



# Diann's Herb Newsletter

FALL 2008

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*The International Herb Society selects the Herb of the Year. Here are a few from the past plus this year's:*

2009 Bay Laurel  
2008 Calendula  
2007 Lemon Balm  
2006 Pelargonium  
2005 Oregano  
2004 Garlic  
2003 Basil  
2002 Echinacea  
2001 Sage  
2000 Rosemary

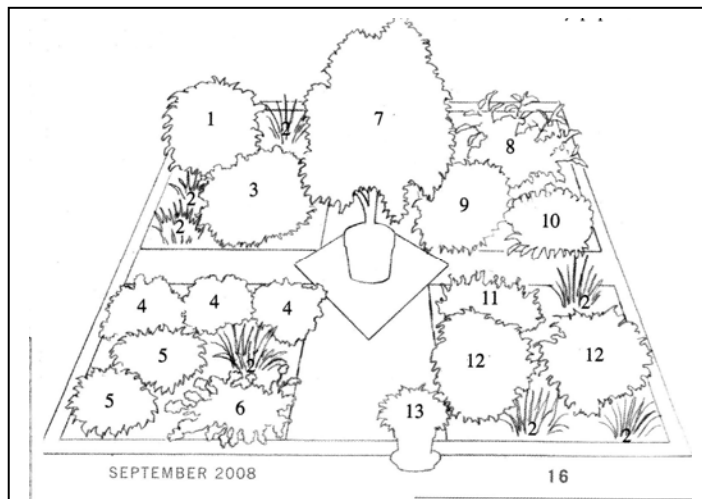
## Starting an Herb Garden

Several of you have asked me about starting an herb garden, so I decided, since fall is the best time to start a new garden, I would include in this issue some basic information and a possible plan and tips for developing a simple culinary herb garden.

A simple framework, such as this four-square garden, complements the free-form beauty and abundance of the herbs within its boundaries. Its rigid lines and sharp corners help balance and contain the soft, mounding forms that by season's end might otherwise sprawl in a riotous fashion.

A potted bay laurel tree (2009 Herb of the Year) anchors the center of this garden, and the container allows you to move the tender plant to a protected garage for the winter. Chives and garlic can be tucked throughout the squares wherever they fit.

Late summer to early autumn is a great time for digging and



### Plant Key

1. Lemon balm (*Melissa officinalis*)
2. Chives/Garlic (*Allium schoenoprasum/A. sativum*)
3. Chamomile (*Matricaria chamomilla*)
4. Basil (*Ocimum basilicum/Ocimum americanum*)
5. Thyme (*Thymus vulgaris/T. praecox*)
6. Cilantro (*Coriandrum sativum*)
7. Bay laurel (*Laurus nobilis*)
8. Sage (*Salvia officinalis*)
9. Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*)
10. Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)
11. Oregano (*Origanum vulgare hirtum*)
12. Parsley (*Petroselinum crispum/P. c. neapolitanum*)
13. Spearmint (*Mentha spicata*)

preparing a new garden bed, and for planting the perennials; come spring, all you need to do is plant the annuals. Mark out the boundaries (8 feet square) in a sunny location. Remove all the grass, rocks, and large roots. Lay out the pathways. You may use

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*Autumn is a  
second spring  
when every leaf is  
a flower.*

--Albert Camus

bricks, paving stones, or landscape edging to mark the edges and pathways.

Work in organic matter and plenty of compost. It's always a good idea to have a soil test to determine what nutrients may need to be added. Contact your local extension service for a kit to have a soil test done. Mulch heavily with shredded leaves or other organic material.

Plant garlic, chives, oregano, lemon balm, sage, lavender and thyme this fall. The spearmint may also be planted in the fall in a pot that will not break if frozen. When it emerges in the spring, it can be moved around to fill a bare spot. Everything else will be planted in the spring after the frost-free date.

During the growing season, all you should have to do is water moderately and enjoy using the herbs.

--adapted from *Herbal Companion*, September 2008

## **What to do in the autumn (...as if there is not enough to do)**

With summer drawing to a close it may seem there is nothing to do in the garden; however, here are some things to do this fall.

1. Harvest your herbs. Bring in the last of the herbs before frost.
2. Winter over perennial herbs. Stop harvesting first year herbs in August. Older perennial herbs may be harvested in September.
3. Plant garlic. Sow seeds or plant cloves in October to November
4. Prep new beds. Now's the perfect time to prepare for next year's planting season.
5. Give your tools some TLC. After cleaning and repairing tools, prepare a bucket of sand with oil and dip your shovels in and out to keep them from rusting.
6. Plant ornamental bulbs. Who doesn't love spring's early show?
7. Create an indoor herb garden. Attach a fluorescent light to the underside of a shelf and place herb pots in a tray on a shelf 15-18 inches below the light.
8. Design a new herb garden. (See page 1.)
9. Clean up—or not! When it's finally time to put the garden to bed, you want to keep things tidy, but be sure to leave enough mess for both winter interest and as food for wildlife.
10. Relax. Run a soothing hot bath, add your favorite herbal oils, and take a deep breath.

--adapted from *Herb Quarterly*, Fall 2008

Winter is an etching, spring a watercolor, summer an oil painting, and autumn a mosaic of them all.  
--Stanley Horowitz

## Recipes

### Garlic-Mushroom Chicken

(Makes 4 servings)

*This dish debuted at the 2007 Hudson Valley Garlic Festival and the crowd was wild for it.*

3 tablespoons olive oil  
3 pounds chicken pieces, skin removed  
½ teaspoon salt  
A few grinds fresh pepper  
2 tablespoons butter  
20 peeled, whole cloves garlic  
1 large onion, coarsely chopped  
1 red pepper, diced  
2 cups chopped zucchini  
1 can (12 ounces) coconut milk  
1 tablespoon roasted red pepper paste or red pepper flakes  
1 pound mushrooms, sliced  
2 cups fresh spinach leaves  
chopped fresh marjoram or basil

1. In a large electric wok or Dutch oven, heat oil on medium-high. Brown chicken, turning occasionally. Using tongs, remove chicken to a plate. Season with salt and pepper.
2. Reduce heat to medium and add butter. Stir in garlic, onion, red pepper, and zucchini. Adjust heat and gently sauté vegetables until soft and translucent, about 15 minutes. Add coconut milk, stirring to loosen browned bits. Bring to a boil.
3. Stir in mushrooms and return chicken to wok. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer gently for 40 minutes or until chicken is falling away from the bones, turning chicken once or twice. Add spinach and herbs and cook about 5 minutes longer, or until spinach is wilted. Serve immediately over steamed greens, rice, or noodles.

### Dill and Apricot Mustard

¼ cup dry mustard powder  
1 cup whole yellow mustard seed  
1 cup coarsely chopped dried apricots  
1 cup warm water  
1¼ cups cider vinegar  
1½ tablespoons kosher salt  
¾ cup coarsely chopped dill leaves

1. Mix together mustard powder, mustard seed, apricots, water, and vinegar in a mixing bowl. Cover and let sit at least 2 hours or overnight.
2. Transfer mustard to a food processor. Add salt and dill. Process until seeds begin to break down and mustard becomes spreadable. (Some seeds will remain whole.) Store in tightly sealed jars in the refrigerator up to 1 month, or freeze for longer storage.