

# Herbal Seasons

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

## Summer 2011

### **Over the Garden Gate**

Well, It's summertime and it's hot enough to fry eggs on the sidewalk, as we used to say back home. If it comes to that at your house, just remember to sprinkle some of your favorite herbs on first. Further on, you'll find some recipes to make summer dishes interesting. Can't wait to try the Chickweed Pesto as my motto has always been: the best revenge on weeds is to eat them!

The herb to explore this month is lavender. You have two chances to learn more about this enticing herb and find new ways to craft or cook with it. Coming up are the PA Lavender Festival in Fairfield, PA(near Gettysburg) and our own Lavender Day at FishHawk Acres this year. We all will miss seeing Myra's delightful yard, but look forward to visiting with her at Dale's farm.

Details on both and other upcoming events are on the events page.

Summer also brings farmer's markets. Be sure to give your local one a visit soon. Many WVHA members participate so it will give you a chance to get a wide variety of herbs for growing and using.

And speaking of vendors, there is a vendor form for our Fall Herb Festival on the back page. If you are planning to sell your wares there, please fill in the form and send to Kathy Flewelling asap. We have limited space so it's first come, first served.

And remember as you are out in your gardens or visiting someone else's herbal splendor-take those pictures and send them to me. The photo contest is easy-people, animals, or insects with herbs; seasons of the year with herbs; or cooking or crafting with herbs. Photos have to be in my hands by Labor Day weekend so I can get the calendar printed by the time of the Festival. They have to be in vertical format to fit the calendar sections so keep that in mind. Prizes will be awarded and the top three go in the calendar for 2012.

Hope to see you all at one of the coming events.

Herbally yours,  
Ann Nye  
WVHA President

**Welcome to the West Virginia Herb Association.** We hope to see you at the coming year's work-shops, field trips, and conferences. If you are new to our group we want to give you an herbal welcome and explain a little bit about how the organization works. Our dues are assessed annually and are renewed in January. To be included in the annual Directory, published in February, you must be a current member as of Jan. 31st. If you are renewing your membership, we thank you for your support.

Lynn Lassiter is our newsletter editor. The newsletters are published quarterly approximately on Jan.1st, April 1st, Jul. 1st, and Oct. 1st. Articles must be submitted 30 days before each publication date. You can receive the newsletters by email or P.O. Please keep us informed of address changes for either so you won't miss an issue.

This Association belongs to you, its members. It is as vital as each one of you make it. We're all busy but to keep an organization thriving each member must make an effort to contribute in whatever way you can-even if only by attending events and showing your support for the efforts of our tireless volunteers. Even little efforts contribute to a living, growing organization.

We welcome you and we're glad you've joined us. Our Board members are here to listen to your ideas, thoughts, and feelings. Let us know how the Association can serve you.

**From your WVHA Board Members,**

President: Ann Nye [nyeann@ma.rr.com](mailto:nyeann@ma.rr.com)

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## **Lets talk Basil! by Deonna Crowe**

Basil originated in the tropics of Asia and in Europe and it still grows wild today. India is one of its native areas. Basil is a sacred herb in [India](#). It is planted near temples and homes to protect them from evil and to assure them guidance into heaven. They place a leaf on the breast of a Hindu at death to assure they go to heaven. The word basil is a Greek word that means king. Basil was also used by the Greek and English royalty for their baths, and medicine. Hence that is why the word basil is still referred to as "the king of herbs" by world-renowned chefs. It is said that it is used in Egypt as an embalming and preserving herb in mummies. Some African tribes believe basil will encourage a good night's rest if the basil plant is put underneath the pillow.

