then work down. Start with cold water and after boiling for what you consider long enough allow it to steep usually for at least 30 minutes.

Making a Poultice

This is used when you need to apply the herbs externally such as for a burn or for acne. Yes it's messy but often essential for healing Pour boiling water over the herbs using just enough to dampen them or evenly cover the plant matter, you're not trying to extract anything from the herb only to moisten it. When it is all evenly wet remove it with a strainer and place between 2 pieces of gauze.

Making an Ointment

This method involves mixing the herb(s) with a fixative such as petroleum jelly or vegetable fat. This is done by heating the fixative until it is quite warm and adding the ground herbs to it. Once mixed up the mixture can be heated more than once and allowed to keep.



Making a Wash

Same as an infusion (tea) except you use it externally.


Making a Tincture










These are used when long term storage is required. It requires alcohol of at least a 75% grade that can be safely ingested. Place the following in a jar that can be tightly sealed. 1-4 ounces of the herb 8 ounces of alcohol (drinkable!) 4 ounces of water Seal the jar and keep it safely out of the light for 2 weeks. Each day at least once, check it and make sure that you loosed the mass of herb inside the jar by swirling it about. Continue this process until at the end of the 2 weeks the alcohol has extracted the ingredients.

Herbs and their typical Uses

<p>Anise (<i>Pimpinella ansium</i>)</p> 	<p>Anise helps expel gas, relieves nausea and stomach pain caused by gas. To use: crush anise seeds into a powder. Put one teaspoon of the powder into 1 cup of warm water. Drink up to three times a day, to relieve symptoms.</p>
<p>Basil (<i>Ocimum basilicum</i>)</p> 	<p>Basil is another anti-nauseant that is also relieves gas, and promotes normal bowel function. To use: Make a strong tea using 1 teaspoon of the crushed dried herb in a half-cup of water. Drink as needed, not to exceed three cups a day.</p>

<p>BUCKEYE</p> 	<p><i>Attracts money and wealth, and can be used to help alleviate the pain of arthritis and rheumatism when held in the hand. Also useful to have near when performing any act of divination. Just don't leave them outside on your balcony, or the birds will take them away...they must have magical properties we are not yet aware of!</i></p>
<p>CAMOMILE</p> 	<p><i>Camomile is useful in spells for luck and gambling. Make a green amulet and fill with Camomile Flowers to carry as a good-luck amulet.</i></p>
<p>Capsicum or Cayenne (Capsicum frutescens)</p> 	<p><i>Cayenne helps stimulate the appetite and acts as a mild stimulant. It may reduce discomfort from the common cold. To use: make a tea out of the dried herb, 1 teaspoon per cup of hot water. 2 cups per day only. Note: Cayenne irritates haemorrhoids, and should never be used by people with stomach problems. Do not exceed recommended dosage as high doses can cause stomach and kidney problems.</i></p>
<p>Caraway (Carum carvi)</p> 	<p><i>Caraway works as an expectorant for coughs due to colds. It also improves the appetite and may increase breast milk in nursing mothers. To use: Chew some seed three or four times a day.</i></p>
<p>CATNIP</p> 	<p><i>Catnip is ruled by the planet Venus, and is therefore useful in love, beauty, and happiness spells. If you feed your cat some catnip, it will build a psychic bond between you and your cat! You can also make a pink sachet and fill it with Catnip to wear or carry to draw love to you. Another fun use for catnip is to grow some in your home. Aside from pleasing your cat, this will draw positive vibrations and good luck to you and to your house.</i></p>
<p>CEDAR CHIPS</p> 	<p><i>Useful in healing, purification, protection, and money drawing spells. Burn cedar chips on a charcoal disc to purify an area. Burning cedar chips is also useful for inducing and strengthening psychic powers. You can keep a little green sachet filled with cedar chips in your purse or wallet to draw money.</i></p>
<p>CINNAMON</p> 	<p><i>Cinnamon is a wonderful herb to either burn as incense or make into a sachet. Fill a green or gold sachet with Cinnamon to draw money and success or to use as a healing charm. A purple sachet can be used to increase your magical and/or psychic powers. A pink or red sachet of Cinnamon can be worn, carried with you, or placed under your bed to draw love or to promote lust. Use a white sachet filled with Cinnamon to increase your spirituality and to confer protection.</i></p>
<p>CLOVES</p> 	<p><i>Their magical properties include banishing evil (exorcism), clearing your head, protection, love, and money. Burn cloves as incense to draw wealth and prosperity, drive away hostile and negative forces, produce positive spiritual vibrations, and purify the area in which they are burned. Wear or carry cloves to draw members of the opposite sex to you. Using cloves in your magical spells is said to ensure that your magical intention is realised.</i></p>
<p>Dill (Anethum graveolens)</p> 	<p><i>Dill eases indigestion and upset stomachs. To use: Make a strong tea by steeping 2 teaspoons of dills seeds in 1 cup of hot water for 10 to 15 minutes. Strain and drink one half-cup 2 to 3 times daily.</i></p>
<p>DRAGON'S BLOOD</p> 	<p><i>Dragon's Blood is a resin that comes from a palm tree. Mix a little bit of it in with oils, sachets, charms, puppets, and incense to increase the powers of the other herbs. Place some on altar to increase the power of spells. Other uses for Dragon's Blood include love, protection, and exorcism...</i></p>
<p>EUCALYPTUS</p> 	<p><i>For healing, and can be used for protection as well. Carry some of the leaves with you for protection. To relieve a cold or other respiratory infection, ring green candles with the leaves and pods and visualise yourself as healed. Allow the candles to burn down completely.</i></p>
<p>Fennel (Foeniculum vulgare)</p> 	<p><i>Fennel is a digestive aid and is known to relieve cramps. The oil is used to relieve stiff joints. To use: 15 drops of extract in warm water with honey, once daily, as digestive aid. Rub oil directly on affected area for pain alleviation</i></p>

<p>Fenugreek (<i>Trigonella gracum</i>)</p> 	<p><i>Fenugreek relieves sore throats and is useful for treating skin irritations and other inflammations. To use: as a gargle for sore throat- mix 1 tablespoon of pulverised seed in 1 cup hot water. Let steep for 10 minutes and strain. Gargle 3 times a day, every 3-4 hours. As a poultice for skin irritations - pulverise enough seed so that when mixed with 8 ounces of water, it forms a thick paste. Apply paste to affected areas once a day.</i></p>
<p>FRANKINCENSE TEARS</p> 	<p><i>Magical properties similar to Myrrh (below). Use the beads to drive out negativity and enhance positive vibrations. You can crush them and use them as incense on a charcoal disc. Frankincense incense induces visions and is useful as an aid to meditation. You can also make a little white or purple sachet of Frankincense and carry it with you to aid in your spiritual growth. A sachet of Frankincense Tears can also be used as a protective amulet.</i></p>
<p>Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>)</p> 	<p><i>Garlic helps fight infections, lowers blood pressure and may be able to destroy some cancer cells. To use: Stir-fry cloves for a few minutes to cut down garlic-breath. Eat two or three a day for maximum effectiveness.</i></p>
<p>Ginger (<i>Zingiber officinalis</i>)</p> 	<p><i>Ginger eases cold symptoms, soothes skin inflammations and minor burns, calms upset stomachs, and is a natural remedy for morning sickness. To use: for burn and inflammations- mash fresh gingerroot, soak cotton ball and then rub juice on the affected area. For all else - add ginger extract to hot water, 10 drops/cup. This can be taken up to three times daily.</i></p>
<p>HIGH JOHN</p> 	<p><i>This is an extremely potent herb, probably due to its affinity with the planet Mars. High John is useful in spells for winning and success, psychic powers, protection, love, and "making things happen". Anoint a root with Peppermint Oil and tie up in a green sachet. Carry this with you to attract prosperity, wealth, and success. You can also carry a yellow sachet to stop depression, or pink to draw love. THIS HERB IS POISONOUS IF EATEN, SO BE SURE TO KEEP IT OUT OF THE REACH OF CHILDREN AND PETS!</i></p>
<p>IRISH MOSS</p> 	<p><i>This herb is great to use in spells for money, luck, and protection. You can carry some with you or place some in your home to increase your luck and to ensure a steady flow of money into your house or pocket. Some place it under the rugs in their house for these purposes. Carry a little amulet filled with Irish Moss with you while travelling, for protection.</i></p>
<p>LAVENDAR FLOWERS</p> 	<p><i>Wonderful for use in love spells. Lavender has long been known to be a particularly attractive scent to men. Lavender Flowers can be sprinkled around the house to bring peacefulness, and can also be burned as incense to help you sleep. Lavender has also been used for protection, chastity, longevity, purification, and happiness.</i></p>
<p>MUGWORT</p> 	<p><i>Mugwort can be used as an incense (mixed in equal parts with Sandalwood) to aid in strengthening Psychic Powers. Try using it while scrying or before divination. Mugwort can also be placed next to the bed to aid in achieving astral projection. Its other magical uses include strength, protection, prophetic dreams, and healing...</i></p>
<p>MYRRH (image is powdered)</p> 	<p><i>Myrrh is a wonderful herb to use in spells for spirituality. Its other magical uses include protection, healing, and exorcism. It is often combined with Frankincense to increase its power. Burn as incense to purify an area. Use the smoke from the incense to purify and bless charms, amulets, talismans, magical jewellery, tools, etc.</i></p>
<p>Parsley (<i>Petroselinum sativum</i>)</p> 	<p><i>Parsley settles stomachs after meals. It also helps clear congestion due to colds and is soothing for asthma. To use: Make a strong tea using 1 teaspoon dried, ground parsley in 1 cup hot water. Let steep 10-15 minutes. Take once a day.</i></p>
<p>PEPPERMINT</p> 	<p><i>Peppermint makes a wonderful tea to increase your psychic ability (drink some before reading the Tarot, consulting runes, scrying, dowsing, etc.). Drinking Peppermint tea is also useful for healing (especially stomach-aches), producing visions, and helping with sleep. The herb can also be sprinkled around your home for purification.</i></p>

