

Herbal Seasons

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

Winter 2011

Over the Garden Gate

Hi there,

It's officially winter, and as many of you know - I'm not fond of it. So I won't go on about the joys of snow scenes; I leave that to others of our group. I will tell you of a few things I try to do to make the winter months slide by with some herbal style. Without a greenhouse, and a very shady yard, even in winter, it's hard for me to have many fresh herbs for cooking. But there are a few that survive indoors. At present my herb pots are growing lemon thyme, rosemary, parsley, scented geraniums, lemon verbena (lives over every winter but usually has dropped it's leaves by now), and garlic chives. I try use a lot of root veggies in the winter months and the herbs come in handy for things like potato soups and stews.

In this newsletter we have the winning recipes from our appetizer contest at the fall conference. I want to try the dips with the bread from the contest. I do a lot of bread and roll baking with my grandchildren - they love to do the kneading. And the scent of baking bread just seems to make a gloomy winter day cheerier.

Also on my winter agenda is making sachets from the gallons of lavender flowers that were harvested last summer. If you have sun, I encourage you to grow lavender. Its fragrance is a fond reminder of summer days.

Several of us having been cutting and gluing together seed packets for the dill seed Melissa has ordered. We plan to distribute 1300 packets of dill at the International MG Conference in October. If you come to the winter meetings you'll get to see what a great job Melissa and her committee did on the design of them.

Please check out the list of upcoming events and meetings. I hope to see all of you somewhere during the year. Hopefully, many times.

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

Vice-President: Melissa Dennison gardentreasures@hotmail.com

Treasurer: Kathy Flewelling kaflew@wildblue.net

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Website: www.wvherb.org **Webmaster:** Ann Schenk webmaster@wvherb.org

Need Member Assistance? Please contact:

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Dear members - if you did not pay your dues at the fall conference, they are due by the end of the month so you can be included in this year's directory. We are also going to publish an Herbal Business Directory this year so if you have one, please send all your info to our treasurer, Kathy Flewelling; RR 2, Box 71E; Proctor, WV 26055; 304-455-4940; kaflew@wildblue.net

Now, as promised, the prize winning recipes from the October Conference:

CIABATTA BREAD RECIPE - FIRST PLACE - from Carol Schweiker

SPONGE:

Mix together and let stand for 5 minutes:

1/8 TEASPOON ACTIVE DRY YEAST

2 TABLESPOONS WARM WATER

Then add the following and stir thoroughly in a small bowl.

1 CUP BREAD FLOUR

1/3 CUP WARM WATER

Let stand over night - or 12 hours - or up to one day, in cool room.

TO MAKE BREAD:

Mix together and let rest 5 min. in a small bowl:

½ TEASPOON ACTIVE DRY YEAST

2 TABLESPOONS WARM MILK

Have ready the following:

2/3 CUP WARM WATER

1 TABLESPOON OLIVE OIL (I used garlic flavored olive oil, YUM)

2 CUPS BREAD FLOUR

1 ½ TEASPOONS SALT

and: *** for Dill bread I used 1/4 cup dill weed and 1 cup very moist feta cheese

OR: 1 plus cup fresh spinach without stems instead of dill and 1 cup moist feta cheese

In large bowl blend milk mixture, sponge, water, oil, and flour, mix at low speed (with dough hook), until flour is just moistened, (sm. amt. water may be added if too dry). Add salt and mix until smooth and elastic about 8 minutes. *** Dill and/or chopped spinach and feta may be added here. Scrape dough into oiled bowl, cover with plastic wrap and let raise until double (about 1 ½ hours). Dough will be sticky and full of air bubbles – the more air bubbles, the better.

Turn dough out onto a well floured surface and cut in half. Transfer each half to a parchment sheet on a rimless baking sheet and form into an irregular oval about 9 inches long. Dimple loaves with floured fingers and dust tops with flour. Cover loaves with dampened kitchen towel. Let rise at room temp. until almost double, 1 ½ hrs.

At least 45 mins. before baking, put a baking stone on oven rack in lowest position in oven and preheat oven to 425 degrees.

Tilt baking sheet and slide loaf to stone when ready.
BAKE FOR 20 MINS. OR UNTIL GOLDEN. Cool loaves on wire rack.
Note: bread will have lots of air holes and semi crisp crust.

DILL-CHIVE SPREAD – SECOND PLACE – from Marion Harless - The Mulch Patch

Mince 1/4c. fresh dill seeds (dried can be used in winter but it won't be the same) and cover with room temperature water.