Basil comes in over 40 varieties (in some circles it is reported to be above 60), but the variety that comes to the minds of most people is "Sweet Basil", also known as *Ocimum basilicum*. It is a small bushy plant having golden green leaves with a hint of chartreuse. You can sometimes see drops of oils on the foliage. The smell of a combination of orange, cloves and licorice is what I smell. It is said that the leaves of basil can be crushed and massaged into the scalp to stimulate hair growth. Basil will deter flies; repel mosquitos; expel worms; and treat ringworm, insect bites and acne. Inhaling the essential oil refreshes the mind and opens up loss of smell due to viral infections. Making it into a massage oil works on overworked muscles. Basil should be avoided during pregnancy as it has been known to induce labor. Basil tea is good for indigestion, fevers, colds, kidney and bladder trouble, headaches, nausea, and nervous conditions. Now to back some of this up, Malaya use it for internal parasites. Indian researchers have reported that basil kills bacteria when applied to skin. They use the oil. One animal study showed an increase of 20% in producing disease fighting antibodies.

To make the tea: use 1 ounce basil leaves to 1 pint of water (simmered twenty minutes with three powdered black peppercorns) This will be effective for most fevers.

For infusion: use 2 to 3 tsp of dried leaves per cup of boiling water. Steep 10 to 20 minutes. Drink up to 3 cups a day.

In tincture: use 1/2 to 1 tsp up to three times a day

**ATTENTION:** basil should not be given in medicinal quantities to children under to age of two. For old people 65 plus use a lower strength preparation. You should consult your doctor before using this. There are some safety factors on pro and anti cancer substances,

Bruise the leaves occasionally so that the fragrance is released. Fresh new leaves will continue opening if you keep pinching out the tip branches. Basil thrives in your garden in rich loam soil. You can add some sand to the soil also. Basil is an annual for cold climates and likes at least 5 hours of hot sunlight and plenty of water. This plant can be grown in the house. Feed your plant twice a month. You can wash your plant with soap and water to keep free from insects. Be sure to rinse thoroughly. If you keep your plant indoors it will thrive better if you do not allow it to bloom or set seeds

Basil adds zest and flavor to a variety of different foods. Add a few fresh leaves to your salads or to your salad dressings. Add some to canned soup to change the taste. Add to stews, meats and egg dishes. Great in butter sauce for fish dishes. Sprinkle in peas. Great in fresh boiled potatoes. Add to fresh tomato juice. Basil can be chopped and frozen with water in ice cube trays. This is an ideal way to preserve basil when using basil for dishes such as casseroles and pasta sauces. The whole ice cube can be added. Make sure you know how much you have frozen in each cube as you may need to add several!! Alternatively, you can freeze whole leaves in freezer bags. They can be taken out of the freezer when required and immediately 'crushed' while still in the bag and popped into your dish. Do not wait a few minutes until the basil has defrosted as it will go very slimy. Basil works great with tomatoes, pasta, garlic, onion and olives. Try with desserts and drinks. Basil must never be simmered. It should be added at the end of cooking.

Nutritional information:	Dried	Fresh
Potassium	48mg	24mg
Calcium	30mg	8mg
Vitamin c	1 mg	traces
Iron	.5mg	.1mg
Phosphorus	7mg	4mg
Magnesium	6mg	4mg
Vitamin A	13re	10re

This is per 1 tsp/5ml

Some Basil Recipes:

#### Crab Cakes:

2 tablespoons olive oil  
 2 stalks celery stalks, very finely chopped  
 2/3 cup finely chopped onion  
 1 pound lump crabmeat (picked over - no shells)  
 2 2/3 cups bread crumbs dry white bread crumbs  
 1/4 cup chopped fresh chives  
 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley  
 6 tablespoons all-purpose flour  
 3 large eggs