<p>Peppermint (<i>Mentha piperita</i>)</p> 	<p><i>Mint is an anti-spasmodic and is excellent for relieving cramps and stomach pain. It also relieves gas and aids in digestion. It can help reduce the sick feeling associated with migraines. To use: Drink one cup as a tea. Commercial teas are available. (Make sure it is only mint, not mint flavoured). Drink as needed.</i></p>
<p>ROSE BUDS / PETALS</p> 	<p><i>These are wonderful for use in spells to draw love. Use red for passionate love, pink or white for romantic, or true love. You can also place a single rose in a vase on your altar as a powerful love-drawing aid. To make a love candle melt several pink household size (6") candles over low heat. When they are completely melted, remove from heat, add several pink or red rose buds (ground) and 20 to 30 drops of Rose Oil. Pour into a prepared glass jar (with wick and metal tab attached). Allow the candle to cool and harden, and burn on the first Friday after the New Moon to draw love to you. Rose buds/petals can also be used for psychic powers (especially when used for a tea), healing, protection, and luck...</i></p>
<p>Rosemary (<i>Rosemarinus officinalis</i>)</p> 	<p><i>This is a wonderful all-purpose herb that you can't afford to be without! Rosemary can be used as a substitute for just about any herb. Its powers include love, lust, protection, exorcism, purification, healing, longevity, youth, mental powers, and sleep. Rosemary is a wonderful incense, smoulder a bit of it to emit powerful cleansing and purifying vibrations and to rid negativity in the area in which it is burned (especially helpful to burn before performing any magic!) Place a bit of rosemary under your pillow to ensure a good night's sleep. Wear rosemary to aid your memory (especially helpful when you are studying for an exam). Add an infusion of rosemary to your bathwater to preserve youthfulness and to purify you. Carry a bit of rosemary with you to remain healthy. Hang a sprig of rosemary above your doorposts. Rosemary is used for most head pains. To use: as tea, to relieve nervous tension, make a strong tea. Rub rosemary essential oil on the temples to relieve headaches. Mix essential oils or leaves with olive oil to make a dandruff treatment.</i></p>
<p>Sage (<i>Salvia officinalis</i>)</p> 	<p><i>Sage is useful for protection, healing, wealth, fulfilling wishes, and spells to increase longevity. One of my favourite uses for Sage is to powder some and add to my home-made yellow candles. Sage reduces perspiration and can be used to ease sore gums. To use: to relieve perspiration medium tea, one time daily. To ease gums, strong infusion, gargled 3 times daily.</i></p>
<p>SANDALWOOD</p> 	<p><i>Sandalwood has many magical uses, including protection, spirituality, exorcism, healing, and wish fulfilment. Scatter sandalwood powder around your home to clear it of negativity. Use in healing and exorcism spells. Write a wish on a sandalwood chip and burn in your cauldron. As it burns it sets your magic flowing. Sandalwood mixed with Lavender makes a wonderful incense that is intended to conjure spirits.</i></p>
<p>Thyme (<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>)</p> 	<p><i>Thyme is good for chronic respiratory problems, cold flu and sore throat. It is also an anti-fungal. To use: make a tea of the dried herb, drink daily. As an anti-fungal, rub extract on affected areas.</i></p>
<p>Turmeric (<i>Curcuma longa</i>)</p> 	<p><i>Turmeric promotes good liver function and helps prevent gallbladder disease. It also my help prevent over-clotting of blood cells, and may help relive arthritis symptoms. To use: take 300mg up to 3 times daily.</i></p>
<p>VIOLET FLOWERS</p> 	<p><i>These are wonderful for using in amulets for good luck and fortune. They also work well in spells for lust and passion; they are powerful love stimulants and also arouse lust...try mixing them with Lavender Flowers for a potent combination. They are also useful in spells for protection, wishes, peace, and healing.</i></p>
<p>YARROW</p> 	<p><i>A wonderful herb to use in love spells. Also works to draw courage and to purify (exorcism). Drink as a tea to increase your psychic powers. Wear a sprig of yarrow for protection. Hold some in your hands when you are afraid. This will stop all fear and give you courage. Carry some with you to draw love and to attract friends.</i></p>



Herbs: growing, harvesting, using/preserving, and checking which you've really got

2.1 Basil

Latin name: *Ocimum basilicum*, other *Ocimum* species.

2.1.1 Growing basil

Basil loves the sun and hates the cold & wind. If it drops below 50 degrees at night, the leaves will yellow. When it warms up the new growth will be green. If it doesn't get enough sun and stays in damp soil too long, it will eventually die. The wind will bruise the leaves. So will rough handling. Again, the new growth will be fine.

It is very important to harden basil plants. Transplant shock may kill them. Set the pots outside for 3-5 days (watch the night temps) before transplanting.

2.1.2 Harvesting basil

You can harvest basil leaves as soon as the plant has 3 sets of leaves. Keep the plants branches shorter than 4 sets of leaves and you will increase leaf production. Once it flowers, production drops. I've found the taste stronger before flowering.

A blooming appetiser:

1 8 oz cream cheese (neuchatel is too light but may be substituted)

1 8 oz cheve (creamed goat cheese)

1/8 tsp. dried garlic chips, crushed

1 tsp. minced (using knife) basil, preferably Perfume

Mix the above together using your hands and shape into a ball. Place on plastic wrap and flatten. Generously sprinkle with fresh ground black pepper. Decorate with herbs and flowers (sprig of tarragon, few blossoms and stems of rosemary, Johnny jump ups - whatever) and wrap airtight. Refrigerate overnight and serve either with a strong cracker or baguette slices.

BASIL OIL

Carefully clean *and dry* each leaf. Use a salad spinner or swing the leaves around in a clean, dry towel for a few minutes. Pat dry, just to be sure...:) This is really important, so please be thorough! Next pour a little virgin- or extra-virgin olive oil into a sealable crock, preferably a stone one. The small kind used to house cheesespreads are ideal! Sprinkle a little salt on the oil. Add a single layer of basil leaves, careful not to overlap them. Cover with a thin layer of oil and sprinkle with more salt. Do this until the crock is full, then top off with oil and salt. Seal. Store in the refrigerator and it will keep indefinitely. To use the basil, simply take out what you need *with a very clean utensil* and, if you like, wash it well to remove the salt and oil.

DRYING BASIL

The time factor really depends on where you hang it to dry, what the temperature is. Mine usually takes about 2 or 3 weeks to dry. That is hanging upside down with stems tied together in a bundle, in the kitchen. If you have a dusty house, after tying together in a bundle put inside a small paper bag that has been punched full of small holes and hang that (tie the top of the bag to the top of the stems so your herbs are still hanging upside down).

2.2 Curry plant / Curry leaf

Latin name:

Curry Plant: *Helichrysum angustifolium*;

Curry Leaf: *Murraya Koenigii*

2.2.4 Which curry plant / curry leaf do you have?

The "Curry Plant" is an herb, *Helichrysum angustifolium*, from the family *Compositae*. I believe it came from Africa or Australia, so it's tropical, and probably perennial; although in North Texas you may need to grow it as an annual or in a container (probably not frost-hardy). The name "curry plant" originated from this herb's pungent smell, which is reminiscent of some curries or curry powders; however it is not used in curry. I believe that it is widely cultivated in the U.K., and is used there mostly in salads, or mixed with cream cheese.

There actually is a plant that produces what is known as the "curry leaf", and which *is* used in the preparation of some curries (much the same way as bay leaf is used). The leaves of this plant, a woody tree from the Asian sub-continent called *Murraya Koenigii*, also have a strong curry-like smell, and can be purchased dried at most Asian markets. The tree itself has only recently been cultivated commercially in this country, and is carried by only a very few nurseries. It is still considered an exotic, and commands a premium price.

2.3 Sage

Latin name: *Salvia officinalis*, other *Salvia* species.

Salvia elegans - Pineapple sage

Salvia dorisana - Melon-scented Sage

2.3.1 Growing sage

The main problem with sage is to keep it under control. I've never had any insect problems with it. Pinch small plants to make them branch, then let them grow to harvesting size. Don't let stems get so tall that they lay down, or you'll end up with a twisted, woody mess in a couple of years.

Pineapple sage (*Salvia elegans*)

Pineapple Sage roots very easily and can make a substantial plant in just one season. If your plant grows too spindly you can always pinch or cut the stems back part way to cause them to bush out more. Woody stems just mean they are old.

Pineapple sage routinely gets woody, so prune away. It may be that it just looks dead. This sage, *Salvia elegans*, is very easy to root, so if you're worried about the rest of the plant, take several cuttings from what you think is the remaining living stem and pot them up.

2.3.2 Harvesting sage

Harvest sage before it blooms. After the dew dries in the morning, cut the stems, leaving a leaf or two at the bottom. I air-dry my sage, stringing the stems on a strong thread and hanging it in a breeze. It will dry leathery rather than crisp, because the leaves are so thick. Strip the dry leaves from the stems and place the leaves into a jar. Chop or rub the leaves into powder when you need to use them.

To use fresh sage, clip off enough of a branch to get the number of leaves you need, strip off the leaves, and chop them up if desired.

2.3.3 Using / preserving sage

- Stuff a few leaves into the cavity of a trout. Tie with string, baste with a little oil and grill. Use only 1 or 2 leaves per fish otherwise the sage will overpower the fish.
- Chop fine, lightly sauté in olive oil with minced garlic. Add a little chopped parsley & toss with spaghetti or other pasta. Serve as a side dish to grilled chicken, fish or meat.
- Toss a few sage leaves with quartered onion and flattened garlic into clay pot chicken.
- Decorative: Leaves in wreaths and nosegays.
- Culinary: Flower in salads or infuse for a light balsamic tea. Leaves can be mixed with onion for poultry stuffing. Cook with rich, fatty meats such as pork, duck and sausage. Combine with other strong flavours: wrap around tender liver and sauté in butter; blend into cheeses. Make sage vinegar and sage butter.
- Household: Dried leaves in linen to discourage insects.
- Medicinal: Leaves aids in digestion and is antiseptic, antifungal and contains oestrogen. Helps to combat diarrhoea. An infusion of sage leaves and a meal can help digestion.

Here's an oddity: sage makes a good insect repellent! Put a handful of sage sprigs and 3 mint sprigs in a pot. Pour over them 1 quart of boiling water and allow to steep. When cool, strain out the herbs and add 1 quart of rubbing

alcohol. To use, splash or spray onto hair, skin, clothes. It won't stay on if you're sweating heavily or swimming, but otherwise it's great.

2.4 Chives

Latin name:

Chives: *Allium schoenoprasum*.

Chinese chives: *Allium tuberosum*.

2.4.1 Growing chives

After they blossom and the flowers dry, you can collect the drying flowers and shake out the seeds to plant elsewhere. The blossom stems should be removed to prevent their being harvested by accident, as they are rather woody and tough. They'll dry out anyway, and should be removed to keep the plant looking nice.

Chives are a very hardy perennial of the same genus as onions, leeks and garlic. It makes a great container plant and does well indoors if given adequate light. A 5-inch pot of chives should be divided and repotted every spring if the clump has spread enough.

Chives like rich, moist well-drained soil with a pH between 6 and 8. It likes full sun but will tolerate partial shade. The seeds germinate easily in 10 to 12 days, but the plants grow and spread slowly at first. It is quicker to obtain a division of a clump from someone. Plant seeds 1/2 inch deep, in small sparse groups spaced about 12 inches apart all around to create clumps quicker, or plant seeds singly. Clumps grown outdoors should be divided every 3 or 4 years. Chives make a good companion plant for beets but should not be planted with beans, carrots, or tomatoes.

2.4.2 Harvesting chives

Chives are best harvested with a scissors or sharp knife. Cut the blade as close to the ground as possible without injuring other blades. It's best to cut individual blades unless you are shearing the whole plant. This leaves the newly sprouted blades to grow bigger for your next harvest. If you're harvesting during or after blooming time, watch out for those blossom stems. They're tough and woody.

Rinse the blades, gather together in bunches, and cut across with a sharp knife into the size you need.

When chives are in flower, you can snip off the flowers and use them before they start to fade.