Mince 1/4c. fresh chives and cover with room temperature water. Let sit 20 minutes.

Add herbs and water to 8 oz. cream cheese (at room temperature). Mix thoroughly.

Then add 4oz. butter(room temperature). Mix thoroughly again then refrigerate. Remove 20-30 minutes before serving.

Good on bread, crackers, sandwiches, baked potatoes, etc.

Notes: Marion says the water step is important. You know that with most herbs some components are water soluble and some are fat soluble. So the water soak yields more flavorful results in cheese or butter spreads. Lemon juice in this kind of recipe will do the same and brightens the herb taste.

You can substitute lower calorie versions of the cream cheese and reduce the butter but it won't have the same flavor. Yoghurt cheese can also be used after draining off the excess liquid overnight in the refrigerator. Cut through the yoghurt, run water over, and let drain again if you prefer less acidic yoghurt. Then add the fresh herbs (no water needed in this version). This version is good, but definitely not like the original.

For a non-dairy version, snip the fresh chives into a small container and the dill into a bowl. Cover each with a tablespoon or two of avocado, almond, or grapeseed oil and allow to sit for at least 20 minutes. Add the chive mix to the dill mix with a block of firm organic tofu and stir thoroughly. Refrigerate to allow flavors to meld. Remove 20 minutes before serving. To me, the tofu version doesn't have much flavor without the oil, but tofu lovers disagree. To me, if olive oil is used, it's flavor overwhelms the dill. To each, his(her) own.

I "made up" these versions and have taught probably at least a thousand people how to make them. So, pass the word and try your own.

ROASTED RED PEPPER HUMMUS SPREAD – THIRD PLACE – from Marion Harless

Use kitchen shears to snip fresh basil leaves finely to make 1/4c. Put in small bowl and just cover with water. Let sit 20 min.

Add: 1t. lemon zest, 1/2c. sour cream, and 6-7 oz. of roasted red pepper hummus. Stir to thoroughly mix ingredients. Garnish with sweet Hungarian paprika and a sprig of basil. Spread on pita bread, crackers, or

boiled new potatoes.

Note: This recipe was served with a water biscuit type of cracker and Tostitos white cornmeal scoops. I used Genovese sweet basil; green and variegated columnar Greek basil; peel from an organic lemon; natural sour cream; and a 7oz. Container of roasted red pepper spread. The basil garnish was the green columnar.

To make your own hummus, soak dried garbanzo beans overnight in water a couple inches above the beans. Drain, rinse, and cover with fresh water. Cook until tender (this takes a while). Or buy canned beans and drain. Puree with sesame seed paste (tahini), salt, lemon juice, and light olive oil.

I roast red peppers by cutting ripe peppers into large chunks or strips - putting them in a single layer in a dry cast iron pan and setting it on a burner turned on low. Turn occasionally. Don't burn them and don't peel them. When they smell and look great, remove from heat and allow to cool before pureeing them. Note that grilling, steaming and peeling peppers as for Mexican recipes have a different flavor - good, but not the same. I like to roast thick-walled red peppers. Any of the pimientos are good.

Tragedy has struck -

Beloved friend, herbalist and soapmaker Melissa Dennison and husband Doug lost their home and all belongings in a house fire Saturday, February 12, 2011 while out of state. The only thing remaining is the woodstove. No one was hurt, thankfully.

It's time to open our hearts and return a bit of the many kindnesses Melissa and Doug have so generously shared over the past 30 years within the community, within the church community, within the soapmaking community, within the Master Gardener Association, within the West Virginia Herb Association, within the farmers' market community, within the West Virginia Beekeepers Association, within the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources, with the West Virginia 4-H Association, and more.

As you make plans for your garden this year, as you sort seeds and start cuttings, set some aside for Melissa. As many of you know, soapmaking is her trademark. Tamarack, Flatwoods, Sutton are just a few places she sells soap - ALL of her supplies are gone. ALL dried herbs, essential oils, treasured mother plants are gone. Her entire library is gone, all herbal and soapmaking references gone.

Note to WV Herb Association Board and members: MELISSA WILL NOT BE INVOLVED WITH THE CONFERENCE. Please, members, step up to the plate and assist in these matters and take the burden off of her. WVHA Members: when people step up to take over some of Melissa's tasks and **it is etched in stone**, please forward the names and duties they will fulfill, and I will pass on to her. This will bring peace of mind and closure for her - believe it or not, this is one of her largest concerns at the moment. Thank you all.