Heat 2 tbsp olive oil in heavy large skillet over medium heat. Add celery and onion; sauté until tender, about 5 minutes. Transfer to large bowl. Stir in crabmeat, 2/3 cup bread crumbs, chopped chives, parsley and reserved 1/2 cup of mayonnaise. Season mixture to taste with salt and pepper. Mix very gently so not to crush all the crab meat - you want nice & chunky. Using scant 1/3 cup mixture for each cake, form into twelve 2 1/2 inch diameter cakes. Arrange cakes on baking sheet. Chill for at least one good hour. NOTE:

the crab cakes (up to this point) and the mayonnaise can all be made up to one day ahead. Place flour in small bowl. Whisk eggs to blend in another small bowl. Place remaining 2 cups bread crumbs in medium bowl. Coat each crab cake with flour. Dip into beaten egg, then into bread crumbs, coating completely. Heat 1 tablespoon vegetable oil in large skillet over medium heat. Cooks Note: Be sure the oil and skillet are hot when you add the crab cakes or food may stick. Avoid the temptation to flip too soon, before they have a chance to set somewhat and obtain some structure. Add crab cakes in batches: cook until golden brown and heated through, adding more oil as necessary, about 5 minutes per side.

Serve the crab cakes with Basil Mayonnaise. (See below).

#### Basil Mayonnaise:

20 whole fresh basil leaves  
1 1/2 cups real mayonnaise  
2 teaspoons Dijon mustard  
1 or 2 tbsp. lemon juice  
1/4 tsp. cayenne pepper

Blanch basil leaves in saucepan of boiling water for 30 seconds and drain. Transfer leaves to medium bowl filled with ice water to cool. Drain and pat the leaves dry. Finely chop basil. Mix mayonnaise, mustard, lemon juice and cayenne in medium bowl. Set aside 1/2 cup for the crab cakes. Mix basil into remaining mayonnaise.

#### Tomato Basil Pizza

1 pkg (10 oz.) refrigerated pizza crust  
2 cups shredded mozzarella  
1/4 cup shredded Parmesan  
2 tbsp fresh basil, snipped  
2/3 cup mayonnaise  
2 garlic cloves, pressed  
4 plum tomatoes (Roma tomatoes), thinly sliced  
olive oil spray

Preheat oven to 375°F.

Spray 12x15 cookie sheet with olive oil spray. Roll dough onto cookie sheet. Sprinkle crust with 1 cup mozzarella. Combine the remaining mozzarella cheese, Parmesan, basil, garlic, and mayonnaise in bowl. Layer tomatoes over mozzarella and top with cheese and mayo mixture. Bake 15 to 20 minutes or until golden brown and bubbly.

### **Chickweed Pesto** from Deaonna Crowe

4 oz. (1/4c.) chickweed leaves  
1 small clove garlic chopped  
2 T walnuts  
2 T pumpkin seeds  
2 Sunflower seeds  
1 -2 T olive oil  
1/4 t. salt

Put chickweed in food processor and puree, add oil as needed to blend. Add nuts, garlic and salt, puree. And Serve. YUMMY.

### **Yucca** – Sue Cosgrove

*Yucca filamentosa*, commonly known as Yucca or Adam's Needle, is a common evergreen shrub hardy to Zone 4, with hermaphrodite flowers (containing both male and female organs) in bloom from early to mid summer. An easily-grown plant, yucca thrives in most well-drained soils but increases in hardiness when situated in poor sandy soil. Tolerating light shade, once established yucca can successfully thrive despite considerable neglect. In your travels, note the stands of yucca crowding around old crumbling farmsteads.

“Monocarpic” means “dying after bearing fruit only once” and yucca's crowns do die after sending up the towering stalks of creamy white flowers. But the crowns also send out a number of offsets or side shoots before dying, and these babies can be set out or potted up; expect them to flower in about four years. Other means of propagation include starting seeds or root cuttings. Yucca does not often set seed when left to its own devices. You must buy seeds or – much more fun! – hand pollinate yucca flowers yourself to obtain your own seeds! When flowers are mature and loaded with pollen, dip a small artist's paintbrush in water, tap off excess water, and transfer pollen from one flower to another. Do this a couple times a day and a couple of days in a row, to ensure pollination. Don't eat all the fruits--leave a couple to mature on the plant and preserve the seed.