2.4.3 Using / preserving chives

Chives dry nicely, but lose much of their flavour in the process. If you want chives in winter, grow a pot on the windowsill. Chives can be used in any recipe that calls for chopped green onions. This gives a slightly different, somewhat milder flavour. Chopped chives make a wonderful addition to salads.

2.5 Saffron

Latin name: *Crocus sativus*.

2.5.1 Growing saffron

Crocus sativus comes up and blooms without autumn. Like all fall-blooming crocus (of which there are many species), they go dormant in summer.

2.5.2 Harvesting saffron

it is the threads that you would collect and dry. There are three of them (the stigmas) per crocus flower. (Over a million crocus flowers produce a pound of saffron)

In planning your planting, estimate 6 mature plants will provide the stigmas for one small recipe.

2.6 Zucchini flowers

Latin name: *Cucurbita pepo*.

2.6.3 Using zucchini flowers

Zucchini flowers battered and fried are far superior to anything else you can do with zucchini. Mix water, flour, salt & pepper to a pancake consistency. If you want a fluffier batter add baking powder. Deep fry and eat them while hot. Tastes like a hint of Zucchini with creamy texture and cheese quality. 4 Zucchini plants is 3 too many :)

2.7 Camomile

Latin names:

German camomile: *Matricaria recutita* (*M. chamomilla*)

Roman Camomile: *Chamaemelum nobile* (*Anthemis nobilis*)

English Camomile: *Chamaemelum nobile* 'Treneague'

2.7.1 Growing camomile

German camomile is an annual that reaches 1 to 2 feet tall and is grown from seed. It prefers a moist sandy soil with a pH between 6 and 8.5, and full sun. Plant outdoors as early in the spring as possible. If seeds are planted on June 1, flowers should appear in late July or early August. Seedlings transplant easily when one to two inches tall. Centre of flower head is hollow.

English camomile is a low-growing perennial that reaches 1 foot in height, propagated by seed, cuttings, or root division. It does well in a slightly acid to neutral soil with good drainage and full sun, but does not do well in hot, dry weather. Growing English camomile in rich soil produces abundant foliage but few flowers. Centre of flower head is solid. Camomile makes a good companion plant for broccoli.

2.7.2 Harvesting Camomile

Harvest and dry flowers of both species.

2.7.3 Using / preserving Camomile

Camomile tea: one pint boiling water to 1/2 ounce flowers, steep 10 minutes. Strain. Add honey, sugar, milk or cream as desired.

Hair rinse: steep dried flowers in hot water, cool infusion. Strain.

2.8 Coriander/Cilantro/Culantro

Latin name: Coriander/Cilantro: *Coriandrum sativum*

Culantro / Puerto Rican coriander / Spiny coriander: *Eryngium foetidum* (see 2.8.4)

Vietnamese coriander: *Polygonum odoratum* (see 2.8.4)

2.8.1 Growing coriander/cilantro

Coriander is a hardy, strong smelling annual native to southern Europe. It may reach up to 4 feet in height when grown outdoors.

Coriander needs full sun and plenty of moisture, and the soil should be deep, well-drained, moderately rich with a pH between 6 and 8.

Coriander is easily grown from seed, germinating in one or two weeks, and self sows well in the garden. Plant seeds 1/4 to 1/2 inch deep, and thin seedlings to 8-12 inches apart. Sow seeds directly into the garden in the early spring, or into deep pots; coriander does not transplant well due to its taproot.

2.8.2 Harvesting coriander / cilantro

In my experience, the best leaves are the dense, wide ones which grow close to the ground. Once the plant begins to even think about flowering, it throws up a vertical stalk, and starts putting out leaves which are much thinner and lacier. These leaves aren't anywhere near as tasty as the early foliage.

I've heard some people compare the taste of cilantro to Lifebuoy soap. To my taste-buds, the thin upper foliage does somewhat resemble Lifebuoy, and I don't like it at all. The denser low-growing early foliage, on the other hand, is utterly wonderful.

2.8.3 Using / preserving cilantro / coriander

Cilantro goes to seed very quickly. You can eat the flowers, though. They taste like the leaves but lighter and sweeter. Or let them develop seed for baking, pickling, curries, and planting next year.

Coriander is eaten in salads and as a pot-herb in China, and the leaves are often used in Mexican, Turkish, Indian, and some Chinese foods. Leaves are used in rice dishes, refried beans, salsa, curries, omelettes, soups, and salads. The seeds are used for flavouring breads, cookies and cakes, sausage and meat dishes, plum jam, and herb liqueurs.

2.9 The mints

Latin names:

The mints: *Mentha* sp.

Peppermint: *Mentha x piperita* (*Mentha aquatica* x *M.spicata*)

Spearmint: *Mentha x spicata* (*Mentha longifolia* x *M.suaveolens*)

Pennyroyal: *Mentha pulegium*

These might not be up to date as botanists make a hobby out of changing Latin names for *Mentha* genera.

2.9.1 Growing mint

When you move spearmint, trust me and only transplant it into a container of some sort. You can bury the container if you want. Good containers to use are those big multi-gallon types that roses come in. Bury it right up to the rim.

Otherwise, in a few years, you will have only one herb in your garden and that is mint because it is VERY invasive.

Spearmint will keep spreading unless you start pulling some of it out by the roots. We however have let it and several other mints spread throughout the lawn. It smells so great when you walk across it.

2.9.3 Using / preserving mints

- *Make a simple sugar syrup and add a whole lot of fresh mint to it. Use this when making granita or to sweeten sun tea. Lemonade made with the mint syrup would be nice, too.*
- *I like to make iced tea heavily minted. Steep a whole lot of mint with the tea bags. Or better yet, boil them with the tea water, then add the tea and steep. Discard the leaves.*
- *Make cold Asian type noodle salads with finely chopped mint added. I use mint to line a bowl in which I'm serving fresh whole strawberries. Don't see why you couldn't use them to line a bowl in which a fruit salad will be served. Melon salad would be nice.*
- *Some middle eastern dishes call for lamb and mint. Ground lamb and finely chopped fresh mint (and a few other goodies) would make interesting meat balls.*
- *Use it in flower arrangements. I've put rosemary branches and mint leaves together when I wanted something but hadn't picked up any fresh flowers.*
- *Give it away to your friends!*
- *Pesto.....a bunch of peppermint leaves, some peppermint or walnut oil, a bit of sugar, all whipped up in a food processor.*
- *Dried, put in decorative jars for gifts, or mixed in some home-made potpourri stuff.*
- *Tea.*
- *Raviolis stuffed with peppermint, pepper and raisins and a bit of goat cheese (or cottage cheese) topped with a light and spicy curry sauce.*
- *Mint planted at the kitchen door keeps ants away.*
- *You can make tabouleh with the mint.*
- *You can boil water with sugar and dip the leaves in for crystallised mint leaves.*
- *You can freeze them for later use.*
- *You can make a sort of pesto by putting them in a blender with some oil and then freezing the pesto for later use.*
- *You can put it in fruit salad, chopped fine.*
- *You can chomp on a leaf before you drink water to make the water taste better.*

2.10 Feverfew and Pyrethrum

Latin name:

Feverfew: Tanacetum parthenium (Chrysanthemum cinerariifolium)

Pyrethrum: Tanacetum cinerariifolium

2.10.1 Growing Feverfew - it does not seem to repel bees.

Certainly Feverfew, Tanacetum parthenium (formerly Chrysanthemum cinerariifolium)) is a good companion plant in a vegetable garden. Because of the flat composite head, hover-flies are attracted to it. Hover-flies are invaluable for eating the larvae of aphids. Any kind of aphid. So Feverfew does provide a way of eliminating insects.

2.11 Tarragon

Latin name:

French tarragon: Artemisia dracunculus var.sativa

Russian tarragon: Artemisia dracunculus var.inodora

Mexican tarragon / Mexican Mint Marigold: Tagetes lucida. See 2.38.

2.11.1 Growing tarragon

French Tarragon may not be frost hardy in Finland, but in milder climes, particularly with a bit of mulch, it should be. It can also be potted for the winter. It likes full sun. Give it any sort of reasonable soil (it's not overly picky). The major growing tip is to divide it frequently (every 2-3 years), or it becomes rootbound. So keep giving plants away to your friends once you have enough for your own use...

2.11.2 Harvesting tarragon

While it's growing, the best bet is to just harvest fresh whatever you need for today by picking off leaves or tips of branches with multiple leaves.

For collecting a lot (drying, vinegar, etc.) you can cut back all the branches by about 2/3rds, whereupon you should leave them for 8 weeks before doing so again, supposedly.

2.11.3 Using / preserving tarragon

Vinegar recipe, if you like. Clean/sterilise a canning jar. Stuff with Tarragon. heat white vinegar (or wine vinegar) to/near boiling. Pour into jar, seal, put in dark place. Strain off into another jar at a date depending on your tarragon taste tolerance - 2-6 weeks, or leave it until used. Adjust amount stuffed & time to taste. A canning jar is used primarily to reduce the likelihood of the jar cracking when boiling vinegar is poured into it.

Tarragon dries well - ideally, hang the branches in a dark warm place (such as an attic, or in a paper bag), and then collect the leaves into a jar for storage when dry. It freezes alone with a lack of fuss that suggests that freezing in oil is probably not worth the bother. You can also make up a flavoured oil in a similar fashion to the vinegar recipe, though boiling the oil would not be a good idea...(warming it a bit might help).

2.12 Nasturtiums

Latin name: *Tropaeolum majus*.

2.12.1 Growing Nasturtiums

Not fussy for "growing at all", but do respond well to rich, loose, well-drained soil & compost, plus regular watering, for growing nice large plants. Differences with the same variety on different spots have been dramatic (plants & leaves 2-3 times larger on good spots). Hummingbirds like the flowers.

2.12.2 Harvesting nasturtiums

I've had good results just picking leaves & flowers as needed for salad - once established, they produce right up until frost. You probably shouldn't harvest more than about 1/3 of the leaves from plants you intend to keep harvesting from.

2.12.3 Using / preserving nasturtiums

Nasturtium leaf is wonderful in salad. Slightly bitter but refreshing. I don't think it preserves very well and should only be used fresh.

2.13 Dill

Latin name: *Anethum graveolens*.

2.13.1 Growing dill

First, there are many different dills. The best approach I have found is to find a dill that that survives the winter wherever you are. Then, it is one tuned to the environment and will grow better. It will also self seed, both where you want it :-) and where you don't :- (or :-) depending. It is perfectly acceptable to seed them very close together. It is also a good idea to succession plant dill if you want a continuous supply of it all growing season long.

2.13.2 Harvesting dill

Dill can be harvested for leaves any time during the growing season. If you're growing for seeds, wait until the flowers die off and the seeds are set, then tie little socks around the seed heads. You can use nylon net, cheesecloth or even old stockings. Any fabric that is porous. Be sure to tie them on loosely so as not to damage the stem. Once the seeds are dry, just cut off the stalk and take it inside.

