



Herbal Seasons

Sharing Knowledge about Growing and Using Herbs to Inspire Fellow Herb Lovers

August 2009

Over the Garden Gate

As I write this I'm still waiting for summer weather to begin. Our cool and wet spring keeps lingering on. Which is wonderful if you are transplanting flowers or starting seeds. If you are weeding you may be grateful it's not 90 degrees and sunny; but not so grateful at the weeds amazing amount of growth. (Postscript - as this goes to press, it is now hot and sunny here; but 30 miles away, Dot is still getting plenty of rain!)

Speaking of weeding, while I have the standard garden tools for that, my favorites are not common for garden work. The tool I use most often is a pry bar - common to all carpenters, not usually gardeners. I have several in lengths of 10-14 inches. My father gave me my first one as he always used one in our 2 acre garden at home (with 8 to feed, we needed all of that and more). It is so versatile as you can get into the tiniest spots or just whack or scrape big areas. It's also handy as a dibble for planting bulbs or digging out dandelions - and it never gets bent out of shape or loses it's handle!

The other tool my dad got me used to using is a pickax. He had a short handled one and I wish I could find one like it. But any will do if you have stony soil as I do in one of my gardens. The pointed end is good for rooting out weeds in gravel and the flat end is good for getting under sod and lifting big clumps. Sometimes it's the only thing that will get through big clumps of perennials that you want to divide (short of a power saw).

In our recipe section I'm including a recipe for hummingbird syrup. It's easy to make and keeps them coming back. We've had what appears to be the same birds returning year after year. One seems especially friendly this year. I've seen it pause by the kitchen window, as if to say, "thanks", before it zips over to the feeder.

Ah, the days of summer - they're here! Check out the article on 25 Things to Do with Herbs in the Summer.

Herbally yours,
Ann

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Herbal Seasons

We would love to have your contributions to this publication. Articles you would like to see, questions you need answered, recipes to share, letters to the editor, etc. Herbal Seasons Newsletter is a forum for all members of the WVHA to use and enjoy.

Departments

Over the Garden Gate
Herbal Spotlight
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From The Editor

Send or e-mail us your articles, calendar items, and news of interest to Association members. If you have anything to contribute in any of the departments, please see the following information for how to submit. If you can think of a Department we missed or would like to see, please let us know. Thanks to everyone who submitted articles and calendar events for this issue! – Lynn

Articles over 250 words may be edited. We reserve the right to decide what is appropriate for the newsletter. We apologize in advance for any typos, mistakes, and omissions – let us know where we goofed and we will make a correction next time!

Items for the Calendar of Events need: Date, Time, Event, Name, Place (City, State), Cost, and Description, Contact. Limit – 30 words

The deadlines for submitting all items are:

February Issue – January 2nd
April Issue – March 2nd
June Issue – May 2nd
August Issue – July 2nd
October Issue – September 2nd
December Issue – November 2nd

Submit by e-mail to lynnlassiter@hughes.net, put WVHA Newsletter in the subject, and your ad or article in the body of the e-mail if possible. **Or mail to:** Lynn Lassiter, HC 50 Box 198, Arnoldsburg, WV, 25234.

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Advertising Rates

Members may list calendar events for **free**, 30 words limit each event. Business card size ads are \$5 for members. Double size ads are \$10 and so on.

Non-members may list one calendar event free and any additional events for \$5 (30 word limit each event). For non-members, business card size ads are \$10, double size ads \$20 and so on. If we have to do any scanning of photo, etc. there will be an additional \$5 charge.

Free calendar events can be e-mailed to:
lynnlassiter@hughes.net

Mail ads, events with check payable to WVHA, c/o Susan Patterson, 160 Jackson's Mill Rd., Weston, WV 26542

