



Diann's Herb Newsletter

SUMMER 2011

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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

Tart words make
no friends, a
spoonful of honey
will catch more
flies than a gallon
of vinegar.

-Benjamin Franklin

Plant a Bee-Friendly Garden

As I was tending my bee hive and anticipating the herbal honey I hope to harvest later this summer, it occurred to me that we need to be more concerned about creating gardens that are more inviting to all pollinators, but especially honey bees.

Did you know that one of every three bites of food is made possible by pollination? Even the meat we eat depends on some plants, which are pollinated by animals. Pollinators are known as keystone species, which means that a large number of other species depend upon them for their reproduction. They are also considered indicator species because their well-being is so intimately connected with the overall environmental health. Three factors are mainly responsible for the decline in pollinator populations. They are loss and fragmentation of habitat, degradation of remaining habitat, and pesticide poisoning.

You might say, "What can I do? I'm only one small gardener." If each one of us will grow more plants which attract pollinators, and, more importantly, stop using pesticides, and influence our friends to do the same, we could eventually make at least a portion of the world friendlier to and safer for pollinators.

Although there are many animals, such as, birds, butterflies, beetles, moths, flies, ants, slugs, bats, plus a few larger animals, that pollinate plants, I will focus on plants that create an environment that is honey bee friendly—not because these pollinators are not important, but because the bees seem to be at greatest risk and because they are the most efficient pollinators. Besides I really like honey.



BORAGE

Bees love herbs especially lavender, thyme, mint, marjoram, oregano, borage, and bee balm. They prefer blue or yellow-blooming flowers; however, they can be seen on flowers of any color. They hone in on sweet or minty scents. Since bees forage in daytime, they like brightly colored day-blooming flowers that are full of nectar, tubular in shape with a platform for landing.

Honey bees are one of some 4000 species of bees. They build nests in cavities of trees or spaces in walls. You are probably

The bee is more honored than other animals, not because she labors, but because she labors for others.

-St. John Chrysostom

Source for some information from Rhonda Flemming Hayes, "Building a World that's Safe to Pollinate." *The Herb Companion*, July 2011



BEE BALM

most familiar with the man-made boxes people provide for them, making it easier to harvest the honey. Other wood nesters are the bumble bee and the carpenter bee. Most bees in the world build nests in burrows in the ground.

Besides how they nest, another way to classify bees is by whether they are solitary or social. Social bees, like

honey bees and bumble bees, form colonies with a queen and very specific hierarchy of workers. Solitary bees do not actually live alone; they live in a community with other bees of the same species, but they tend their own nests.

Social bees are polylectic, which means they feed and gather pollen from a large number of flowering plants and can adapt to changing availability of food sources. They may, however, concentrate on a particular flower at a time, which is called "flower constancy."

They can carry large amounts of pollen on the stiff hairs of their bodies or carry it in specialized body parts, called pollen baskets.

It is believed by many that if you consume honey from a local source that your resistance to allergies will be increased. Some studies have indicated that any pure honey will ease the effects of hay fever type symptoms. Whatever the reason, a daily intake of honey is good for you. Honey is also anti-bacterial; it was used in ancient times to treat wounds. Try it; it works. It also moisturizes the skin and reduces wrinkles.

Entomologists believe that environmental stress, disease and parasites are acting alone and/or together to cause decreasing numbers of bees.

The Herb Society of America has created a program called GreenBridges, whose goal is to create avenues through which birds, bees, and butterflies may safely travel from one plant population to another. If you would like to create a GreenBridges certified garden, contact HSA Headquarters at 440-256-0514.

Check out the Clarksville Downtown Market, which is open every Saturday from 8 AM to 1 PM. It has been voted #1 in Tennessee and #6 in the US.

I will be there with herb plants to sell June 18 and 25. July and August are too hot for me. I will be open at Diann's Greenhouse anytime by appointment, and will return to the Downtown Market with perennials in late September.

2011 Herbal Workshops

Space is still available in the July 22 workshop, "Enjoy Herbal Teas and Desserts." Go to www.diannsgreenhouse.com or call me at 931-648-8701 for details.

RECIPES

Honey-Carrot Muffins (You will love these muffins.)

2 cups flour
1 cup sugar
2 teaspoons baking soda
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon ground allspice
1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
3 eggs
3/4 cup pure honey (local if available)
3/4 cup oil
8-ounce can crushed pineapple, drained
2 1/2 cups shredded carrots
2/3 cup chopped walnuts
Honey Butter (recipe below)

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour muffin pans. Mix flour, sugar, baking soda, cinnamon, salt, allspice, and nutmeg in a large bowl, set aside.

Beat eggs in a medium bowl, stir in honey and oil. Add to flour mixture, stir just until moistened. Stir in pineapple, carrots, and walnuts. Spoon batter into muffin pans, filling each cup 3/4 full.

Bake in 350-degree oven 20 to 25 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center of muffin comes out clean. Serve warm with Honey Butter, if desired. Makes 24 muffins.

Honey Butter

1/2 cup (1 stick) butter, softened
1/4 cup pure honey
2 tablespoons raisins or currants (optional)

Beat, or process in food processor, butter and honey until light and fluffy. Stir in raisins or currants, if desired. Serve at room temperature with muffins. Store covered in the refrigerator. Makes 3/4 cup.

If you want to gather honey, don't kick over the bee hive.

-Dale Carnegie