Their immediate needs are taken care of at the moment. They currently are staying with family and shortly will move to a house in the neighborhood that is furnished with essentials. They also have a trailer set on the property they will utilize when they repair electric, water and phone. Their clothing needs are met -- thank you to all who jumped to the fore to assist.

THEY HAVE NO ROOM TO STORE ITEMS AT THE PRESENT TIME. They cannot ascertain what their needs are until the site is dozed and rebuilding begins. At this moment, they intend to look at floor plans for a kit home to rebuild on site. If you have items that you want to donate and wish to forward that information to me, I will be happy to pass it along to Melissa and Doug. Melissa is writing down book titles, etc., as she thinks of them and I will send that info out to all when it is available.

Regarding monetary contributions - For security purposes, the suggestion is made that those wishing to help financially do so by purchasing postal money orders through the US Post Office and mailing directly to the Dennisons. USPS money orders are traceable and replaceable should they be lost or stolen. PLEASE DO NOT SEND CASH THROUGH THE MAIL. All post offices sell money orders for \$1.10 and they work just like a check. When writing a money order, make it out to EITHER Melissa OR Doug. If both names are on it, they will both need to be present to cash it. Another option, although not as secure and sometimes easily lost, are store gift cards.

Regarding food contributions - they have a small refrigerator and tiny freezer. Consider canned or dried, or items that do not require preservation.

A warm thanks to everyone who has responded so quickly and beautifully! And thank you to everyone who has passed the information along. I ask you again to forward this on. Also, please think of the folks who do NOT utilize the Internet and give them a call or drop them a line. They will want to know.

Melissa asks again not to phone. They've been inundated by concerned and caring people and are very thankful, but they need some time to focus and prioritize. If you wish to send a note or mail your donation, their address is: Melissa and Doug Dennison, HC 69, Box 30, Clem, WV 26623.

Every message received will be delivered to Melissa and Doug when I visit them . Got more to say? Send it on!

Bless you all,
Sue Cosgrove; vwheat@yahoo.com

Seed Catalogs – Melissa Dennison

When December rolls around the seed catalogs start coming to my mailbox. Like many of you I receive too many so I try recycling them with my gardening friends and bring them to seed swaps.

Let's remember what a seed is. A seed is a small embryonic plant enclosed in a covering called the seed coat, usually with some stored food. It is the product of the ripened ovule of gymnosperm.

Here is a list of some of my favorites - in no particular order:

www.fedcoseeds.com 207-873-7333
FEDCO Seeds; PO Box 520; Waterville, ME 04903
Great collection of organic (untreated) seeds, trees, bulbs and growing supplies.

www.Richters.com 800-668-4372

Richters Herbs; 357 Highway 47; Goodwood, Ontario L0C1A0 Canada Seeds, plants, dried herbs, books and more.

<http://rareseeds.com> 417-924-8917

Baker Creek Heirloom Seed Co.; 2278 Baker Creek Rd.; Mansfield, MO 65704
From Mansfield, MO now also located in Petaluma, CA and Wethersfield, CT.

www.bbbseed.com 303-530-1222 Beauty Beyond Belief Wildflower Seed; 6595 Odell Place, Suite G; Boulder, CO 80301

Wildflower mixes of natives, heirloom and organic vegetables.

www.johnnyseeds.com 877-564-6697

Johnny's Selected Seeds; 955 Benton Ave.; Winslow, ME

Organic, heirloom flowers, herbs, and vegetables. Great YouTube videos - Gardening Wisdom.

www.horizonherbs.com 541-846-6704

Horizon Herbs; PO Box 69; Williams OR 97544

Rare herb and vegetable seeds and products, books. Their catalog has great information on how to start and grow, and where to plant, and how to harvest plants - and on seed saving. I had the opportunity to meet them at the Mountain State University Spring Herb Conference years ago.

www.eldoradoheirloomseeds.com Lipscomb Enterprises Inc.; 206 E. Central Ave.; El Dorado, KS 67042
Heirloom seeds (non-GMO only) and DVDs.

www.seedsofchange.com 888-762-7333

Seeds of Change; c/o Marketing Concepts; PO Box 152; Spicer, MN 56288

To preserve biodiversity and promote the use of sustainable organic agricultural practices - 100% certified organic seed.

www.hpsseed.com 800-322-7288

HPS Catalog; 334 W. Stroud St.; Randolph WI 53956

Horticultural products and services.

www.superseeds.com 207-926-3400

Pinetree Garden Seeds; PO Box 300; New Gloucester, ME 04260

Great varieties of seeds, garden products, books.