25 Things to do with Herbs in the Summer

1. Try growing herbs in a strawberry pot to keep close to the kitchen door for last minute snips.
2. Garnish your favorite summer drinks with sprigs of mint, lemon balm, rosemary, or lemon verbena.
3. Band sprigs of lavender, rosemary, thyme, or other favorite herbs together with a string or rubber band and use to baste grilled foods with marinades.
4. Have a tufa making party. Tufa pots are great for planting with herbs as they will leach out the lime that most herbs like. They do have to be left to weather for at least 6 months so that makes them ready to plant next spring.
5. Buy or gather lavender flowers for cooking and making treats like lavender jelly.
6. Make Lavender Liqueur and try it with fruit or over vanilla ice cream. A true summertime treat.
7. Start gathering and drying herbs for fall projects like wreaths, sachets, and dream pillows.
8. Try braiding garlic. To do this, you will need a couple dozen soft necked garlic with stems left on.
9. Plant some thyme or tiny Corsican mint in between stepping stones, sidewalk cracks, brick paths, or along side drive ways or down the center of unpaved ones. You'll enjoy the scent when walking on it and it will keep weeds away.
10. Plant mints somewhere in your yard where they can ramble. You'll enjoy keeping them under control by mowing. If you have no place for them in the yard, grow some in pots. Mine winter over with no problems.
11. Pot up some of your favorite herbs to give as gifts. Keep them in a sunny spot till you need a gift, then wrap pot in pretty paper and band with a stretch bow and add a tiny card saying what it is and how to grow it.
12. Send your favorite herbal recipes and tips for using them to our newsletter editor, Lynn Lassiter at: lynnlassiter@hughes.net
13. Make lavender floral water by adding a teaspoon of lavender essential oil to a pint of distilled water. Fill a spray bottle and keep by your sink. Spray your hands or hair for a refreshing little pick me up when it's hot.
14. Make tussie mussies. With an artful bouquet you can give out different sentiments by the flowers and herbs you include. ie. Rosemary is for remembrance.
15. Grill a pesto pizza for a different taste treat. A good way to use up all that garlic and basil!
16. Make lavender dusting powder with: 1c. cornstarch, ½ t. sunflower or almond oil, and 2-3 drops lavender essential oil. Mix together in a zip lock bag then store in an airtight container.
17. Grow scented geraniums for potpourris and cooking and just for scenting your yard and giving you a lift when it's hot. Peppermint and rose are my favorites for baking under cakes - mint with chocolate and rose with white cakes. (Editor's note: Lemon is great with pound cake!)
18. Make teas with mints, lemon balm, lemon verbena, and scented geraniums.
19. Take a class or read your favorite herb magazines and books on making an herbal medicine kit.
20. Buy unscented shampoo and add a few drops of lavender essential oil. Suave is very inexpensive, works well, and smells wonderfully of flowers with the oil added. If you don't have any oil, you could just add sprigs of lavender and wait till the scent comes out.
21. Make this the year you try a window sill box garden of your favorite herbs for cooking. A few garlic, basil, rosemary, thyme, chives, dill, etc. Make this your one stop, in a rush, spot when you just need a pinch of this and a pinch of that.
22. Plant scented herbs in pots placed where you can brush them when you walk by. Try lemon balm and verbena, scented geraniums, pineapple sage, mints, and lavender.
23. Make herbal vinegars. And don't just leave them on the counter for show. They are really good for salads and marinades!
24. Try landscaping with herbs. The sidewalks in my yard are lined with lavender. Pretty to look at and good for the lavender as they get lime from the concrete.
25. Share your love and knowledge of herbs with a child, a friend or loved one.

From Ann Nye

Franklinia alatamaha

John and William Bartram discovered the rare elegant flowers tree Franklinia alatamaha in 1765 while traveling in Georgia. The Franklinia is a small tree of historical significance and has been extinct in the wild for nearly 200 years. All current trees are cultivated plants derived from the original seeds brought to Philadelphia by the Bartram's. It has strong showy flowers three inches in diameter with abundant gold colored stamens, and it remains in bloom from late summer till frost.

The dried leaves of the Franklinia when chewed have an astringent dry taste very similar to green tea (camellia sinensis) leaves. A tea made from the leaves has a pleasant relaxing effect. Search for tea related catechins revealed presence of Epicatechins and Epicatechin Gallate (ECG). Catechins are vital biomolecules in tea plants and their health benefits against heart disease, stroke, cancer, and diabetes are well known. They have anti-inflammatory antioxidants and free radical scavenging properties. Presence of these essential biomolecules in the Franklinia extract is beneficial and they have:

1. Neuroprotective properties which benefit multiple sclerosis and Parkinson's Disease.
2. Prevent various cancers.
3. Decrease lipid peroxidation thus reducing atherosclerosis and further decreases heart attacks and strokes.
4. Anti-microbial effects with inhibition of bacterial biofilms and an anti-influenza effect and possible effective against HIV.
5. A weight loss agent.
6. An anti-inflammatory in certain cases of asthma and emphysema.
7. Use in diabetes mellitus.

In brief, catechins present in Franklinia are known to be used in chemoprevention of obesity, diabetes mellitus, cancer, and cardiovascular disease. Limited experience with tea made from the leaves has no known side effects, but long term studies are in progress.

Research done at our clinics shows:

1. It's effective in the treatment of fibromyalgia pain. It reduces dependence on pain medicine.
2. It helps in relaxation and treatment of anxiety.
3. It is useful as a sleep aid.
4. It has a mild anti-yeast activity.