Root cuttings in late winter and lift in mid-spring, rubbing off small buds from the stem base and rhizomes, then dip in dry wood ashes to stop the sap. Pot up in sandy soil and grow on under protection until established. Divide suckers late in spring, and set into permanent locations, watering well the first year.

Food: Here's the yummy part – the large, fleshy fruits are scrumptious fresh out of hand or added to a salad. Fruits can be dried and used in the off season. The young flowers are also edible with a mildly bitter tang that adds personality to salad. I prefer to encourage a preponderance of fruits rather than sacrifice the flowers so early in the season. The flowering stems can also be cooked and eaten like asparagus, if one needs them badly enough.

Health: A poultice is a moist, usually warm or hot, mass of plant material applied to the surface of the skin to treat various ailments. In yucca's case, the roots used as a poultice treats sores, sprains, and a variety of skin diseases. The roots are quite rich in saponins, which are various plant glucosides that create soapy lathers when agitated with water. Forget your bar of Ivory on your camping trip? Harvest a couple yucca roots and you'll have soap for hair, body and clothing! Museums have used plant saponins to clean delicate tapestries and other fine objects, since yucca yields a nice, mild soap.

Fiber: Here's where yucca really shines with its multi-purpose characteristics. The leaves alone offer so many possibilities because of its tremendously durable fiber. A cream-colored paper can be made by harvesting the leaves in summer, scraping, soaking, then cooking in a lye bath before beating. Ardent paper-makers will want to give it a try. Yucca lends well to making cordage (ropes and twine), mats, cloth and baskets. The leaves are also used as paint brushes.

And don't overlook yucca's purpose in the landscape: While a stately presence in the border with its stiff pointed leaves and majestic flower stalks, strands of curly fiber playfully dangle from the edges of more mature leaves, softening the sometimes haughty nature of the plant. A friend told me she has lots of yucca and lots of deer. And the deer love to chew on the points of the leaves. Rather than cut out the leaves, she takes shears and trims new points to the leaves. From a short distance they look undamaged and retain their majesty. And while, just like me, yucca prefers a southern exposure, yucca is also good and sturdy to -15 degrees Celsius. Unlike me . . .

#### UPCOMING EVENTS:

**June:** 17th - 19th Pennsylvania Lavender Fair: [www.palavenderfestival.com](http://www.palavenderfestival.com) . Contact Madeleine Wajda; Willow Pond Farm; 145 Tract Rd.; Fairfield, PA 17320; 717-642-6387; [info@willowpondherbs.com](mailto:info@willowpondherbs.com)

Note: Just heard from the lady there that if we get there at opening time 6 spots in each of the classes are available. They only prereg. 10 spots early so they have some left for those of us who show without.

**Lavender Day at Fish Hawke Acres** – Saturday, June 25 from 9 AM – 5 PM - A mid-summer day at Fish Hawk Acres celebrating lavender, herbs, wild things, art, natural crafts, music, foods, and the people who tell you about them.

#### Workshops:

9-9:45 AM: Lavender infused yoga experience with Harmony Kopelov.

10-10:45 AM: Making lavender soap with Angie Harlow of Circe H Farm.

10-10:45 AM: Wild edible walk around Fish Hawke Acres with Dr. David Ahrend.

11-11:45 AM: Healing Lavender with Dot Montgillion of Smoke Camp Crafts.

12-12:45 PM: Complementary Lunch.

1-1:45 PM: Cooking with Lavender by Chef Jay Mahoney.

2-2:45 PM: Natural dyeing workshop: lavender/silk dyeing with Kate McComas.

3-3:45 PM: Growing shiitake mushrooms with Flo Little of Hidden Acre Farm.

4-4:45 PM: Enjoy a self-guided tour of Fish Hawke Acres.

Vendor Booths:

LaPaix Herb Farm: hydrosols, salves, creams and other lavender products.

Smoke Camp Crafts: Jams, jellies, teas.

Circle H Farm: Goat's milk soap/lotion, Icelandic sheep wool, Angora rabbit and Alpaca products.