To harvest, assuming they are planted very close together, cut the plants off at their base that are the biggest. Then, let the remaining plants, which will be more properly spaced, grow larger until they are crowding themselves and pick them. Then repeat the process until they are all properly spaced and then pick the fronds as quickly as they reach their size because they are preparing to go to seed by then.

To harvest the seeds, take a pair of panty hose past the wearing stage and cut them off mid-thigh or mid-calf depending on your preference. Put the seed head, when it is still green, into the foot of the panty hose and the leg over the stem. Tie a twist tie around the panty hose on the stem and wait until the seeds are fully developed and quite dry. Then cut off the stem below the twist tie, bring it into the house or somewhere else out of the wind and put it over a big piece of paper. The seed will pretty much fall off the head as it is dry enough. Don't forget to shake the seed out of the panty hose leg too :-).

2.13.3 Using / preserving dill

The dill is an aromatic European plant that belongs to the parsley family, and it bears yellow blossoms that turn into tiny fruits or seeds. The pungent leaves and seeds of the plants are used as condiments and as pickling agents. Dill is derived from the Norse "dilla", meaning to lull, and was formerly given to infants as a soporific.

Dill seeds have a rather acrid taste, and they serve to stimulate the appetite. The odour of dill is stronger and less agreeable than that of fennel. The two are closely related but they are not identical. However dill that is found growing wild in the United States, is popularly called fennel.

2.14 Rosemary

Latin name: *Rosemarinus officinalis*.

2.14.1 Growing Rosemary

This is an herb you can literally kill with kindness! Rosemary will die if you fertilise her, or water her too much, or plant her in too-rich earth. Benign neglect will result in big healthy plants. There are two basic types of Rosemary, the trailing or prostrate type, and a bush type that will, in time, become large enough to be considered a shrub. These plants have been used in England in mazes, and in the USA as landscape plantings. Prostrate Rosemary is an excellent ground cover.

Rosemary comes in various shades of blue-lavender, and there is a pink version that is a magnet for bees (as is the blue). The leaves are like miniature pine needles, in a lovely blue-green colour.

Rosemarinus, the herb's Latin name, means "sea spray", and the plant grows especially well near the ocean.

2.14.2 Harvesting Rosemary

I cut my rosemary back all summer and dry it hung in a closet. This perfumes my hanging clothing, and keeps it from sunburn.

2.14.3 Using / Preserving Rosemary

I use it for poultry stuffing, and as a tea to soothe stress. Also, the tea is a wonderful hair rinse for red heads and brunettes. I also use the tea in a bath when I ache all over from too much gardening.

Rosemary may be dried by hanging sprigs in a warm place, then stripping the leaves and keeping them in a jar or plastic bag. Uses of this versatile herb include teas (infusions of the leaves) that make soothing tisanes, enhancing hair rinses, and lovely fragrant soaking baths.

Leaves are used in cooking and for scented oils, the flowers are often added to a bride's head-dress to insure fidelity.

2.15 Lavender

*Latin name: *Lavendula angustifolia* and other *Lavendula* species.*

Also see 3.6 below, 'Growing herbs from cuttings'.

2.15.1 Growing Lavender

Among native plants of the Mediterranean, Lavender must surely be one of the most adaptable of these sun and warmth-loving plants. It thrives from its indigenous lands as far north and south as hardy perennials will grow. It is grown commercially in Australia, as well as in the more familiar lavender fields of England and France. It will grow even as far north as Norway, though perhaps not _very_ far north once there.

Lavender is happiest in light, well-drained soils, in a somewhat lean loam. By lean, I mean a soil not too rich in nitrogen; lavender, like many plants, will gladly imbibe the nitrogen, and then send this nourishment into healthy leaf growth. In general, we prefer to cultivate lavender for its blooms (the leaves are useful, but the blooming plant will, after all, have leaves enough for most purposes I can imagine). Drainage is at least as important as soil content. I don't recommend planting lavender in gravel, but gravel would be preferable to a clay bed. A sandy loam is ideal. "Just dirt" is probably fine as long as it will crumble in the hand. Clean wood ash is a helpful addition to the soil.

Lavender likes the sun. Unlike human beings, it is made to flourish under UV rays.

It may also be easily propagated from cuttings. This is the way most commercial stock is reproduced. In the spring or fall, take cuttings from new growth. You want small stems, pulled with a "heel" from the larger branch (pull quickly downward from the angle of the stem, and the "cutting" will detach with the desired tissue forming the heel). Dust with rooting hormone if available. Set the cuttings into sand or soil.

Tend the plants gently, and keep them moist, and when they have rooted, (new top growth is a good sign) pot them into larger containers and fertilise them.

In addition, lavenders will layer well in the garden; buried stems will root along their length and can then be dug up, separated from the parent, and replanted on their own.

2.15.2 Harvesting Lavender

Lavender flowers should be harvested just before the blooms open. The flowers will look like fat, purple seeds on a stem. If you miss and must cut them later, be prepared for the flowers to fall off the stems. For culinary purposes, it may not be so important that you have perfectly preserved stems of lavender, but they probably lose some of their intensity of aroma as they mature on the plant.

Cut the lavender stems as long as you are able. Doubtless some of your harvest will be used for gifts or crafts. The long stems are most lovely. They also increase the possibilities available to you (you cannot make lavender bottles with short stems).

2.15.3 Using/Preserving Lavender

Do not dry your herbs in the sun. "Dry them quickly," say the books, but direct sun will cause them to fade, both in colour and in intensity. You can spread them out flat to dry if you have unlimited table space. Or tie them in bundles and hang them upside down.

Lavender bottles

Lavender bottles are a very old little whimsy. You must use freshly cut lavender. Once it has dried, the stems will break as you try to bend them, and your bottles will fall apart before they are made.

Use a goodly bunch of lavender, 15 to 20 stems with flower heads. Also have on hand some strong thread.

Neatly bunch the lavender and tie the stems together just below the flower heads. Wrap the thread several times around the stems to make a strong band. Trim the thread ends.

One stem at a time, bend the stems over the flower heads. Work around the bundle, carefully. The stems will form a kind of cage over the flowers. As the lavender dries, the stems will shrink some, and the "bottle" will be more open.

When all the stems are bent over the flowers, tie them again at the point just below the flower heads. Your earlier tie will be obscured. Tie the bottoms of the stems together, too. Tie tightly, because the stems will shrink. You can tie narrow ribbons over the strings to make things prettier.

2.16 Lemon balm

Latin name: Melissa officinalis.

2.16.1 Growing Lemon balm

Lemon Balm, is a hardy perennial member of the mint family (Lamiaceae). I've found it easy to propagate from seed or by dividing the clump in spring or late August; cuttings don't seem to work well. A mature plant forms an ordinary-looking rounded clump that's about 2' across. It doesn't spread as rampantly as some of its relatives, although it can become weedy if you let it go to seed (this is a good way of getting little plants to share, though :)).

There is a variegated form, very attractive but less vigorous (it is hardy in my Zone 5 winters). I've found that if you stress this form, it reverts to completely green, until it recovers from the stress (which may take the rest of the season). I haven't tried propagating this one from seed; it is true from cuttings and divisions.

2.16.3 Using / Preserving Lemon balm

Someone asked about lemon balm tea: should it be used fresh or dried, etc. We are great lovers of lemon balm tea. We grow a patch of it, harvesting the leaves all summer for fresh tea. In the fall, we gather the crop and air-dry it for winter. The flavour is different depending on whether it is fresh or dried; I prefer the fresh, but dried is fine. Bruising the leaves before brewing the tea definitely intensifies the flavour.

To prepare the tea, just steep the leaves in boiling water for a few minutes. Personal taste will determine the amount to use (don't skimp) and the brewing time. Try adding some of your other favourite tea ingredients for a little variety. Camomile and hops make a soothing (maybe sedative or soporific for those sensitive to these ingredients) combination with the lemon balm.

I have never heard of any toxic effects or contraindications to the use of lemon balm. From personal experience, I'd say it's perfectly harmless.

Put some fresh stalks in a muslin bag or similar and hang over hot tap while running a bath. Scents the bath beautifully. Nice dried and added to potpourri.

Lemon Balm Cordial

4 sprigs lemon balm

2 sprigs hyssop

2 sprigs basil

2 sprigs mint

2 sprigs sage

1 Tbs. chopped, crushed angelica root

2 oz. sugar

2 1/2 cups brandy

Steep the herbs and sugar in the brandy for a fortnight, shaking occasionally. Strain and repeat with fresh herbs if the taste is not sufficiently pronounced. Strain and bottle. Take a Tbs. of this digestive before meals.

2.17 Garlic

Latin name: *Allium sativum*.

2.17.1 Growing garlic

Plant a clove every place you'd like a garlic plant to grow next year. "Regular" garlic does not get "seed" heads. Rocambole garlic does. The "seed" heads are not really seeds but are "bulblets" which may be planted and will develop into garlic in a couple of years. These bulblets do have a garlic flavour but I find them a bit bitter compared with garlic cloves. Btw, my Rocambole is just slightly smaller (head size) than my "regular" garlic. and, I am unable to taste a difference between the two varieties.

The little bulblettes which are formed after the flower are the seeds for the garlic plant, but they must be planted in the FALL to make big beautiful garlic bulbs the following fall. Actually, the garlic knows the best time to plant itself -- when that head dries, it drops its seeds at just the correct planting time. The garlic also tells you the best harvesting time for the bulbs for keeping and eating -- when that gooseneck flower stem unwinds fully, the bulbs are fully formed, but have not yet started to petal outward. The bulbs are still tightly closed and keep well. I've grown award winning garlic in Nebraska for years by letting the plants tell me when to pick this way.

2.18 Thyme

Latin name: *Thymus vulgaris* and other *Thymus* species.

2.18.1 Growing thyme

Transplanting thyme: a suggestion made by Adelma Grenier Simmons (of Caprilands, CT fame) in one of her many herb pamphlets is to bury one-half of the plant along with the roots in the soil. In other words, you will only, after transplanting, be able to see 1/2 of the plant that you had formerly. The other 1/2 will be underground.

Since thyme is tricky to transplant because its roots are so fine and in my experience easy to sever from the main plant, this method has worked with good results for me.

2.19 Lemon grass / Citronella grass

Latin names:

Lemon grass: *Cymbopogon citratus*.

Citronella grass: *Cymbopogon nardus*

2.19.2 Harvesting lemon grass

Scissor off the top third of the leaves, [dry] and use in tea or potpourri. Do this whenever you have lots of points sticking up, rather than harvested edges. I love to mix it with mint and Texas Ranger (all three fresh off the plant). Supposed to be good for throat complaints (cough, soreness). Rose petals or hibiscus makes for a prettier colour.

Cut off a clump to ground level, use bottom third in cooking - sliced fine or diced. Traditionally boiled in soups or sauces. For instance, lemon grass clump, chicken broth, coconut milk, garlic and a bit of fish sauce makes a great soup. Wait till you have at least three clumps.

Cut off a clump almost to ground level and lay on the BBQ grill under fish or poultry. I usually separate the clump vertically into 1/4- 1/2 inch diameter lengths and grill them for about a minute before putting down the fish.