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Will the Real Food Please Stand Up!!

By Susan Patterson, CMTA
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With so many choices available to us today it is hard to pick out the imposters from the real food. Labels are hard to understand and the food industry does its best to confuse us. By developing a practical understanding of real food and applying a few simple shopping principles you will be sure to find the real stuff!

Let's begin with a definition of real food. In its simplest form real food is **ancient**, these are foods that are familiar and consumed for many, many years. Meats, fish and eggs have been around a long time, in fact, for millions of years. Although it is not clear when regular dairy farming began, we can trace the consumption of butterfat back at least ten thousand years. In comparison, margarine which is hydrogenated vegetable oil made solid and dyed yellow to look like butter is a modern invention only a little over a hundred years old. It is not a real food. If you use the principle of old food versus new food you can easily sort out the real from the fake. If your great grandmother would not recognize it, don't eat it!!

In addition to being old, real food is eaten in its **natural state**, not altered, processed or added to for increased shelf life. Real food is found when traditional methods of farming, processing, preparing and cooking are used. Industrial methods of farming and preparing foods diminish nutrition and flavor. The more natural a food is, the less it is tampered with, added to, or altered the more it has to offer your body.

Some examples of real food include:

1. Real beef is raised on grass (not soybeans) and aged properly
2. Real milk is grass-fed, raw, and unhomogenized, with the cream on top
3. Real eggs come from hens that eat grass, grubs and bugs, not "vegetarian" hens
4. Real lard is never hydrogenated, as industrial lard is
5. Real bread is made with yeast, a form of fermentation
6. Real olive oil is cold- pressed, leaving vitamin E and antioxidants intact
7. Real tofu is fermented soybeans and easy to digest

The industrial foods which make up over 80% of our grocers shelves are the complete opposite of real food. Industrialized food is synthetic and new, processed, treated and packaged to increase shelf life and marketability. There is nothing real about cheese that lasts for months without developing a mold!

The food industry has intentionally designed fake foods to look like the real thing. Food packages are always changing; ingredients, vitamins and other nutrients are added to entice the consumer to purchase. Thousands of new pseudo food products are invented and put before us yearly. This only confuses us more in our pursuit for health. Don't be fooled by the fancy labels, packages and health claims found on so many products.

Another great tip for sorting the real from the fake is to **check the label**. Are there more than five ingredients listed on the back? This is a sure tell sign that this is not a real food and contains additives and fillers that your body is unable to use for energy.

When you read the label on a food and find a word that you **cannot pronounce** and does not really make sense, don't buy it!!

When you go shopping it is important that you understand the anatomy of the grocery store. Most stores are set up in a similar manner with real, whole foods being found on the perimeter and the imposters taking up the majority of the inside isle space. **Keep to the perimeter** and you will be safe!

In summary, in your search for real food use these guidelines:

1. Eat only foods that your great grandmother would recognize - ancient foods
2. Don't eat anything that has more than five ingredients
3. Don't eat anything that has ingredients you cannot pronounce
4. Keep to the perimeter

Bibliography

Planck, N. (1971). *Real Food What to Eat and Why*. New York: Bloomsbury.
Pollan, M. (2008). *In Defense of Food; An Eaters Manifesto*. New York: Penguin Press.
Wayne Roberts, R. M. (1999). *Real Food For a Change*. Canada: Random House

MEMBER RECIPES

From WVHA's "**Herbs: A Recipe for Life Cookbook, Vol. 2**": Have fun! Experiment!

Herbs for Tea

Anise	Lemon Verbena
Anise Hyssop	Orange Mint
Calendula	Peppermint
Chamomile	Rose Geraniums
Lavender	Peppermint Geraniums
Lemon Mint	Rosemary
Pineapple Mint	Spearmint
Pineapple Sage	Thyme
Lemon Thyme	

You can mix and blend. Use 1 tsp. dried herbs or 1 T. fresh herbs. Add ¼ tsp. or ½ tsp. spices or dried fruits or more. Pour boiling water over. Let steep 5 minutes. Remove herbs.

Mint mixes: very little Mountain mint, lots of spearmint, and medium amount peppermint.

Red mix: beebalm. Hibiscus, nasturtium, rose petals, and red raspberry.

Berry: any with lemon thyme or lemon verbena.

Zippy Peppermint: peppermint with lemon peel or lemon balm

Lemon mix: rose hips with lemon geranium, lemon verbena, lemon balm, lemon thyme.

