



Diann's Herb Newsletter

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The International Herb Association selects the Herb of the Year. Here is a list of the ones starting from the beginning of the 21st century:

- 2012 Rose
- 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

You Can Grow Your Own Healing Herbs

Our bodies are equipped to heal themselves from many minor scrapes and infections. But sometimes the wounds, burns, sore throats, fevers, queasy stomachs need a little help when our natural immunities don't provide the defenses needed. There are herbs that are easy to grow and that can give your body that needed boost.

This article is not intended to take the place of medical advice, but for many routine physical complaints, the garden can provide much relief. And often the relief comes as easily as brewing a cup of tea or incorporating the herbs into your diet. When possible avoid using processed herbs; instead grow your own and use them when you cook.

The following herbs are recommended to aid in digestion: dill, fennel, chamomile, lemon balm, and peppermint.

To grow **dill** all you have to do is throw out some seeds. Once it's established, it will re-seed itself for years to come. Its ferny leaves and feathery flowers make a pretty filler even in your flower garden. Used throughout the ages

as a remedy for babies' colic, it is also a calming herb that settles digestion and helps promote a calm sleep. Chew a few seeds after a meal to freshen your breath and aid your digestion.

Fennel, which looks a lot like dill and is also a favorite of the swallowtail butterfly, has been used for thousands of years to freshen breath, aid digestion, soothe colic, balance the appetite, and relieve bloating and gas. It can also help relieve coughs and sore throats when gargled. Fennel is a perennial if you don't harvest the bulb.

My grandmother's favorite--**Chamomile** flowers have graced home gardens for centuries and its apple-scented tea has worked for generations to calm the nervous system and soothe digestion particularly in children. It eases bloating and indigestion after meals, can ease heartburn, and is a useful remedy for mouth ulcers and canker sores. It has been used since ancient times to wash wounds and sores—a practice now borne out by science.

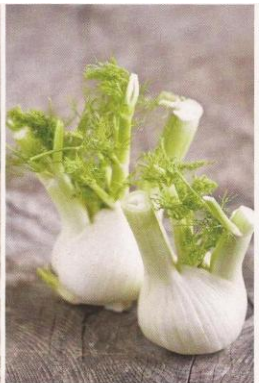
Lemon balm is good in so many ways. High in essential oil content, it is used to reduce fevers and treat colds, to calm the digestive



Sage has antibiotic and antiseptic properties. It calms inflammation of the mouth and throat, among other uses.



Lavender is used in aromatherapy for calming and relaxation. The essential oil is also antiseptic and anti-inflammatory.



Fennel relieves bloating, gas and diarrhea, and has a pleasant licorice taste. It is also used as a gargle to soothe a sore throat.

It was one of those March days when the sun shines hot and the wind blows cold: when it is summer in the light, and winter in the shade.

--Charles Dickens

I love spring
anywhere, but if
I could choose I
would always
greet it in a
garden.

--Ruth Stout

tract, to relieve spasms related to cramps and headaches, and to overcome insomnia. It improves mood and mental performance. A member of the mint family, Lemon balm has an assertive growing habit.

Peppermint is easy to grow from cuttings. It is a versatile herb, used for indigestion, irritable bowels, colds and coughs, muscle aches and tension headaches. Recent research shows that the essential oil contains a substance that relieves muscle spasms and inhibits the growth of bacteria and viruses.

Calendula, yarrow, lavender, and aloe are very beneficial for your skin. You'd want **calendula** in your garden even if you didn't know what a powerful healing herb it is. Calendula is used in lotions, salves, and ointments for chapped skin, dermatitis, minor cuts and burns, insect bites, diaper rash and even hemorrhoids. Calendula grows from seed and likes sun in the spring and fall. Although it is commonly known as "pot marigold," don't confuse it with the common garden marigold, which has no medicinal properties. Calendulas have very little fragrance while marigolds have a strong scent.

According to legend, **yarrow** was named for Achilles who made a poultice of yarrow (*Achillea*) to stanch his soldiers' wounds during the Trojan War. Yarrow contains an alkaloid that actually does stop the flow of blood. The plant also contains more than 120 other components, some of which calm muscle spasms, reduce pain, ease digestion, calm anxiety, and reduce inflammation. Yarrow is easy to grow requiring no care and remaining pest-free and winter-hardy.