Fish Hawke Acres: West Virginia products – Jeff's Breads, Granola from the Crazy Baker, Mountain Roaster Coffees, Maple Syrup, Fire Fly Farm Goat Cheeses, WV Rainbow Trout, shiitake mushrooms and veggies.

Harmony Yoga: Mats and accessories, lavender scented eye pillows.

Ulrika Floor: Hand carved wooden spoons and jewelry.

Ann Nye: WVHA materials, lavender sachets and lavender liqueur.

Kate McComas: Fabrics and stuff.

Chair massages by Ellie and books/information about wild edibles.

Sculptures by Mark Blunstein.

Music by Brown Chicken Brown Cow String Band.

Please RSVP to [chefhawkins@gmail.com](mailto:chefhawkins@gmail.com) or Ann Nye at 304-842-6385

Directions to Fish Hawk Acres:

From Clarksburg: Take I-79/exit 91 (Roanoke). At the end of the ramp, turn right and travel approximately 14 miles to the intersection of Rtes. 4 & 19. Turn left and travel 7 miles to Rock Cave. Travel past IGA for ½ mile and turn right onto Fish Hawke Drive.

From Charleston: Take I-79/ exit 91 (Roanoke). At the end of the ramp, turn left and travel approximately 14 miles to the intersection of Rtes. 4 & 19. Turn left and travel 7 miles to Rock Cave. Travel past IGA for ½ mile and turn right onto Fish Hawke Drive.

From Buckhannon: Travel south on Rtes. 4 and 20 to Rock Cave (14 miles). Just past Rock Cave Elementary School, turn left onto Fish Hawke Drive.

**September:** 17th – WV Grown Food fest in Charleston

**October:** WVHA-MSU Fall Conference at Jackson's Mill on Friday, Sept. 30<sup>th</sup> through Sunday, Oct. 2<sup>nd</sup>  
MG International Conference in Charleston on Oct. 6-9<sup>th</sup>

Updates will be sent out as they are available.

**OF INTEREST:**

Myra Bonhage-Hale will have Lavender blooming on the hill by June 14th and plans to make it available for cutting at La Paix by customers. The price will be \$15 per plant (approximately 100 stems) and La Paix will be open (by reservation) from June 14th to June 17th and June 20th to the 24th for customers to come cut their own beautiful lavender. Please email Myra at [lapaix@hughes.net](mailto:lapaix@hughes.net) or phone her (304-269-7681) at least one day before you plan to come and cut! And visit La Paix on the web at [www.lapaixherbfarm.com](http://www.lapaixherbfarm.com) to see how lavender grows in France and here in West, by God,

**MSU-WVHA'S FALL HERB FESTIVAL 2011 VENDOR REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for those wanting to have a table in the WV building on Saturday, Oct. 1st, 2011 at the Fall Herb Festival at Jackson's Mill, WV. There is room for approximately 20-25 tables(30" x 8'). Business tables are \$45. This fee includes a free membership in the WVHA for 2012, free registration for the Fall Herb Festival, and lunch for one person. Additional lunches are available for \$10. Vending on Fri. and Sun. is included in the Sat. price. If vending only on Fri. or Sun., the fee is \$10.

If you want to do an educational display only, those are free, as usual. To attend classes as well, you must pay the \$40 registration fee which would include your 2012 membership in WVHA and lunch on Saturday. Please return this form with your fee, if any, as soon as possible to:

Kathy Flewelling RR 2 Box 71 E Proctor, WV 26055

Make check to: West Virginia Herb Association (WVHA)

Check one: \_\_\_\_\_ educational or \_\_\_\_\_ business table.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Institution or Business \_\_\_\_\_

Do you need electricity? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

We look forward to seeing you at the Festival. If you want brochures to hand out, we will send them to you. Brochures needed \_\_\_\_\_.

Herbally yours,  
Ann Nye WVHA Pres.