Carol Schweiker sent this recipe for **Birch Tea** with this note: "from: Carol Schwinger. Recipe taken from a 1981 copy of the Fort New Salem heritage cookbook published that year. The basic recipe may well be 75 to 100 years old. I'm sure that the wording has been modernized for the cookbook."

"Take a pinch (?) of fresh leaves from a birch tree (or 1 teaspoon of dried ones [crushed]) add 1/2 pint of boiling water and allow to stand for eight minutes. Strain and drink the rather pleasant, green, woody-flavored tea three times a day."

"The person who prepared the recipe did not explain the benefit of drinking the brew 3 times a day, but I'm sure it benefited something. Please, I do not recommend this drink; I am only passing it on as an example of heritage teas."

Hummingbird Syrup

Dissolve 1 T. sugar in 1 qt. water. Fill feeder. Refrigerate any leftovers. This will keep the hummingbirds coming back all season!

Ann Nye's Soft Lavender Sugar Cookies – these won 1st Prize at the Lavender Fair this year! Thanks for sharing them with us, Ann.

Mix together in a small bowl:

2c. flour

½ t. baking powder

¼ t. salt

Beat together for 3 min. at medium speed:

2 sticks (1 c.) softened butter – save the wrap

1 c. sugar

1 T. light brown sugar, packed

Beat in dry ingredient and then add, one at a time, and beat 30 more seconds, scaping down the sides of the bowl as you turn:

1 large egg

1 t. lavender liqueur

1-½ t. almond extract(or just use ½ t. extract if you don't have the liqueur

You can add 2T. of lavender flowers to the dough now or you can press them on later - your choice.

Fill a bowl with cold water and a flat dish with 1/2c. Sugar. Wet your hands, shake off. Place a heaping tablespoon of dough in your hand and roll into a 1-½ inch ball. Place on parchment lined baking sheet 2 inches apart. Do not crowd!

Use the butter wrappings to lightly coat a flat-bottomed glass and dip the glass in the sugar. Press the ball down by half to 3/4 inch thick. Press on 8-10 lavender flowers if you didn't add them to the dough. Bake at 375 degrees for 5 minutes and reverse the tray then bake 6 minutes more till the outer edges are lightly golden and the middles are light and puffed up slightly. Cool for 3 minutes before removing to racks so they can harden up some and not break apart. Cool completely before sampling(this is hard to do!).

BEER MARINATED STEAK WITH GRILLED VEGGIES

from Tufts University Health& Nutrition Newsletter, July 09 issue: Here is a healthier approach to barbecuing steak. Use an appropriate portion of a lean cut of beef (slice it so that a little goes a long way), serve with a generous quantity of veggies, and marinate the meat. (In March issue Tufts reported on a study that found marinating meat in beer or wine before grilling can significantly reduce levels of potential carcinogens that form when meat is cooked at high heat.) The marinade also means you can use a less expensive cut of steak-and transforms into a luxurious sauce. ~ Thanks to Dot Montgillion for this one. Good news for beer and wine lovers!

Marinade:

½ C beer or ale
1 T balsamic vinegar
1 T molasses
½ t. Worcestershire sauce
1 T chopped fresh rosemary or 1 tsp dried
2 cloves minced garlic
1/8 t. salt
Freshly ground pepper to taste

Meat and Veggies:

8 oz. flank or flat-iron steak
2 finely chopped shallots
1 small bell pepper, seeded and cut into strips
1 small zucchini or summer squash, cut
into 3/8 inch thick slices
2 tsp. olive oil
1 t. balsamic vinegar
1/6 tsp. salt

Whisk marinade ingredients in a small bowl. Place steak in in a zip-lock plastic food bag. Pour in the marinade mixture; seal bag; refrigerate at least 2 hours or up to 12 hours. (Marinate at least 6 hours for more tender meat.) Place a fine-meshed grill topper or grill basket on one side of grill. Preheat grill. Remove steak from marinade & pour marinade in small saucepan. Add shallots. Bring to a simmer over medium-high heat& cook until syrupy and reduced to 1/4 cup (5-7 minutes). Keep warm.

Meanwhile, toss bell pepper & squash with oil & 1/8 tsp salt. Lightly oil grill grate and grill topper by rubbing with a piece of oil-soaked crumpled paper towel. Place steak on grill grate. Arrange bell pepper & squash in single layer on grill topper. Cover grill and cook over medium-high heat until steak reaches desired doneness and veggies are tender and lightly browned. Steak & veggies will take about the same amount of time. Plan on 10-14 minutes to cook steak to medium-rare (140 F); turn steak with tongs after 5 minutes. Place steak on clean cutting board. Let rest 5 minutes. Turn veggies as needed and transfer them to a medium bowl as they are done.