The gooey gel found in the leaves of **aloe** soothes irritated skin and eases topical pain, as well as providing antibacterial protection, and its soothing juice has been shown to be effective in treating psoriasis. Grow your own in a pot, so you can bring it in during the winter.

Echinacea and sage are good for coughs, colds, and flu. The Plains Indians used the common prairie species of coneflower as medicine more than any other plant. **Echinacea's** usefulness in preventing colds and flu is well known, but it is also effective for treating lower urinary tract infections, poorly healing wounds and chronic ulcerations. While most references suggest using Echinacea root for medicinal use, many herbalists recommend making a tea of the fresh or dried flowers of *E. purpurea*, which contain chemical constituents similar to those of the root.

Versatile and easy to grow, **sage** is beautiful in the garden, tasty in the kitchen and a stalwart in the medicine cabinet. With antibiotic and antiseptic properties it has been prized in treating inflammation in the mouth and throat, including gingivitis and canker sores.

--Compton, K.C., "Grow a Healing Garden," *Herb Companion*, March 2012

My Spring Herb Schedule

March 20	Herb Display "As You Like It" Tea at Smith-Trahern Mansion
March 20	"Culinary Herbs of the Bible," Immaculate Conception Church
March 26	"Culinary Herbs of the Bible" First Presbyterian Church
March 31	Craft Fair at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Dover
May 4	"How to Eat a Rose" workshop at Diann's house
May 5	Green Thumb Festival at Habitat Restore on Madison St.
May 19-June 30 (Saturdays)	Clarksville Downtown Market
June 20	Cooking with "Culinary Herbs of the Bible" workshop at Ingredients

Zesty Spring Dressing

½ cup olive oil
¼ cup champagne vinegar (or apple cider vinegar)
2 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
Zest of 1 lemon
¼ tsp. salt
2 tsp. fresh **dill**
2 tsp chopped parsley
1 tbsp. chopped chervil

Whisk together the olive oil, vinegar, lemon juice, and salt. Add lemon zest and herbs, stirring thoroughly. Keep in a covered jar in refrigerator, allowing flavors to blend for at least 2 hours.

--Katherine K. Schlosser, *North Carolina Unit, Herb Society of America*

Herbal Shortbread Cookies

1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature, cut up
½ cup confectioners' sugar **or** ½ cup packed brown sugar
2 cups unsifted all-purpose flour
½ tsp herb of choice or a blend: **lavender** flowers, **calendula** flower petals, candied ginger, rosemary, **lemon balm**

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees F. In an electric mixer (or with a wooden spoon), beat together the softened butter and sugar until smooth. Sift flour and salt on top of mixture and sprinkle in herb(s) of choice; blend all together just until ball begins to form.
2. On a floured surface, roll out to a circle or square shape, about ¼-½-inch thick. When you have the shape you want, move the dough to an ungreased baking pan. Cut wedges or small squares in the dough, but do not pull apart.
3. Bake for 25 minutes or until top is dry and just turning golden. Take a sharp knife and cut through the marked areas.
4. Cookies will keep well in an airtight container.

--Debby Accuardl, *West District, Herb Society of America*

My Secret Herb Butter

Can be used to baste turkey or chicken when grilling or roasting. Very good spread on hot French bread or on a baked potato.

¾ cup butter, softened
1/3 cup cut celery leaves packed
1 tbsp. fresh **sage**
1 tbsp. fresh thyme
1/3 cup chopped fresh parsley
1/3 cup green onions, including tops
1 tbsp. fresh sweet marjoram
¼ tsp. freshly ground black pepper

Blend or process all ingredients until well blended. May be stored in the refrigerator for 1 week.

--Mary Nell Jackson, *North and Central Texas Unit, Herb Society of America*

--From **Essential Guide to Growing and Cooking with Herbs** edited by Katherine K. Schlosser

In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt.

--Margaret Atwood

Diann's Greenhouse

3072 Nicole Road

Clarksville, TN
37040

931-648-8701

931-237-3698 cell

www.diannsgreenhouse.com
