



# Diann's Herb Newsletter

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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

Force may subdue,  
but love gains, and  
he that forgives  
first wins the  
**laurel.**  
--William Penn

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## Herbal First Aid

With spring almost upon us, poison ivy (or oak), bites, stings, scrapes, bruises, aches, pains, rashes, and sunburn will not be far behind. Here are some herbal preparations that rival chemical remedies for many of these warm weather and work-related irritations.

I was awed to learn last year that a plant growing wild in my backyard is an instant cure for poison ivy. Jewelweed leaves, stems, and/or flowers crushed up and rubbed on the affected area will either prevent or stop poison ivy from irritating the skin. The likelihood is that jewelweed will be growing near where poison ivy is growing. A tincture or tea made with jewelweed and/or calendula (*Calendula officinalis*) and stored in the refrigerator will be handy if someone in your household is allergic to poison ivy.



Lavender (*Lavandula augustifolia*) essential oil helps to repel mosquitoes and ticks, and when applied to bug bites, it quickly stops itching and helps disinfect the area. Witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*) infused in vinegar also gives cooling relief to bites and stings, especially if it's kept cool in the refrigerator.

A poultice of yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) leaves will help stop bleeding, and it is antiseptic. Honey is one of nature's best healers. It is anti-bacterial and provides a moist healing environment for a scrape or minor cut. Vinegar infused with witch hazel bark or leaves helps to disinfect minor wounds also.

Tea made from the flowers of Arnica (*Arnica montana*) and used as a compress will give relief from muscular pain and arthritis. It also eases the pain of bruises. Steamed pine needles folded in a cloth and wrapped around the sore area can be effective also.

Calendula (2008 Herb of the Year) oil or salve is very effective against any kind of rash, burn, or itchy spot. My favorite remedy

God will not look  
you over for  
medals, degrees,  
or diplomas, but  
for scars.  
--Elbert Hubbard

for skin irritations or minor wounds is aloe (*Aloe vera*). My mother always kept a plant nearby. I have done the same thing for my family. Simply peel off the flat side of the leaf and apply the gel directly to the affected area. It will provide instant relief. If the aloe is cold, the relief is even better. Try keeping some in a plastic container in the freezer or refrigerator. It's wonderful for sunburn.

Some information from "Skin Deep," by Maria Noel Groves in *The Herb Quarterly*

## 2009 Herbal Workshops

The 2009 herbal workshops still have spaces available. The dates are as follows:

March 14	Propagating & Growing Herbs
May 6	Using Savory Herbs in Cooking
July 17	Enjoying Herbal Teas and Desserts
September 14	Making Herbal Oils and Vinegars
October 13	Decorating with Dried Herbs

Check [www.diannsgreenhouse.com](http://www.diannsgreenhouse.com) or call me for details of these workshops.

***FYI:** I am still working on the format for the website catalog. Please be patient. If you're looking for a particular plant, call me or send an email.*

## Recipes

*Here are a couple of delicious meatless dishes suitable for Lenten suppers, but elegant enough for entertaining company. They are from **The Herbal Kitchen** by Jerry Traunfeld.*

### Herbed Skillet Soufflé

3 tablespoons fine dry bread crumbs  
½ cup milk, whole or low fat  
8 large eggs, separated  
½ to ¾ cup chopped mixture of soft leaved herbs, such as basil, chervil, parsley, sorrel, chives, dill, marjoram, or tarragon  
¾ teaspoon kosher salt  
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
2 tablespoons unsalted butter

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Stir the bread crumbs into the milk in a large mixing bowl and let them soak until they become pasty, 10 to 15 minutes. Whisk in the egg yolks, herbs, salt, and pepper. Stir in ½ cup of the cheese.

Just before you are ready to cook the frittata, beat the egg whites with an electric mixer until they form very soft (not stiff) peaks. When you scoop up some on a rubber spatula they should hold their shape in mounds, but the peak at the top of the spatula should flop over instead of standing straight up—any stiffer and they won't incorporate as easily.

Scoop the whites into the yolk mixture and quickly fold them in.

Heat a 12-inch ovenproof skillet over medium heat. Add the butter when the pan is hot enough for it to sizzle but not brown, and swirl it until it melts. Pour the batter into the pan and sprinkle with the remaining cheese. Immediately put the skillet on the middle rack of the oven and bake for 15 to 17 minutes, or until the soufflé is puffed and deeply browned. Serve it right away, spooned from the skillet, or at room temperature, cut into wedges.

### Slow-Roasted Salmon with Spring Herb Sauce

1 ½ pounds fresh wild king or sockeye salmon fillet

¼ cup extra virgin olive oil

Kosher salt

1 cup dry white wine

3 tablespoons finely chopped shallots

1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

6 tablespoons unsalted butter, at room temperature

½ cup mixed coarsely chopped soft-leafed herbs, such as basil, chervil, dill, fennel, lovage, mint, sorrel, or tarragon, plus additional small tender

Herb sprigs for garnish

Coarse sea salt for finishing

Pull out any small bones that were left in the salmon and, if you wish, trim off the gray fat that was next to the skin. Holding your knife at a 30-degree angle to the cutting board, cut the salmon into 4 wide slices that are about ¾-inch thick. Lay them in a shallow baking dish and pour in the olive oil, rubbing it around the fillets to coat all the sides. Let the fish sit in the oil as it comes to room temperature, 30 to 60 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 225 degrees, or 200 degrees if you have the option of convection bake. Lift the fillets from the oil and evenly space them on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Sprinkle the fish lightly with salt. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes. When it's done, the fat between the layers of fish will just begin to turn opaque, a small amount of liquid will collect under the fillets, and the fish will flake slightly when nudged with your finger. Pick up a piece and it should easily break apart between the layers rather than holding firmly together. It might appear to be underdone because the color will be vivid, but it will be fully cooked.

While the fish is roasting, make the sauce. Boil the wine, shallots, lemon juice, and ¼ teaspoon salt together in a small sauce pan until you have half as much as you started with. Turn the heat to medium-low and whisk in the butter, one-third of it at a time, until it is all incorporated. If you have an immersion blender, use it to blend the sauce for about 10 seconds, which gives it a creamier consistency. If the fish is not quite ready, keep the sauce warm by putting the saucepan in a larger pan of hot water.

When the salmon is done, transfer the fillets to individual warmed plates (since the sauce will run, choose plates with deep rims that will contain it, or use shallow bowls). Stir the coarsely chopped herbs into the sauce, taste it and add more salt if you think it needs it, then ladle it around the fish. Sprinkle each fillet with a pinch of coarse sea salt. Toss the reserved herb sprigs onto the plates in a casual way and serve.

The greatest  
healing therapy is  
friendship and  
love.

--Hubert Humphrey

