



# Diann's Herb Newsletter

SUMMER 2012

VOLUME 7, NUMBER 3

*The International Herb Association selects the Herb of the Year. Here is a list of the ones starting from the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> 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**

Rest is not idleness,  
and to lie sometimes  
on the grass  
on a summer day  
listening to the  
murmur of water,  
or watching the  
clouds float  
across the sky,  
is hardly  
a waste of time.

--John Lubbock

## It's Not Too Late to Start a Herb Garden

Many of the most useful herbs love the summer heat and have plenty of time left to grow a bountiful harvest. Basil, dill, parsley, sweet marjoram, stevia, oregano, thyme, and many more herbs can still be planted. Just give the plants adequate water and shade to get them started. If you are starting with seeds, make sure the soil is kept moist for good germination.

If you don't have a large yard, containers are perfect for growing herbs. It's important to consider the plants' requirements when using containers. Mint, which likes a lot of water and some shade, would not mix well

with rosemary, which likes sun and does not like wet feet. Cilantro, which loves spring sun, needs some protection from harsh summer sun.

Be creative in choosing containers. Any container will work as long as it has a hole for drainage. Remember that clay pots are porous and lose moisture quickly, whereas plants planted in plastic will not need to be watered as often.

Use a good potting mix, adding a slow release fertilizer. Generally speaking, you're going to want nutrient-rich soil and good drainage. However, a few herbs do better with little or no fertilizer.

It is important, especially for the newbie gardener, to label your herbs to help distinguish parsley from chervil or one variety of basil from another. Even lavender and rosemary can look similar.

Start using the herbs as soon as there are enough leaves to



Diann watches as Mary Fisher, Kay Lange, Deborah Leighton, and Susan Binkley work on their container gardens at the Propagating and Growing Herbs Workshop at Diann's Greenhouse.



Many different kinds of herb plants are available at Diann's Greenhouse.

spare a few. The more you prune the plants the bushier they will grow. Once your herbs are on their way, clip leaves and enjoy your culinary adventure. Fresh herbs taste so much better than dried ones. Basil is great for homemade pesto or Caprese salad. Thyme is wonderful in stews and on meats, especially chicken. Rosemary is great for roasts and in homemade focaccia.

Leaves you don't use immediately can be dried or frozen and saved for later.

There are many plants suitable for containers. Here are some of my favorites. Bay laurel is a slow growing shrub and works well with a low growing herb at its base such as creeping thyme, which would trail over the edge of the pot. All types of lavender are excellent for pots and provide fragrance and blooms. Since French and Spanish lavenders are not hardy here in north middle Tennessee, they can be more easily moved inside for the winter if they are in containers.

Other herbs to consider for containers are rosemary, which is drought tolerant; sage, which adds gray foliage; scented geraniums, which come in a variety of fragrances; oregano, a culinary herb that will trail beautifully over the edge of the container; lemon grass, which gives height to a container garden; and basil, which is available in green, purple, variegated, or gray to add color contrast.

The most important thing is to use and enjoy the herbs you plant in your garden or in containers.

### Diann's Summer and Fall Herb Schedule

- June 15 "Jammin' in the Alley" Market, 5:30-8:30 PM
  - June 16-30 (Saturdays) Downtown Market, 8 AM-1 PM
  - June 20 "Culinary Herbs of the Bible" workshop at Ingredients
  - July 9 Workshop cancelled because of travel time to IHA Conference in NY.
  - July 13-16 IHA Conference in Corning, New York
  - Aug. 25 "Make Herbal Oils and Vinegars" workshop 9 AM-Noon\*
  - Oct. 13 "Making Herbal Breads" workshop 10 AM-1 PM\*
- \*For more information on workshops, see the "Schedule of Herbs" at [www.diannsgreenhouse.com](http://www.diannsgreenhouse.com).

A life  
without love  
is like a year  
without summer.

--Swedish Proverb

## Gazpacho Salsa with Ricotta on Grilled Bruschetta

### *For the dressing:*

2 garlic cloves, minced  
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar  
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil  
1 tablespoons pimento  
½ teaspoon ground cumin  
½ teaspoon red pepper flakes  
2 teaspoons Kosher salt  
Freshly ground pepper

### *For the bruschetta:*

4 tomatoes, seeded and cut into ¼-inch dice  
½ English cucumber, cut into ¼-inch dice  
1 small bell pepper, trimmed, seeded and cut into ¼-inch dice  
½ cup finely chopped red onion  
¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro leaves  
3 tablespoons chopped fresh Italian parsley  
1 baguette, cut in ½-inch thick diagonal slices  
Extra-virgin olive oil  
1 pint ricotta

For dressing, combine garlic, vinegar, and olive oil in a small bowl. Whisk in spices, salt, and pepper.

Put vegetables and herbs in a large bowl. Add dressing and adjust seasoning.

Brush bruschetta slices lightly with olive oil and toast on a prepared grill, or toast in a 375 degree oven. Top each slice of bread with 1 or 2 tablespoons of ricotta and a spoonful of ricotta and a spoonful of gazpacho salsa. Serve immediately. Makes 6 to 8 servings.

## Mexican Corn Salad with Spicy Lime-Cilantro Vinaigrette

### *For the spicy cilantro-lime vinaigrette:*

¼ cup fresh lime juice  
2 teaspoon minced garlic  
2 teaspoon red chile flakes  
1 jalapeno pepper, steamed, seeded, and minced  
½ cup vegetables oil  
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil  
1 bunch cilantro washed and chopped coarsely  
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper

### *For the corn salad:*

6 ears corn, soaked 30 minutes, husks intact  
½ medium white onion, cut into ¼-inch dice  
2 pint baskets cherry tomatoes, halved  
1 15.5-ounce can black beans, rinsed and well-drained  
1 green bell pepper, cut into ¼-inch dice  
1 cucumber, peeled, seeded, and cut into half-moon slices  
1 bunch radishes, washed and sliced  
3 hearts of romaine, chopped, washed, and dried  
1 cup feta cheese, crumbled (optional)

Prepare grill for cooking corn. Combine ingredients for vinaigrette in the bowl of a processor. Pulse to chop coarsely. Set aside.

Grill corn, with husks on, for 10-15 minutes, turning frequently. When cool, shuck the corn and cut kernels off the cob. In a large bowl, combine the corn kernels with onion, cherry tomatoes, black beans, bell pepper, cucumber, radishes, salt, and pepper. (Don't over mix or the black beans will turn the salad gray.) Combine with ¾ cup of vinaigrette. Dress romaine with remainder of the dressing.

Serve as individual salads or as a plattered salad. Place greens on a serving dish. Top with corn salad and sprinkle with crumbled cheese. Serves 4.

--Roxanne O'Brien, "Summer Sides and Sauces," *The Herb Quarterly*, Summer 2012

Deep summer  
is  
when  
laziness  
finds  
respectability.

--Sam Keen

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