Toss veggies with remaining 1 tsp vinegar. Cut steak across the grain into thin slices. Serve steak with grilled veggies & sauce.

Makes 2 servings. Nutrition per serving (with flank steak): Calories: 280. Total fat: 12 gm, Sat fat: 4 gm. Cholesterol: 50 mg. Sodium: 360 mg. Total carbs:10 gm. Fiber :2 gm. Vitamin A: 25%. Vitamin C: 140%. Calcium: 4%. Iron:15%

Remember – you can substitute whatever fresh veggies you have on hand! And try this marinade with other cuts of meat.

UPCOMING EVENTS

AUGUST EVENTS

August 2nd-9th: "Herbs" workshop at the Augusta Heritage - Davis & Elkins College, Elkins. WVHA's own Marion Harless will be teaching there. For more information on her workshop check out www.augustaheritage.com

August 23rd : 2nd Annual Tomato Tasting Festival – Highgate Carriage House, Fairmont. From Noon to 4 PM. Hosted by the Marion County Master Gardeners. \$100 prize for the largest tomato! Check out <http://sites.google.com/site/tomatotastingfestival> for more events. For more information TomatoTasting@gmail.com

August 26th & 27th: Tea Festival – 225 Church St., Oak Hill from 1 PM to 6 PM. Celebration of tea and everything tea related. Exhibits, tea tasting, lectures, music and dancing, natural herbal products, Qi gons, Tai chi, vendors, etc. A great place to spend a hot August day. For more information contact Janice Sumpter at (304) 465-1047 (home), (304) 663-4580 (cell), or e-mail: mssumpter@hotmail.com

SEPTEMBER EVENTS

September 12th and 13th: A Women's Herbal Weekend Retreat - Hidden Hollow Farm, Keyser, WV. Open to women only. Discuss women's health issues and herbal allies for women. Make herbal body care products and enjoy herbal facials, foot baths and hand massages. Take herb walks to meet medicinal plants. The cost is \$125 (\$100 for West Virginia Herb Association members) See www.hiddenhollowfarmwv.com for details and registration. For more information e-mail hiddenhollowfarmwv@hughes.net or call 540-336-3997.

OCTOBER EVENTS

October 10th: CELEBRATION OF HERBS 2009 – Jacksons Mill 4-H Grounds. WV building from 9 AM to 5 PM. Regular and vegetarian box lunches will be available for \$10. Russ Richardson (Crummies Creek Tree Farm in Arnoldsburg, Calhoun County) is the featured speaker this year! Demos and workshops throughout day. Plenty of vendors. Cost is \$30 which includes FREE year's membership! For more information contact Dot Montgillion at smokecamp@iolinc.net

INTERESTING WEB SITES

www.vegetablegardener.com - Nice site from Horticulture Magazine. Check out the news about the tomato blight affecting eastern gardeners.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wvherb> - WVHA e-group forum for sharing ideas, information, calendar events (monthly calendar can be printed out), files, photos, etc. Newsletters and events will be posted there. This group is restricted to WVHA members and select resource people.

www.hobbyfarms.com - Nice site for small farmers; lots of good information. Free e-newsletter. Register for free and build a web site about your farm/ette. Easy to use templates included.

www.farmland.org - Web site for American Farmland Trust. Dedicated to saving the land that sustains us. For information on AFT in West Virginia www.farmland.org/states/wv/default.asp

www.lapaixherbfarmproducts.com/index.html – WVHA member Myra Bonhage-Hale's web site. Beautiful photos. Interesting events and herbal products.



Herbal Seasons
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Moving? Please return your Mailing label along with your new address. Thank you!

www.wvherb.org

The mission of the West Virginia Herb Association is to promote the ethical and environmentally sound propagation, cultivation, harvest, and use of herbs in West Virginia.

Membership Form, Change of Address Form

Yes, I would love to join the West Virginia Herb Association (**WVHA**).

I am very interested in: Growing Herbs, Cooking with herbs, Continuing Education, Improving my Health with Herbs, Creating Herbal Art. **Note:** CEU's available.

Volunteering sounds like fun! Have my Regional Coordinator contact me.

There is a change in my contact info. This is a renewal of my dues.

Name: _____

Address: _____

County: _____

Phone, Fax: _____

Email, Website: _____

Business Name: _____

Member Dues

- Individual \$20 Family \$30
- Professional \$50 Corporate \$100

Please return your completed membership Form and check or money order to:

WVHA c/o Susan Patterson
160 Jackson's Mill Rd.
Weston, WV 26542