



Diann's Herb Newsletter

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The International Herb Society selects the Herb of the Year. Here is a list of the ones from the first decade of the 21st century:

2011 Horseradish
2010 Dill
2009 Bay Laurel
2008 Calendula
2007 Lemon Balm
2006 Pelargonium
2005 Oregano
2004 Garlic
2003 Basil
2002 Echinacea
2001 Sage
2000 Rosemary

Contact Diann at www.diannsgreenhouse.com

2010 Herb Workshops

I'd like to thank Teri Schultz for her photographic talent and for taking these pictures of the workshops this year. My plan is to post more of her pictures on the website.

It was hands-on in the picture on the right as attendees prepare individual salmon entrees for the "Dilly of a Lunch" workshop. Dill is a wonderful herb to flavor salmon. All the dishes at the luncheon—even the dessert—contained dill, the Herb of the Year for 2010.



On the left I present lavender biscuits at the "Herbal Teas and Desserts" workshop. Other desserts featured were Citrus Almond Basil Cake, Faerie Blossom Cookies, Mint Crème Brulee, and Lavender Ice Cream.

The last workshop for 2010 is "Pamper Your Skin with Herbs" Thursday, October 7. Check the website for details and registration information. There are three spaces available.

If there is a herbal topic you're interested in for a workshop for next year, please let me know. I'm thinking about doing one on herbal breads or maybe one on harvesting and preserving herbs. Horseradish, HOY for 2011, will certainly be included in at least one of them. The 2011 schedule of workshops will be published in January.

Culinary Herbs for Health

Although culinary herbs add flavor to foods, they also provide health benefits according to Gina Mohammed, Ph.D., a plant physiologist who researches medicinal and other specialty uses of plants. Since many herbs are potent, it is safer for you to use small amounts of herbs regularly rather than to take mega doses.

Here are some herbs that are outstanding in helping **digestion**. All **mints** settle the stomach and relieve gas. As a bitter herb peppermint stimulates bile production. **Caraway** seeds contain compounds that relax the smooth muscles of the digestive tract. **Ginger** encourages gastric emptying, and it relieves constipation. It may also ease symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome. Other herbs that aid digestion include **dill, basil, rosemary, fennel, turmeric, and cinnamon**.

Some herbs deter harmful bacteria, fungi, and other microorganisms and keep foods from spoiling and can help protect our bodies from such disease-causing microbes. **Thyme** combats a wide range of toxic bacteria and fungi, including those associated with food poisoning. Try marinating meats in a thyme based seasoning for a few hours before cooking. **Cilantro** has a volatile constituent called dodecenal, which is antibiotic against salmonella. **Coriander** seeds are also effective. **Garlic, lemon balm, oregano, and cinnamon** are other good **antimicrobials**.

There's much talk these days about the harmful effects of free radicals to cells and tissue, which may result in many aging-related ailments, such as cataracts, muscular degeneration, dementia, atherosclerosis, and arthritis. Several herbs contain **antioxidants**, which destroy free radicals. Antioxidants can also help prevent spoilage in foods. Antioxidant herbs include **oregano, basil, parsley, rosemary, thyme, turmeric, sage, cloves, and cinnamon**.

How about herbs that help **brain function**? **Sage, garlic, ginger, and rosemary** are considered good memory herbs. However, the potential super-herb for the brain may be **turmeric**. "A recent paper in the *Annals of the Indian Academy of Neurology* reviewed its benefits against Alzheimer's. The herb supports macrophage cells in clearing out plaques in the brains of Alzheimer sufferers; discourages chronic nerve-cell inflammation; neutralizes free radicals; and binds toxic heavy metals so they don't congregate in the brain." (Mohammed, Gina, "Stealth Health," *Herb Companion*, Sept., 2010) For more information about Gina Mohammed, visit www.pmtech.ca.

I'm sure you have read the benefits of **garlic** as a **heart healthy herb**, but you may not have heard of **fenugreek**, an herb which is used in most curries. The seeds of fenugreek contain

Take all that is given. Whether wealth, love, or language, nothing comes by mistake and with good digestion all can be turned to health.

--George Herbert

Pain is inevitable. Suffering is optional.

--M. Kathleen Casey

sapogenins that help the body excrete cholesterol. It may also reduce blood sugar. Other herbs that may help your heart are **onion, chives, juniper berries, and ginger.**

You will notice that several of the herbs are in more than one list, making them very important in our diet for overall good health. Low amounts taken over a long time are more effective than high doses. Remember that herbs in high doses are drugs. If you are taking prescription drugs, it is best to consult your doctor before taking herbs in large amounts.

Recipes (Recipes from *Herb Companion*, Sept. 2010)

Turmeric Yogurt Soup

(Serves 4 to 6)

1/2 cup garbanzo bean flour	1 teaspoon ground turmeric
1/4 teaspoon chili powder	1/2 teaspoon salt
1 1/4 cups plain low-fat yogurt	2 tablespoons peanut oil
3 cups water	

Chili Pepper Garnish (Recipe below)
Fresh parsley sprigs for garnish

1. Whisk together garbanzo bean flour, turmeric, chili powder and salt in a large bowl. Whisk in yogurt until no lumps remain.
2. Heat the oil in a heavy saucepan over medium high heat. Whisk in yogurt mixture and then water. Bring to a boil over medium heat, whisking constantly. Reduce the heat to low and cook, whisking constantly 8 minutes, or until soup thickens slightly and no longer has a "raw" taste.
3. Ladle into warmed soup bowls and top with Chili Pepper Garnish (Recipe below) and sprig of parsley.

Chili Pepper Garnish

1 1/2 teaspoons peanut oil	3/4 teaspoon cumin seeds
1/2 teaspoon black or brown mustard seeds	
1/2 teaspoon crushed fenugreek seeds	
4 to 6 fresh new chili peppers	

1. Heat oil in a small skillet. Add the cumin, mustard, and fenugreek seeds and cook, stirring constantly until seeds start to jump and crackle. Add chili peppers and remove skillet from heat. Stir for about 30 seconds, or until peppers blister. (If the peppers are fresh, they might burst and 'jump,' so stand back.)

Behave so the
aroma of your
actions may
enhance the general
sweetness of the
atmosphere.

--Henry David Thoreau