



Diann's Herb Newsletter

WINTER 2010

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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:

2010 Dill

2009 Bay Laurel

2008 Calendula

2007 Lemon Balm

2006 Pelargonium

2005 Oregano

2004 Garlic

2003 Basil

2002 Echinacea

2001 Sage

2000 Rosemary

2010 Herb of the Year—Dill

Dill, *Anethum graveolens*, has long been highly prized as both a culinary and a medicinal herb. It is believed to have its beginnings in the Mediterranean region more than 5,000 years ago. Dill was probably introduced into the United States by the early settlers.

The name "dill" means to "calm or soothe," and probably originates from the plant's known ability to calm troubled stomachs and colicky infants. The Latin name, *Anethum graveolens*, literally translates as a tall plant with a vigorous growth habit that has a

strong smell. Dill is related to such herbs as parsley, cilantro, fennel, and Queen Anne's lace.

Dill seeds are best planted directly in the garden because dill forms a tap root, making transplanting difficult.

Germination

occurs best during periods of cool temperatures. It grows best in full sun. However, hot weather may cause the plant to flower early, which brings to a halt leaf production. It grows best in temperatures ranging from 42.8-79 degrees F in well-drained soil.

In the food industry dill is primarily used for making dill pickles. Dill weed, seed, and oil are frequently added to baked goods, snacks, condiments, and meat products. It can also enhance all types of sauces, dips, butters, and cheese. An especially good combination is that of salmon and dill. Cooks most often prefer to use leaves since they have a stronger flavor than that of dill seeds. The fragrance industry makes much use of dill essential oil to produce soaps, perfumes, detergents, creams, and lotions.

In the past, dill has been a versatile plant used in a variety of ways to treat different medical conditions. Writings from 1500 B.C.



Cooking Ratios

$\frac{3}{4}$ tsp. dill seeds =
one dill head

1 Tbsp. fresh dill
leaves (minced) = 1
tsp. dried dill leaves

suggest that dill was used as a painkiller by Egyptians. The Greeks used dill as a sleep aid. Dill water is an ancient remedy that has been used by mothers for centuries to calm colicky babies or help them sleep. Today, recent studies are bearing out the belief that dill is a useful remedy for indigestion and ulcers.

Dill is a wonderful host plant for black swallowtail butterflies. Be sure to plant extra dill in your garden for them.

There are also myths associated with dill. It was supposed to provide protection from witchcraft. In the Middle Ages it was included in love potions and aphrodisiacs. Brides in Germany and Belgium would attach a sprig of dill to their wedding gown or carry it in their bouquets in the hopes that happiness would bless their marriages. In the language of flowers, dill means "good spirit" or "to lull."

--taken in part from *The Herb Society of America's Essential Guide to Dill*

Some Cultivars of Dill

'**Bouquet**' is a tall variety good for seed production.

'**Delikat**' is known for dense foliage.

'**Dukat**' is a long lasting variety good for container growing.

'**Long Island Mammoth**' is a tall variety good for weed or seed production.

'**Vierling**' is a tall variety that takes longer to flower.

'**Hercules**' is another variety slow to flower, primarily for commercial growers.

'**Fernleaf**' is a dwarf variety, winner of the 1992 All-American Selection.

'**Mammoth**' is a tall vigorous grower that bolts (goes to flower) quickly.

'**Tetra**' is a slow bolting variety with bushy, compact growth.

New! '**Green Sleeves**' is dark green variety very resistant to bolting.

New! '**Monia Dill**' is a sturdy compact variety best for container growing, but great in the garden as well.

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2010 Herbal Workshops

I will be completing the schedule of herbal workshops for 2010 soon and will send out the list in an email by the end of January, but you may also check my website for postings.

Check www.diannsgreenhouse.com or call me (931-648-8701) for details of the herbal workshops for 2010.

Recipes

Creamy Dill Dressing

1 10.5 oz. pkg. firm silken tofu
1½ tsp. garlic powder or granules
½ tsp. dill weed
½ tsp. salt
2 Tbsp. water
1½ Tbsp. lemon juice
1 Tbsp. seasoned or plain rice vinegar

Combine all ingredients in a food processor or blender and blend until completely smooth. Store any extra dressing in an airtight container in the refrigerator. Makes 1 ½ cups.

--reprinted from Amanda Formaro and *Family-Corner.com*

Salt Method for Preserving Dill, Basil, or Fennel

In a wide-mouthed glass jar, alternate layers of kosher salt and fresh herbs. Cover with plastic lid and store in a dark, dry place. Allow to sit for at least two weeks.

When ready to use, break up any lumps that may have formed in the salt. Carefully remove herbs for use in cooking, lightly brushing off the salt. Reserve the flavored salt for cooking as well. Alternatively, after 2-3 weeks, you may empty contents of the jar into a food processor and chop lightly. Use as a seasoning salt.

--reprinted from HSA's *Essential Guide to Growing and Cooking with Herbs*

Dill Butter

½ cup butter or margarine, softened
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. dried dill weed
¼ tsp pepper

In a small bowl with a wooden spoon, beat all ingredients until well blended or use a food processor to blend ingredients.

--reprinted from Amanda Formaro and *Family Corner.com*

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