Separate the pot contents into clumps, and plant each clump in a new pot.

Either start by trimming off some of the older blades every few weeks, leaving some young shoots on the plant, then (1) roll up each blade into a tight curl or tie it into a bow and freeze it at once inside a plastic bag, or (2) dry the leaves, chop them up, and store in jars.

If you use the freezer method all you have to do is thaw the lemon grass and it's ready to use. Dried lemon grass needs to be softened up if you're going to cook with it, so place some in a small bowl with a few tablespoons of hot water and let it soak for a while before cooking.

2.19.3 Using / preserving lemon grass

Iced Lemongrass Tea

1/4 c Chopped fresh lemongrass-tops or
2 tbs. Dried flakes
4 c Boiling water
Sugar to taste

Preheat teapot with boiling water; discard water. Add lemongrass and boiling water, steep 8 to 10 minutes; strain. Allow to cool, sweeten to taste, and serve in tall glasses with ice. Yield: 4 servings

Lemon Grass Crockpot Chicken & Thai soup from the leftover stock

1 whole chicken
8 young lemongrass stalks, 4-6" long (use the tender white parts from the base of young shoots. These are tastiest)
salt and pepper to taste

Rinse the chicken and pat dry. Rub all over with butter and then salt and pepper to taste. Stuff about half the lemongrass stalks in the cavity of the chicken and put it in a crockpot, or Dutch oven. Make slits in the skin and insert the other stalks. Trim if necessary to fit these in. Pour water over the chicken to submerge it about halfway and cook on low 6-8 hrs till tender.

Now, you can eat the chicken and make Thai soup out of the lemon grass stock. To make the soup, strain all the stuff out of the stock. Add a can of coconut milk, several shakes of red pepper flakes, bits of leftover chicken that you've shredded and then salt and pepper to taste. Heat thoroughly & in the last five minutes of cooking time add some sliced mushrooms, & green onions.

Nasi Kuneng (Yellow rice)

1 lemon grass stalk or lemon zest
2 1/2 c rice
1 1/2 c coconut milk
3 c water
2 1/2 tsp. turmeric
1 tsp. salt
1 sl galangal, dry
1 bay leaf
1 krapau leaf

Once reserved for religious ceremonies, nasi kuneng is still served on special occasions in Indonesia. This sweet and aromatic centerpiece of a dish is perfect with sate.

Cut lemon grass into pieces about 3" long and tie into a bundle. In a 3-quart pan combine lemon grass, rice, coconut milk, water, turmeric, salt, galangal, bay leaf, and citrus leaf. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, uncovered, stirring gently every now and then, just until liquid is absorbed. To finish cooking, steam according to one of the methods listed below.

To steam in cooking pan: cover pan, reduce heat to low, and cook until rice is tender (15-20 minutes). Halfway through estimated cooking time, gently fluff rice with 2 forks. Remove and discard seasonings. Transfer to a serving bowl or mound rice on a platter into a rounded cone.

To steam using traditional method: transfer rice and seasonings to a colander or steamer basket insert. Into a large kettle, pour water to a depth of 1 1/2 inches: bring to boil over high heat. Place colander in kettle. Cover and reduce heat, steam until rice is tender (about 20 minutes). Remove and discard seasonings. Serve as noted above.

Lemongrass Drink

A handful of fresh lemongrass leaves, preferable the soft grassy tops, or the top half of 12 fresh green stalks 3 cups cold water
1/4 cup sugar syrup

Cut the leaves or tops into 2-inch lengths, measure out 1 1/2 cups, loosely packed. In a blender, combine the tops, water and syrup and blend at high speed until the water is a vivid green and the lemongrass leaves are reduced to fine,

short, needlelike pieces, about 1 minute. Strain through a very fine sieve into a large pitcher, spoon off and discard green foam. Taste to see if it's sweet enough, and add more syrup if you like. Serve in tall glasses over ice.

Sugar syrup:

1 cup sugar

1 cup water

Combine sugar and water and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and cook until liquid has thickened and coloured slightly, about 5 minutes. Cool.

2.19.4 Which lemon grass do you have?

A friend told me he was buying small lemon grass plants to put in his garden to help keep away bugs. Has anyone ever heard of lemon grass as a bug (I assume he meant, gnats, etc.) deterrent? Perhaps there is a connection to citronella?

Boy, are we confused here folks, but it is a common mistake. Here's the story: Lemongrass, a delightful plant, and it's close cousin, Citronella have many wonderful properties, releasing their scent into the air not being one of them.

Lemongrass is wonderful to eat, Citronella is *not. They look similar, so be careful what you buy. Citronella is distilled to extract its oil, which is used in insect repellent candles, burning coils, etc.

Very interestingly, a Dutch plant scientist did some genetic engineering and spliced the oil gene of the Citronella into a Pelargonium (scented geranium) plant. The resultant plant looks like a scented geranium, but gives off the fragrance of Citronella (and rose, the original scent of the geranium) to the air with just a breeze or a kiss from the sun.

The hybrid is called Citrosa, and it is patented (you can't make cuttings for sale). A fully grown Citrosa (about 4 x 4 feet here in Miami) is supposed to protect a 100 sq. ft area from mosquitoes. Hope this clears up any confusion.

I would like to know if it is worth while to grow citronella plants with the idea that I can make citronella candles. I don't believe I have seen these plants in any of my order catalogues and none of my gardening books tell how you get the citronella out of the plants.

Commercially the oil is extracted by steam distillation using old extracted plants as fuel. I doubt that you want to get that elaborate. I have never tried it but I suspect that the plants could be chopped up and extracted with a solvent like alcohol or toluene. Of course you would then have to boil off the solvent. If you do contemplate this, know that the % oil in the plant is low (I have forgotten the number) so your yield will be low.

Incidentally the notion that citronella discourages mosquitoes is not well supported by my experience. I have seen mosquito larvae in rain water on top of drums of citronella oil with oil droplets in the water!!!

2.20 Horseradish

Latin name: *Armoracia rusticana*.

2.20.1 Growing horseradish

With this plant, the problem is less how to get it to grow and more how to get rid of it later.

2.20.3 Using horseradish

also see 4.9.5 Mustards, below.

A word of warning: Proceed slowly. Fresh horseradish is a lot hotter than the stuff you get in bottles.

Dig up the root. Wash carefully, and peel like a carrot. Grate very fine. Add 1 T cider vinegar and a pinch of salt per 1/2 c. Store frozen, or in the refrigerator. You can add a couple of ounces of grated horseradish to vinegar, and let it sit for a couple of weeks to produce a spiced vinegar with a real 'zip'. A small amount of grated horseradish added to any dressing or sauce will pep it up effectively. Mix powdered mustard, the vinegar of your choice, and grated horseradish in equal volumes for the best mustard in the world.

BTW, horseradish greens are also very good, either diced very fine as an addition to a salad, steamed like spinach, or sautéed in a little butter or oil.

2.21 Fennel

Latin name: *Foeniculum vulgare*.

2.21.1 Growing fennel

Fennel is easy to grow, growing wild in many areas. An annual, it looks like dill, only slightly more coarse. I've had problems in wet years with it getting some sort of mould, but is generally quite troublefree. It prefers full sun and well-

drained soil. Seeds can be planted as soon as frost danger is past. It's best to blanch (cover with dirt) the bulbs if you plan on harvesting them to keep them tender. Plants should be thinned to about a foot apart. You should get some volunteers if you let them go to seed.

2.21.2 Harvesting fennel

The tender leaves may be diced and used to add a hint of liquorice flavour and is great to use with seafood. Fennel seed can be used with poppy seed, sesame seed, celery or dill seed on bread. The bulb of the plant is also commonly harvested, though I always let mine go to seed instead. For best flavour harvest the leaves just as the flowers are starting to bloom.

Can anyone give me some ideas on how to store or prepare the surplus of fennel seeds in my yard?

If you intend to use the seeds in baking or other cooking, then you must collect them from the flower heads as soon as they begin to turn brown, or they will fall to the ground to re-seed. I store whole dill seed heads (as you can do with fennel) in paper bags and keep them in a cool, dry pantry in the basement. Fennel seeds are excellent with grilled or broiled fish, chicken, with tomato based soups, and of course, in breads, cakes & cookies.

If the seeds have already fallen to the ground, and are not cleared away, you can expect to see the emergence of new plants in early spring. This may delight you; however you should consider where these plants will grow in relation to the rest of garden. Fennel should be grown in a bed of it's own since most herbs won't do well in its presence, and it will stunt tomatoes and bush beans.

2.21.3 Using / preserving fennel

The leaves and seeds may be dried. The leaves may also be frozen. The tastiest way I've had it is from a local restaurant, Ambrosia. A dish called fettuccine Gamberi, it had fettuccine in a parmesan cream sauce with garlic, fennel leaves, parsley, scallops, shrimp, capers and fresh tomatoes. Quite tasty! Fennel has an anise or liquorice flavour, and can be used to flavour cheeses, vegetables and some pastries in addition to seafood.

2.21.4 Which Fennel do you have?

There are two common types of fennel; Bronze Fennel and Common Fennel also known as Finocchio (or Florence fennel). True to its name, the Bronze Fennel's foliage is a dusky brown. My experience has all been with bronze fennel, which is pretty in the garden as well as useful for cooking.

2.22 Anise hyssop

Latin name:

Agastache foeniculum (Anise Hyssop)

Agastache rugosa (Liquorice mint, Korean)

2.22.3 Using / preserving Anise hyssop

They are both strongly scented of liquorice and somewhat sweet-smelling as well. They are attractive in the garden with long spikes of blue-purple flowers. They are considered to be good bee forage. They will grow well indoors under fluorescent lighting, blooming about 2 months after seeding. Anise Hyssop is native to N. central U.S. I used the leaves and flowers in salads and for flavouring meat dishes. They are supposed to good as a tea also.

2.23 Parsley

Latin name: *Petroselinum crispum*.

2.23.1 Growing parsley

Parsley is a biennial. Plant seeds early in the spring (they're a little slow to germinate). The first year, you get plenty of leaves, on fairly long stems that come from the crown of the plant. The second year, you get a couple of leaves and a long bloom stalk, which looks very much like Queen Anne's Lace (they're related.) If you let it go to seed, some of the seed will grow the next year.

To have a steady supply of parsley for cooking, you should plant two years in a row. After that, it will self-sow if you let it.

Parsley's easy to grow - reasonable soil, sun, and water if you have a long dry spell. The only pest I ever had was leaf miners, and the damage was minimal.

2.23.2 Harvesting parsley

Pick leaves from the plant, stem and all. The first year, the more you pick the more leaves you'll get. The second year, there are only a couple of leaves, and no more will grow, because the plant is working on bloom and seeds.

2.23.2 Using/preserving parsley

The flat "Italian" parsley is the most strongly flavoured. If you're going to use it for cooking, this is the kind to get. Curly parsley is much prettier on a plate, but doesn't have as much flavour. Use it mostly for garnishes.

Parsley is, of course, a classic garnish. A sprig of curly parsley on a plate really dresses it up. You can also chop parsley and sprinkle it on meats, vegetables, etc.