<http://highmowingseeds.com> 802-472-6174

High Mowing Organic Seeds; 76 Quarry Road; Wolcott, VT 05680

100% certified organic seeds. Reliable market standards and unique specialty from an independently owned, farm-based organic seed company. Over 500 varieties including 79 new varieties this year.

I've included the name, phone number and website. These are just some of the many seed companies out there.

Phenology – compiled by Dot Montgillion

The science of phenology is the study of plant and animal activities and when they occur yearly. In farming and gardening, it is used for planting times and pest control. Indicator plants are observed for bud break, bloom, and leaf emergence. These clues are also useful in observing bird and animal migrations.

Phenological observations have been used for centuries by farmers to maximize crop production via proper planting time and insect pest emergence. It is also a means of anticipating seasonal allergies. Today, this well-established science is used by scientists (phenologists) to trace the effect of global warming and climate change in order to predict the future health of the environment.

For a wealth of information on this subject simply google "Phenology", Project Budhurst, and The Master Gardener website. Some of the best known examples are:

When lilac leaves are the size of a mouse's ear, sow peas, lettuce and other cool weather crops.

When lilac is in full bloom, plant beans.

Once lilac blooms have faded, plant squash & cucumbers.

When daffodils begin to bloom, sow peas.

When oak leaves are the size of a squirrel's ear, plant corn.

When maple leaves reach full size, plant morning glories.

When apple trees shed their petals, plant corn.

When dogwood reaches peak bloom, plant tomatoes & early corn.

When lily-of-the-valley blooms, plant tomatoes.

When day lilies begin to bloom, plant tomatoes & peppers.

When bearded iris are in bloom, plant peppers & eggplant.

Once aspen has leafed out, plant pansies & snapdragons.

When forsythia is blooming, crabgrass is germinating. Prune roses & feed lawn.

When crocus bloom, prune roses.

When crab apple & wild plum are at bud break, Eastern tent caterpillars are hatching, Begin looking for & controlling them with Bt dust or spray.

When shad bush blooms, plant potatoes.

When catalpas & mock orange bloom, sow broccoli & cabbage for fall harvest.

Plant perennials when maple leaves begin to unfold.

When dandelions bloom, plant spinach, beets & carrots.

~~~ From the Horticulture Magazine Project Budhurst

#### UPCOMING EVENTS:

**Feb - Mar.:** We'll have meetings when weather permits for conference planning, the seed packet project for the MG Conf, and the Tamarack garden project. We will email dates to everyone when we'll meet.

**March:** Saturday, 19<sup>th</sup> – Tea Festival in Charleston at the India Center in Southbridge. Tea sampling, demonstrations and more. No fee to attend. Charge for vendors. Information: [evartistl@aol.com](mailto:evartistl@aol.com)

**April:** 9<sup>th</sup> – Workshop on Wildflowers and Stilt Grass at Russ Richardson's farm.

16<sup>th</sup> – Sustainable Fair in Elkins.

Garden Festival in Charleston is Saturday, April 30<sup>th</sup>. Speakers are: Archie and Linda Snedegar - Growing Roses Successfully; John Marra - Vegetable Gardening; Mary Beth Lind - Planting for the Seasons and Eating in Season; Keynote Speaker, Darrell Trout- Award Winning Plants for Zone 6.

**May:** MSU-WVHA Spring Conference in Beckley on Saturday, May 7<sup>th</sup>

MG Spring Clinic in Clarksburg on Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup>

**June:** 17<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> 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)  
Saturday, June 25<sup>th</sup> WV Lavender Fair at Fishhawk Acres, Dale Hawkins' farm.

**September:** 17<sup>th</sup> – 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.

**Classes::** Please send this year's classes you are having to Ann S. and Lynn.

#### **2011 Classes at Hidden Hollow Farm in Keyser, WV (Mineral County) - The Family Herbalist**

**Series** - The 7 hands-on classes in this introductory series will include the basics of using herbs for common family health issues. Classes stress the importance of getting to know the plants, and a featured herb that grows locally or that is easily grown in the garden will be discussed in detail in every class.

Class dates: April 3<sup>rd</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup>, May 1<sup>st</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup>, June 12<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>, July 10<sup>th</sup>.

Registration & fee information can be found at: <http://www.hiddenhollowfarmwv.com/classes.html> or email them at [hiddenhollowfarmwv@hughes.net](mailto:hiddenhollowfarmwv@hughes.net)

