



# 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 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**

## 2012 Herb of the Year—Rose (*Rosa*)

A rose is a rose is a rose— but it's really so much more. My introduction to roses was in my mother's garden where she grew many flowers to decorate church. Roses were her favorite—I especially remember how she loved her red Abraham Lincoln rose and her creamy peace rose. Although I learned to love the beauty and fragrance of roses, the work my mother did to grow her beautiful roses did not appeal to me. I'm more of a let-them-grow-if-they-want-to gardener. Today there are so many varieties on the market that it's much easier to find roses that do not need so much care as the hybrid and grafted roses do. There are antique roses and Old Garden roses that are very popular. I suspect that aromatherapy has always been a part of the history of the rose, but records reveal the original herbal use was in treating illnesses. Cosmetic use quickly followed, and since the rose is edible, we can enjoy it in many culinary dishes. Before we go any further, a word of caution—do not eat roses that have been treated with any chemical applied topically or systemically. Those beautiful long-stemmed roses from the florist were probably grown in South America using pesticides and fertilizers that would not be safe to consume.



"We bring roses,  
beautiful fresh roses,  
Dewey as the  
morning and  
coloured like the  
dawn;  
Little tents of odour,  
where the bee  
resposes,  
Swooning in  
sweetness of the bed  
he dreams upon."

--Thomas Buchanan  
Read, *The New  
Pastoral*, Book VII,  
Line 51

Roses have been around for a very long time. Fossils have placed the rose on Earth at least 32 million years ago. Early Greek mythology casts the rose as a symbol of love by associating it with the birth of Aphrodite, goddess of love. She emerged from the sea creating sea foam which was transformed into white roses, signifying purity and innocence. The botanic design of roses has insured its survival. The flower attracts insects ensuring pollination; the prickly, thorny stems deter foraging animals from destroying the plant; the tasty seed pods are eaten by birds that spread the seeds far and near.

The vitamin C-rich rose hips and the oil-laden rose petals have been used for centuries to treat colds and stomach upsets, minor infections, scurvy, and stress. Seventy-seven years before

Christ, Roman physician and botanist, Pliny the Elder, listed more than 30 disorders for which roses were the accepted treatment. Every part of the rose plant was used by Native Americans as food and medicine. Even though we associate rose water with cosmetics, it was developed in Persia as a treatment for eye inflammation.

*Rose water is beneficial topically and is used in many beauty and skin care treatments as a toner, cleanser, and refreshing misting spray. Whether using roses to make a beauty aid or in a recipe make sure the petals come from a reliable source to insure purity. To make your own rose water, take one cup of firmly packed rose petals and put them in a bowl. Pour two cups of boiling water over the petals, then cover and steep until cool. Strain and squeeze out excess liquid from the petals and store in a glass jar. Label and refrigerate and use as needed. Use this rose water within a week or two for best results.*

There is an enchanting story told of the discovery of rose oil, which is a primary ingredient in rose medicines and cosmetics. When Shah Janal, who built the Taj Mahal and Shalamar Gardens, married his beloved wife, he had a canal dug encircling the garden. It was filled with water and rose petals. The heat of the sun separated the water from the essential rose oil. The bridal pair observed this as they rowed on the fragrant water; the oil was skimmed off and found to be an exquisite perfume, beginning rose distillation in India.

You may think that eating roses is a new thing, but roses have been part of the Asian and Native American diets for centuries. Roses provide nutrients and flavor to sweet as well as savory dishes. The edible parts of the rose used in cooking are the petals and the hips. The petals add a distinctive sweetness and perfume in puddings and compotes, to make jams and sauces, and rose petals can also be candied. Chop three or four scented rose petals (first removing the white base that produces a bitter taste) and mix with a small block of cream cheese for tea sandwiches. Rose hips can be peeled and chopped to add to breads and cakes.

--Source of the above information is based on articles published in the International Herb Association publication: *Rose (Rosa) Herb of the Year 2012*.

**Copies of *Rose (Rosa) Herb of the Year 2012*, the official HOY book of the International Herb Association, are available from Diann's Greenhouse. Let me know if you would like a copy at \$14.95. I also have a few 2012 herbal calendars left at \$13.95.**

## **2012 Herbal Workshops**

Watch for the schedule of 2012 herbal workshops which I will publish soon. Please let me know ASAP if there is a special workshop you would like for me to schedule.

Be your heart as  
pure,  
your cheek as  
bright  
as the spring rose.

--Miss Loudon in  
*Flora's interpreter*,  
1833

## RECIPE

### Herb and Rose Stuffed Chicken Breasts

*Make sure that roses are food grade. Serves 8*

1 tablespoon unsalted butter  
1 medium yellow onion, chopped fine  
10-ounce package frozen, chopped spinach, thawed and drained well  
1 tablespoon fresh-chopped French tarragon  
2 tablespoons fresh-chopped chives  
2 tablespoons fresh-chopped Italian parsley  
¼ cup fresh-chopped rose petals  
1 teaspoon rose water  
½ cup ricotta cheese  
½ cup shredded, aged cheese (Asiago, Parmesan, etc.)  
salt  
Freshly ground white pepper  
8 large chicken breasts, boned with skin left on

1. Melt the butter in a large skillet over medium heat; when hot, add the onions and cook until tender, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat and add the spinach, chopped herbs and rose petals, rose water, ricotta and aged cheeses and mix well. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
2. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Trim fat and loosen skin from each chicken breast and stuff 1/8 of the herb and cheese mixture under the skin. Tuck the skin and meat under the breast to form a neat, rounded dome shape. Repeat with remaining breasts. Place the stuffed breasts in a well-greased baking pan.
3. Bake prepared breasts in the preheated oven for 30 minutes or until the skin is a nice golden brown. Serve hot from the oven. Garnish with additional fresh rose petals.

--Stephen Lee, IHA

### Rose Petal Freezer Jam

*Remove the white at the base of each petal since it is bitter. Makes approximately 1 quart.*

2 cups packed fragrant rose petals, chemical-free, (reds and pinks are best, white tends to turn brown)  
1 teaspoon zest from an unwaxed lemon, optional  
1 cup apple juice  
4 cups superfine or ultrafine sugar, sold as 'Baker's Sugar.'  
3-ounce pouch liquid fruit pectin, such as Certa brand  
¼ cup fresh lemon juice

1. Combine rose petals, lemon zest (if using), and apple juice in blender and pulse to finely mince the rose petals. Put the sugar in a large bowl and pour the minced rose petal and apple juice mixture over the sugar. Stir often for a period of 20 to 30 minutes to dissolve the sugar.
2. Meanwhile empty the contents of the liquid pectin pouch into a small bowl and stir into the sugar and petal mixture and blend well making sure the sugar is no longer grainy. Pour into clean freezer-safe containers and label. Let stand at room temperature for 24 hours to set. For immediate use store in the refrigerator for up to 3 weeks, or store in the freezer for a year.

--Karen England, IHA

He that does  
not grasp the  
thorn  
should never  
crave the rose.

--Anne Bronte,  
1820-1849

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