Parsley is also a classic soup herb. When you're making stock, parsley is one of the "aromatic vegetables" that's recommended to make the flavour richer. For this, use stem and all; in fact, this is a good place to use stems that you've cut off from pieces used for garnish.

It's a wonderful addition to a cooked vegetable, especially green beans or peas. Tends to accentuate the flavour of the vegetable.

It's good in salads, too, adding a different "green" texture and flavour. It's a bit too strong to be used by itself, for most people's taste.

Parsley can be chopped and dried, or chopped and frozen in ice cubes. The cubes are great added to soup or a sauce. The dried parsley can be added as is to a dish to be cooked or used as a garnish on soup, or soaked in a little bit of water and sprinkled on top of already-cooked food as a garnish.

2.24 Monarda or Bee Balm

Latin name: Monarda didyma and other Monarda species.

2.24.1 Growing Monarda

My Monarda Cambridge Scarlet (the most common one) doesn't stay in place; it moves forward on flat stems near the surface. That means it creeps forward and needs to be divided and resituated every two-three years or so. It also is prone to mildew - but the crown-like scarlet blooms are fabulous.

A more well-behaved variety is the pink one, "Croftway Pink"; it has more lanceolate leaves and smaller blooms, but the bees (including hummingbird-moth) love it, and it enlarges in the more traditional way, increasing the clump rather than travelling all over the garden.

Both bloom about three weeks, maybe more (sometimes I get "double" and even "triple decker" crowns on the red one). After that clip back and you may get more smaller blooms after a while.

Both 'Croftway Pink' and Cambridge Scarlet are rather mildew-prone. You may be interested to know that there are a whole range of new hybrids that have come out, bearing the names of the signs of the zodiac, that are much more mildew-resistant. They come in colours from purple through red and pink to white.

Monardas are also much less prone to getting mildew (and also grow and flower much better) in a dampish soil, or at least in a place where they do not get too dry in summer.

Monarda didyma, also known as Bergamot and Bee Balm is a hardy perennial which grows 2-3 feet tall. Bees love it.

The plant spreads fairly quickly through its root system. Divide every three years, discarding the dead centre of the root. The plant will grow well in sun or part shade. The flowers last 4-6 weeks.

2.24.3 Using / preserving Monarda

Monarda didyma, Bergamot or Bee Balm: The leaves dry well and can be used to make a tea that tastes like Earl Grey tea.

The leaves and flowers of Cambridge scarlet are marvellous, bergamotty-flavored things, though I found the tea rather scratchy on the throat.

Monarda does make good tea, which is why it's also called Oswego tea. It's not the same as the bergamot in Earl Grey, which is a tropical citrus.

Both the leaves and flowers can be used. The flowers, of course, add nice colour. Some say that the flowers have a more delicate flavour, and of the various varieties, the red bergamot is the creme-de-la-creme.

2.24.5 Monarda and the bergamot flavour in Earl Grey tea

So I heard from someone that bee balm is sorta-kinda the same plant that gives Earl Grey tea its distinctive taste. Is this true?

No, it isn't. The flavour in Earl grey tea comes from the bergamot orange, *Citrus aurantia* var. *bergamia*. *Monarda* just has the same flavour, so you -can- make your own Earl grey tea using *Monarda* leaves. Store-bought Earl grey uses above mentioned citrus.

2.25 Ginger

Latin name: *Zingiber officinale*

2.25.3 Using / preserving ginger

Also see 4.8.2, *Ginger beer*, below.

Scrape and cut into 1/4 inch slices enough non-fibrous young Ginger root to make 1 quart. Put the slices into a large non-aluminium pat and cover generously with water. Bring slowly to the boil and simmer, covered until tender (20 min). Add 1 cup sugar and stir until the mixture boils. Remove from heat. Cover and let stand overnight at room temperature. Recook, simmering gently for about 15 min (after coming to the boil). Add 1 seeded sliced lemon and 1 cup light corn syrup. Uncover and simmer 15 minutes longer, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat and let stand covered overnight. Bring the mixture to the boil again and add 1 cup sugar and simmer for 30 min **STIRRING CONSTANTLY** (burns easily). Add 1 cup sugar, bring back to the boil and remove from heat. Cover and let stand overnight again. In the fourth cooking, bring the mixture to a boil once more. When the syrup drops heavily from the side of a spoon, and the ginger is translucent, pour the mixture into sterile jars and seal. This yields about 5 cups. If you want candied ginger...drain the ginger after the last cooking. Reserve the syrup for flavouring sauces and allow the slices to dry on a sheet or better still a rack, overnight. When well dried, roll in granulated sugar and store in tightly covered glass jars.

Before grilling a thick whitefish, I sometimes coat it with this mixture:

1 cup orange juice
1/4 cup honey
1/2-inch gingerroot, chopped very fine
Sweet but tasty.

Slivered macadamia nuts or almonds may be sprinkled on after the fish comes off the grill.

This is a great recipes which I always make in our cool, rainy season out here on the west coast. Hope you enjoy it as much as my family and guests do.

Gingerbread

1/2 cup shortening
1/2 cup sugar
1 egg beaten
1 cup molasses
2 1/2 cups flour
1 1/2 teaspoon. Baking soda
1 tbsp. ginger
1 tsp. allspice
1 tsp. cloves
1 cup boiling water
1 cup raisins (optional)
1 cup crystallised ginger, chopped

Cream shortening, sugar, add beaten egg and molasses. Add dry ingredients. Add boiling water, mix well. Add chopped crystallised ginger and stir gently. Pour into 2 small greased loaf pans. Bake at 350 degrees for 50-60 minutes. A skewer inserted into the middle should come out clean when the gingerbread is done.

My personal twist to this recipe is to add 1 cup of crystallised ginger (instead of 1/2 cup) and to serve it with hot lemon pie filling which has been extended by adding enough extra water to make it pourable.

2.26 Anise

Latin name:

Pimpinella anisum - this is aniseed, and that's the plant covered here.

Illicium anisatum (*I.verum*) - this is star anise.

2.26.1 Growing anise

Anise is an annual herb native to the Mediterranean- Egypt, Greece, Crete, and Asia Minor. It is a rather fussy herb; it likes perfect weather of uniform rainfall and temperatures. It wilts under excessive heat but requires full sun, and it does not transplant well.

Propagation is by seed, and be sure the seed is fresh. Seeds need a temperature of 70F to germinate, and will germinate in 7 to 14 days. Sow 1/4 to 1/2 inch deep in light, well-drained, medium-rich sandy soil. A pH of 6.0 to 7.5 is best. Space 3 inch seedlings 6 to 12 inches apart.

2.26.2 Harvesting anise

Harvest seeds as soon as the tip of the seed turns grey (they should not be black), anywhere from 60 to 130 days after planting, depending on climate. Since Anise is an annual, collect seeds either by pulling up the entire plant, or by just cutting the tops off. Spread plants to dry. Thresh.

2.26.3 Using / preserving anise

Use fresh leaves as a garnish or flavouring for salads. They can be cooked as a pot-herb. Flowers are occasionally dried and powdered as flavouring for wine. Seeds are used in bread, pastries, cookies, vegetables, baked apples, applesauce, cheese, desserts, plum jam, brandy, cordials, and milk. 1/2 to 1 tsp per 4 quarts of potato or lentil soup, 1/2 tsp crushed in salads. Use ground anise seed quickly; it loses its strength fast.

2.27 Borage

Latin name: *Borago officinalis*

2.27.1 Growing borage

Borage is a very hardy annual native to the Mediterranean. It grows to 2 feet tall, or even 5 feet in rich soil, and has beautiful blue flowers. It is an extremely tolerant plant, doing well in average and poor dry soils (pH between 5 and 8), but it is difficult to transplant due to its tap root. It is a good plant for container culture, planted in a large tub with smaller herbs arranged around the edge.

Borage is easily grown from seed. Plant 1/2 in. deep (about the time of the last frost outdoors), seeds will germinate in 7 to 14 days. Plant in full sun or partial shade, thin 18 in. to 2 feet apart. To encourage leaf growth, supply rich moist soil. To encourage flowers, hold the fertiliser and give plenty of sun.

Leaves give off sparks and pop when burned due to nitrate of potash.

2.27.3 Using / preserving borage

Fresh leaves are best, but can be dried. Harvest leaves for drying as plant begins to flower. Dry very carefully - quickly, good air circulation, and with no overlapping of leaves. Flowers can be dried to add colour to potpourri.

Fresh leaves and flowers have a spicy, cucumber-like taste and an onion-like smell. Young leaves or peeled stems are good chopped in salads or leaves can be boiled as a pot-herb. The flowers make a colourful addition to salads and a flavourful addition to lemonade. Add borage to cabbage-type vegetables, gravies, or spiced punches. In some areas of France, the flowers are dipped in batter and fried. Flowers can also be candied.

Borage Flower Tea: handful of fresh leaves steeped in 1-2 quarts of water, add one or two sprigs of spearmint. Makes a refreshing summer beverage.

Borage and Rosemary Wine: Steep a handful of fresh rosemary (or 2 tablespoons dried rosemary) and 2 tablespoons dried borage leaves in one bottle of white wine for a week or more. Strain through cheesecloth or a paper coffee strainer.

Candied Borage Flowers: Brush flowers with lightly beaten egg white, then dip in superfine granulated sugar. Spread to dry.

Borage vinegar

1 1/2 cups fresh borage flowers (I add a little of the stem and leaves for more intense flavour), wash and blot dry. 4 cups white wine vinegar (do not use distilled white vinegar)

Place in large jar. (I use mason jars with plastic over jar lip under lid). Heat vinegar to just before boil. Pour into jar. Stir. Place in dark place for 3 to 4 weeks. Go by and stir from time to time.

2.28 Horehound

Latin name: *Marrubium vulgare*

2.28.1 Growing horehound

Horehound is a perennial native to the Mediterranean and northern Europe, and is naturalised in the United States. It is a good border plant and doesn't require much attention, but is sometimes winter-killed.

Horehound prefers a poor, dry sandy soil, and tolerates a wide pH range- all the way from 4.5 to 8.

Horehound is easily grown from seed sown in shallow holes in fall or early spring. It can also be propagated from stem cuttings, root divisions, or layering. Space seedlings 8 to 15 inches apart.

2.28.2 Harvesting horehound

Horehound flowers from June to September, but not always in its first year as plants that are grown from seed may take two years to bloom. Harvest the leaves and flowering tops in peak bloom, they are easy to dry, or can be used fresh.

2.28.3 Using / preserving horehound

Horehound tea, cough syrup and candy: (Dried leaves may be used for tea.) Strip leaves from plant, chop into measuring cup. Measure out twice as much water as leaves. Bring water alone to boil, then add horehound. Boil for five minutes, let cool, and strain into jars. Refrigerate resulting infusion until needed.

To make tea: Add twice as much boiling water as horehound infusion. Sweeten to taste.

To make syrup: Add twice as much honey as horehound infusion and a little lemon juice.

To make candy: Add twice as much sugar as horehound infusion, and add about 1/8 teaspoon cream of tartar per cup of infusion. Stir to dissolve, and cook over low heat until the hard ball stage (290F) is reached. Pour into buttered plate. Break into pieces when cool.

Old-Time Horehound Candy

2 cups fresh horehound, including leaves, stems and flowers (or 1 cup Dried)

2 1/2 quarts water

3 cups brown sugar

1/2 cup corn syrup

1 tsp. cream of tartar

1 tsp. butter

1 tsp. lemon juice (or 1 sprig lemon balm)

In large saucepan, cover horehound with water. Bring to boil, simmer 10 min. Strain through cheesecloth and allow tea to settle. Ladle 2 cups horehound tea into large kettle. Add brown sugar, corn syrup, cream of tartar. Boil, stirring often, until mixture reaches 240F. Add butter. Continue to boil until candy reaches 300F (hard crack). Remove from heat, add lemon juice. Pour at once into buttered 8" square pan. As candy cools, score into squares. Remove from pan as soon as it is cool. Store in aluminium foil or ziplock plastic bags.

2.29 Marjoram and oregano

Latin names:

The genera of *Origanum* sp. are subject to frequent changes ... like with *Mentha*, the botanists can't seem to make up their minds. The 'marjoram' mentioned below is *Origanum majorana*. The rest are lumped together under 'oregano'.

Sweet Marjoram: *Origanum majorana* (former: *Majorana hortensis*)

Oregano or Wild Marjoram: *Origanum vulgare*

Pot Marjoram: *Origanum onites*

Winter marjoram: *Origanum heracleoticum*

Dittany of Crete, hop marjoram: *Origanum dictamnus*

2.29.1 Growing marjoram and oregano

Marjoram grows as an annual up to two feet tall in most parts of the United States due to climate, but it is a perennial in its native North Africa, Portugal, and Southwest Asia.

Marjoram prefers a light, fairly rich, well-drained, slightly alkaline soil, with a pH from 7 to 8. It like full sun.

Marjoram is easily grown from seed that is sown in spring, or by cuttings taken in the summer. It can be induced to be perennial by overwintering indoors in pots. When grown indoors it has a tendency to trail that makes it good for hanging baskets. Marjoram makes a good companion plant for eggplant, pumpkin and zucchini.

The genus *Origanum* contains about 20 species, of which five are common in herb gardens. *Oregano* (*O. vulgare*) is a perennial, native to Asia, Europe, and northern Africa. *Pot marjoram* (*O. onites*) is a close relative of sweet marjoram that is native to the Mediterranean, and *O. heracleoticum* is native to Southeast Europe.

Oregano grows to 2.5 feet tall, and flowers from late July until September. It is a sprawling herb and is therefore not well suited for growing indoors. *Pot marjoram* grows to two feet tall, and neither it nor *Dittany of Crete* are hardy in cold climates. *Dittany of Crete* grows to one foot tall, blooms in summer or autumn, and like *Pot marjoram*, grows as an annual in cold climates. *Dittany of Crete* grows well indoors due to its small size and its flavour is very similar to that of common *oregano*.

Oregano likes light, well-drained, slightly alkaline soil with full sun. Rich, moist soil makes the aroma and flavour of *oregano* weak.

Oregano can be grown from seeds, stem cuttings, or root divisions, but seeds are sometimes slow to germinate. Also, plants grown from seed may not be true to the flavour of the parent plant, or may even be flavourless. *Oregano* makes a good companion plant for cauliflower but should not be planted with broccoli or cabbage.

2.29.2 Harvesting marjoram and oregano

Marjoram: harvest the leaves as soon as blooming begins. They dry easily and can be frozen, but some people believe that drying the leaves actually improves the flavour, making it sweeter and more aromatic. Its flavour when fresh is closer to that of *oregano*.

Harvest *oregano* leaves as plants begin to bloom.

2.29.3 Using / preserving marjoram and oregano

Marjoram is great in tomato dishes, and with meats, onions, Brussels sprouts, or mushrooms.

Oregano is good with potato salad, fowl stuffing, peas, soups, scrambled eggs, omelettes, tomato dishes, meats, beans, devilled eggs, spaghetti, chilli, hamburgers and pizza. It is essential to Italian, Spanish, and Mexican dishes, and combines well with basil.

Chicken Corn Soup with marjoram

2 cups chicken stock
2 cups chopped potatoes
2 cups fresh corn kernels
2 cups chopped cooked chicken
1/2 cup finely chopped fresh marjoram
salt and pepper

Bring stock to a boil; add potatoes, cover, cook until potatoes are barely tender. Add corn and cook for 5 minutes. Stir in chicken and marjoram, add salt and pepper to taste. Cook for about another 10 minutes.

2.29.4 Which oregano do you have?

The word *oregano* comes from the Greek "oro" meaning mountain and "ganos" meaning joy. The generic stuff that nurseries sell is *Origanum vulgare* which is attractive, but of little culinary value. Many of you may have noticed that your *oregano* plants don't have much flavour. True Greek *oregano* is the same as what is often called wild marjoram. In fact, I usually use marjoram in place of *oregano* in my recipes. Many nurseries interchange the labels freely. Greeks felt that the sweet smell was created by Aphrodite as a symbol of happiness. Bridal couples were crowned with it and it was placed on tombs to give peace to the departed.

O. vulgare -- basic *oregano*, spreads by rhizomes, grows wild in England

O. onites is an upright plant -- called pot marjoram

O. heracleoticum -- winter marjoram, peppery and volatile flavour

2.30 Caraway

Latin name: *Carum carvi*

2.30.1 Growing caraway

Caraway is a hardy biennial native to Europe and western Asia. It grows to 2 1/2 ft. tall. *Caraway* like full sun, and does well in dry heavy clay soil that has a moderate amount of humus (pH between 6 and 7.5). It doesn't like having its roots disturbed.

Caraway is easily grown from seed that is sown in either early spring or in the fall. Seeds planted in September will flower and produce seed the following summer. It occasionally matures in the third summer of growth.

Plant seeds 1/4 to 1/2 in. deep, they will germinate in 7 to 21 days, or more. Space seedlings 12 to 24 in. apart.

2.30.2 Harvesting caraway

Harvest seeds as soon as they begin to ripen to avoid shattering of the fruits. They ripen from June to August of the second year.

2.30.3 Using / preserving caraway

Roots taste like a combination of parsnips and carrots, and they can be boiled like a vegetable.

Young shoots and leaves can be cooked with other vegetables or can be chopped into salads.

The dry seeds are used in rye bread, sauerkraut, cheeses, applesauce, soups, salad dressings, apple pie, cabbage dishes, potatoes, and stew. Seeds contain small amounts of protein and vitamin B.

2.31 Catnip

Latin name: Nepeta cataria, Nepeta mussinii

2.31.1 Growing catnip

Catnip is a very hardy perennial that is native to the dry regions of the Mediterranean, inland Europe, Asia, and Africa. Cataria grows to 4 feet tall and somewhat resembles stinging nettle. Mussinii grows to 1 foot, sprawls. It has a citrus-like scent and is sometimes called catmint. In order to keep cats away from catnip avoid bruising the leaves, which releases the oils. "If you sow it cats won't know it, if you set it cats will get it," is an apt saying.

Catnip loves full sun but can tolerate partial shade, and does well in almost any garden soil (pH between 5 and 7.5). It is more pungent when it is grown in sandy soil with full sun.

Catnip is easily grown from seed, and can also be propagated from root division. Plant seeds 1/4 in. deep or shallower, they will usually germinate promptly. Space seedlings 18 to 24 in. apart, they transplant fairly happily. (However, transplanting them brings them to the attention of the felines.) Catnip grows well in pots and windowboxes, and even though it is a perennial, it may have to be re-planted a couple times a year to replace those plants ravaged by the cats.

2.31.2 Harvesting catnip

Harvest as needed for fresh leaves. Harvest flowering tops for drying, usually in July and September.

2.31.3 Using / preserving catnip

Catnip can be used to add an unusual flavour to sauces, soups and stews.

2.32 Lovage

Latin name:

Lovage: Levisticum officinalis (Ligusticum levisticum)

Scotch Lovage: Ligusticum scoticum (this one is commonly called Lovage in the UK)

2.32.1 Growing Lovage

This is a broad-leaved, tall (6-10') and (for an umbellifer) long-lived perennial. It has deep fleshy roots, and prefers deep, well-drained soil with some moisture in a light but not necessarily sunny position.

It dies down completely in the winter and will survive the top inch or so of the soil freezing solid. It may be grown from seed, small plants, or by splitting older ones in its dormant season. It spreads slowly but is not invasive.

If you give it good soil and plenty of sun it'll go for the height record in your garden - I've seen plants that were over 3 m (10') high. On the other hand, in a poor spot it'll only get to about 50 cm (2'). The roots will be enormous no matter where it grows. You can propagate it from pieces of root, and it's an 'easy to garden' plant - nothing will crowd it out and I have yet to see an unhealthy plant.

2.32.2 Harvesting Lovage

The leaves can be used fresh or dried in the usual way, or the seed can be harvested for winter use. An established plant produces huge heads of seeds.

The roots are used in cooking in Europe. Dig them, take a step or two back, try to dig again. Give up, and at least try to break off a chunk or two. Dry these in small chunks and powder before use. Caution - very little goes a long way. You pick the seeds when they turn brown; dry them and add as a spice to your foods.

You pick a leaf a year (they have a very strong taste and are -really- large), dry it and use it as a spice. You can pick a leaf- or flowerstalk and shoot peas - it's much more fun than weeding the garden, and you might hit a fly or two, too ;) or you can use it as a drinking straw.

2.32.3 Using / preserving Lovage

It has a taste rather like celery with a hint of yeast extract, and is a traditional flavour enhancer; it can be used in quite large quantities. The young leaves are excellent chopped in salads, but the normal use is to put the older leaves or seeds in soups, stews, casseroles, stock etc. The seeds will keep for a year or two (for cooking) in a tightly closed jar. It is an extremely useful herb.

It's the main spice in all those dried soups - in Germany it has been called the Maggi-herb, after one big dried soup firm over there. I add it to all kinds of stews and soups, and it fits nicely in a spicemix with ginger, sweet pepper, cayenne, turmeric, garlic powder... sorry, have to go cook something now. And oh yes, you can also candy young stems of Lovage. I wouldn't vouch for that taste, though. Anyone want to try? Let me know how many you managed to eat ;)

2.32.4 Which Lovage do you have?

Scotch Lovage can be used like Lovage. Can't say how it differs from Lovage, though, as it doesn't grow here. I imagine the taste is milder - how else can you explain that the English make a stew out of Lovage leaves?

2.33 Savoury, summer and winter

Latin name:

Summer savoury: *Satureja hortensis*

Winter savoury: *Satureja Montana*

2.33.1 Growing savoury

Summer Savoury: This is a medium-sized (1') annual, and needs reasonably warm, damp conditions for germination, but needs only a little water thereafter. It has small seeds, so don't sow it too deep. It may be possible to sow it for succession in warmer climates than the UK, but it isn't here.

Winter Savoury: Treat it exactly as common thyme (*thymus vulgaris*), which it closely resembles; however, it is slightly more compact, darker leaved and has white flowers. Like thyme, it makes a good edging plant.

Summer savoury is sometimes called the bean herb because it goes so well with green beans. It is a much more delicate plant than winter savoury and in my experience, can handle a little more shade. In my zone I can only grow it as an annual; winter savoury will overwinter and stay almost evergreen if it's mulched a bit.

2.33.2 Harvesting savoury

Summer Savoury: The leaves can be used fresh or dried in the usual way.

Winter Savoury: The leaves can be used fresh or dried in the usual way, but it is evergreen in the UK (again, exactly like thyme).

2.33.3 Using / preserving savoury

Winter Savoury: It has a flavour somewhere between thyme and summer savoury, but is slightly bitter. It can be used as an alternative for either, and makes an interesting change, but be careful not to use too much. It is nothing like as bitter as hyssop.

Summer Savoury: It has a special affinity for beans and is known as the "Bohnenkraut" in Germany - adding it to bean salad turns horse food into a delicacy! It can also be used in salads, and for other flavouring.

I like to get a bite of summer savoury in salads, too, lettuce salads, potato salads, whatever. The leaves are fairly small so I just strip them from the stem and throw them in; chop them if you don't love herbs as much as I do. You can use it in soups and things but the flavour is so delicate that you might not know that you did! It would be better served chopped as a topping to hot dishes. (Put the winter savoury in while it's cooking.) The winter savoury can be kept whole, tied with other herbs and taken out of the soup before serving. Has anyone ever used savoury for it's smell? I wonder if it wouldn't add a nice note to a lemony mixture. I just don't know if it lasts. Also, I have never preserved either variety so can't tell you what works best.

2.34 Rue

Latin name: *Ruta graveolens*

2.34.1 Growing rue

It is a short-lived (c. 5 years) evergreen perennial 1-2' high, and seems totally indifferent to soil. It takes incredibly easily from cuttings and responds very well to being hacked back when it gets leggy. Apparently it can also be grown from seed. Jackman's Blue is the most decorative variety, and tastes the same as the common green one. It is hardy in the UK, but I don't know how much frost it will take.

2.34.2 Harvesting rue

Don't bother, unless you are Italian!

2.34.3 Using / preserving rue

It is extremely bitter, and is used in very small quantities in Roman (ancient) and Italian cookery - but do experiment, because it really does add something. There is an Italian liqueur called (surprise!) Ruta, which has a branch of rue in the bottle, but is too bitter for most foreigners to drink :-)

It is also considered slightly toxic nowadays. Sensitive people can develop photosensitivity due to the coumarins in the plant when handling it; these folks should not ingest it. Otherwise, small amounts not too often should be OK - but if you can't take it then don't take it.

2.35 Rocket

Latin name: Eruca sativa

2.35.1 Growing Rocket

It is a quick-growing annual about 2' high, and even in the UK will produce seed in well under a growing season. Sow it every few weeks for succession, and leave one early sowing for seed. It will probably escape, but is not a pernicious weed. A late sowing will last until the first severe frosts.

2.35.2 Harvesting rocket

Use its leaves fresh.

2.35.3 Using / preserving rocket

It has a smoky taste, and is used to enliven salads - it gives some flavour even to supermarket Iceberg lettuce! It is probably the best of the traditional (but now neglected) salad plants, and is well worth the space even in a very small garden.

2.36 Angelica

Latin name: Angelica archangelica

2.36.1 Growing Angelica

This is a broad-leaved, monocarpic biennial or perennial (i.e. it takes 2-5 years to flower, and then dies) 6-10' high. It likes half shade (to reduce the grass cover), and damp, rich soil. Given the right environment, it will self seed and keep itself established. If you have a very hot, dry garden, don't bother with it. It looks very much like Lovage, but smells entirely different.

If you keep the flowerstalk down (break it off every time you see it emerge) the plant will be perennial - until it does flower.

2.36.2 Harvesting angelica

Cut the side-shoots (which can be quite thick stems) before they become stringy - this is in May or June in the UK, and is just as the flower heads start to open. You can also cut the flower shoots off a little earlier, which will have the effect of keeping the plant alive for a year or so longer, but it will die after about 5 years anyway.

2.36.3 Using / preserving angelica

Candied angelica stems

Cut the shoots into strips about 6" long and 1/2" wide, and remove untidy bits. Blanch them (i.e. bring them to the boil and throw away the water). Then candy them, using gradually increasing strengths of sugar syrup. When they are done, dry them and keep them, but don't throw away the syrup; it keeps for at least a year in the refrigerator and for a long time just in a jar.

They can be used for decoration, in fruit salad, in ice cream and so on.

The syrup can be used for sweetening such things, and adds a strong angelica taste. I recommend angelica ice cream, made with the chopped stems, syrup and Chartreuse (an angelica-based liqueur) - this recipe is my own invention, incidentally, and this is the first publication :-)

The young leaves and stems are also naturally sweet, and can be used in stewed fruits or other puddings, or used in potpourris.

Home Candied Angelica

1 lb. Angelica

1 lb. Granulated sugar

The most important thing about candying angelica is to choose stalks that are young and tender. In other words, angelica is only worth candying in April or May when the shoots are new and softly coloured. Trim the young shoots into 3-4 inch lengths, put them into a pan, cover with water and bring to a boil. Drain and scrape away tough skin and fibrous threads with a potato peeler, rather as you might prepare celery. Return the angelica to the pan, pour on fresh boiling water and cook until green and tender. If the shoots are as youthful as they should be, this will take 5 minutes or less. Drain the stalks and dry them. Put them into a bowl and sprinkle granulated sugar between layers, allowing 1 pound of sugar for every 1 pound of angelica. Cover and leave for 2 to 3 days. Slide contents of the bowl into a heavy-based pan. Bring very slowly to the boil and simmer until the angelica feels perfectly tender and looks clear. Drain, then roll or toss the shoots on greaseproof paper thickly strewn with sugar, letting the angelica take up as much sugar as will stick to it. Then dry off the angelica - without letting it become hard - in the oven, using the lowest possible temperature. I place the stalks directly on the oven shelves (with trays underneath to catch any falling sugar) and find they need about 3 hours. Wrap and store after cooling completely. Packed into pretty little boxes, home-candied angelica makes a charming present.

2.37 Sweet Cicely

Latin name: Myrrhis odorata

2.37.1 Growing sweet Cicely

You have a wild garden, a long way away from anywhere else? No? Then don't grow this. Sweet Cicely likes half shade and a moist, rich soil (like angelica), but is horribly invasive when it likes the conditions. It is a perennial 2-3' high, with deep roots. Like most umbellifers, the individual plants are short lived, but it seeds itself like crazy. Its leaves are a pretty mottled green, and are large and fairly deeply cut.

2.37.2 Harvesting sweet Cicely

Its leaves can be dried, though this is tricky, or its seeds can be collected.

2.37.3 Using / preserving sweet Cicely

It is naturally sweet (like angelica), but has a mild aniseed flavour; very pleasant, if you like aniseed. It can be added to stewed fruits, other puddings etc., or used in potpourris.

Herbs for Cats

CONDITIONS/PROBLEMS/DISEASES	PRODUCTS THAT ARE USEFUL	APPLICATION
ABSCESS	GOLDEN SALVE or PAU D'ARCO LOTION	Directly on the skin
APPETITE (stimulant)	ZINC or VIGOR/VITALITY	1 per day
ARTHRITIS, joint pain, dysplasia	JNT-A extract	.05 ml twice daily
ASTHMA	ASTHMA homeopathic	Use as directed on bottle
BLADDER/KIDNEY	CORNSILK or K	1 AM plus 1 PM
BLOOD, purifier & builder	RED CLOVER extract	.05 ml twice daily
BREATHING DIFFICULTY	SN-X or ALJ (capsules or extract) plus TEI FU OIL	1 AM plus 1 PM 2 drops on the nose leather
CANCER	PAU D'ARCO LOTION plus PAU D'ARCO extract	On lesion .05 ml internally
COAT GROWTH	HSN-W plus THREE plus ZINC	1 of each daily
COLD, SNEEZING	VS-C (capsules or extract) or IF-C	1 AM plus 1 PM
CONSTIPATION	LB extract	.05 ml as necessary
DIARRHEA	SLIPPERY ELM or DIARRHEA homeopathic	1 after diarrhoea or make tea & use dropper Use after diarrhoea
EAR MITES	YELLOW DOCK or GOLDEN SEAL/PARTHENIUM	Make tea; use daily for 14 days in the ears 20 drops in 1 oz. canola oil - daily for 14 days in ears
EYE PROBLEMS	EW EYEWASH RECIPE	Use eye wash 2 to 3 times daily Boil cup water; empty 1 capsule; steep 3 minutes; Give 1 to 2 capsules daily strain through paper filter; will keep in refrigerator up to 3 days
FLEAS	TEA TREE OIL	Mix 10-12 drops in 8-12 oz. bottle shampoo
HEART, strengthen	HAWTHORN BERRIES (capsules or extract)	1 cap daily add to food or .05 ml daily oral
IMMUNE SYSTEM, build	PARTHENIUM LYMPHOSTIM extract	1 AM plus 1 PM .05 ml twice daily
LABOR/DELIVERY	RED RASPBERRY (capsules or extract)	Daily until last 2 weeks; then twice daily
LACTATION	MARSHMALLOW	Add to food daily
MALE PROBLEMS, urges doesn't want to breed	BLACK COHOSH (female hormone) MASCULINE TONIC homeopathic	1 per day .05 ml twice daily
NERVOUSNESS	X-A NERVOUSNESS or CALMING homeopathic VAL liquid valerian extract	1 AM plus 1 PM As necessary .05 ml as necessary
NUTRITION	SUPER ALGAE - can be added to food LIQUID CHLORPHYLL	1 AM plus 1 PM 2 to 3 teaspoons in daily water
RECOVERING FROM ILLNESS	VIRAL RECOVERY homeopathic	.05 ml twice daily until well
RINGWORM	BLACK WALNUT extract	On lesion + .05 ml internally twice daily
SEASON, bring into keep out of	X-A or FEMININE TONIC HOPS or MASCULINE TONIC	Twice daily for 7 days 1 per day or .05 ml twice daily for 7 days

SPRAYING	BLACK COHOSH	1 per day
SKIN PROBLEMS	GOLDEN SALVE or PAU D'ARCO LOTION	Directly on skin
SINUS	SINUS homeopathic	.05 ml twice daily
TUMOR (INTERNAL)	PAU D'ARCO extract	.05 ml daily until gone
(EARS or THROAT)	GOLDEN SEAL/PARTHENIUM extract	.05 ml daily until gone
UPPER RESPIRATORY	GOLDEN SEAL/PARTHENIUM extract or	.05 ml twice daily
	VS-C extract	.05 ml twice daily
WORMS - ROUND & TAPE	BLACK WALNUT (capsules or extract)	2 times daily for 7 days

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