



Diann's Herb Newsletter

SPRING 2014

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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:

2015 Savory
2014 Artemisia
2013 Elder
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

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

--Ruth Stout

How to Grow It

Despite Winter's reluctance to leave, spring will come. It seems like a good time to consider the many different growing conditions required for the numerous varieties of herbs. People often ask me how to grow a certain herb, so here are some pointers for growing some common culinary herbs.

Aloe Vera: Aloe is ideal for a rock garden or xeriscape (low water or desert area). It won't survive winter in Zones 6-7. It prefers morning sun; however, it needs some protection from harsh afternoon summer sun. Give it well-drained sandy soil in a big pot.

Anise hyssop: These beauties love moist, rich, well-drained soil, and full sun is ideal. They can be sensitive to fungus if kept too wet. They will die back in the winter, but will return in spring.

Basil: Basil needs warmth and full sun, average to rich soil with plenty of humus, and regular irrigation. Fertilize it well. Basil is always grown as an annual; however, it will often reseed.

Calendula: This lovely, sunny flower enjoys our spring and fall seasons but needs protection from our harsh summer heat and from freezing winter temperatures.

Catnip: With the exception of very mucky ground, catnip grows well in all soil types, including dry, sandy, and gravelly. Give it full sun and deep it dry to increase the volatile oil production in the aromatic leaf. Cut it back severely at each harvest. You can propagate it from seed, cuttings, or by root division.

Chamomile: Chamomile likes moist, light, and sandy loam with good drainage, and it enjoys being crowded. German chamomile is an annual; Roman chamomile will die back in the winter and regrow early the next spring. Harvest regularly, or flower production will slow or stop.

Coriander/Cilantro: It's a waste of money to buy plants to transplant because this plant will very quickly want to go to seed. Start from seeds early in the spring where you want the plants to grow. Plant more seeds every two weeks for more leaves. Cilantro goes directly to seeds in extreme heat, so don't expect much leaf-production in the summer.



Dill: Like cilantro, it's a waste of money to buy dill plants to transplant. So plant seeds where you want the plants to grow. Unlike cilantro, dill loves heat, so plant late in the spring and periodically throughout the summer for fresh leaves.

Echinacea: Echinacea originated in open meadows, sunny woodlands, and prairies of the United States. It likes full sun or partial shade; it is frost hardy and can tolerate poor, rocky soils. Start from seeds, or buy plants.

Elder: You'll get better flower and berry production if you grow elder in morning sun and afternoon shade. It is fast growing and can shoot up more than 4 feet yearly if given rich soil, regular moisture, and plenty of drainage.



Fennel: Fennel seeds will sprout readily in the garden as long as the soil is warm. Disturbed or poor soil is fine. Once fennel is established it will grow for many years although it will die back in the winter. Just clear the dieback in late winter in preparation for next year's spring growth.

Garlic: Place individual cloves 1 to 2 inches deep in rich soil, with the pointed tips up, in September or October, and let them overwinter under mulch. For the strongest garlic flavor, medicinal strength, and biggest bulbs, remove the flowering stalks as they form.

Lavender: Lavenders are native to the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern regions. They love full sun and well-drained, gravelly soil. The roots rot in wet soil, and lavender doesn't do well in areas with high humidity. In warm climates, you will want to prune it back after flowering. English lavenders are hardy in Tennessee; however, French and Spanish lavenders are tender perennials.

Lemon balm: Lemon balm is very adaptable; it does well in full, sun but it will also thrive in partial shade. It is frost hardy and tolerates crowding, as well as rich or poor soil. It prefers moist soil with good drainage, but it will develop higher amounts of the medicinal constituents when subjected to some water stress. Lemon balm will self-sow and spread easily. (more in summer newsletter)

--some info from Christopher Hobbs and Leslie Gardner, *Grow It Heal It*, 2013

Herbal Workshops

The Schedule of Herbal Workshops for 2014 is available at www.diannsgreenhouse.com.

Market News

The **Winter Market** at the Smith-Trahern Mansion (101 McClure St., in Clarksville) continues every Friday from 9 AM to 1 PM. I will have plants at the **Sango United Methodist Church Craft Fair** May 3.

The **Downtown Market** in Clarksville will start May 24, 2014.

Call me and come by anytime you are ready for plants.

*If we had no
winter, the spring
would not be so
pleasant; if we did
not sometimes
taste of adversity,
prosperity would
not be so welcome*

--Anne Bradstreet

Recipes

Walnut, Green Olive, and Roasted Garlic Spread with Rosemary

Yield 1½ cups

Smear this crunchy, earthy spread on crostini for an elegant hors d'oeuvre or try it as an accompaniment to cheese. The sweetness of the roasted garlic, counterbalances the salinity of the olives, and the walnuts mellow everything out. Rosemary adds a final whiff of the Mediterranean.

1 head garlic
5 to 6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1½ cups green olives
2/3 cup walnuts, toasted
1½ teaspoons finely chopped fresh rosemary leaves
Freshly ground black pepper

Heat the oven to 375 degrees F. Slice off the top third of the garlic head and put it in a small roasting pan. Drizzle the cut surface with a tablespoon of olive oil and cover the pan with foil. Bake for 45 to 50 minutes, until the garlic cloves are soft and caramelized. Set aside until cool enough to handle and then squeeze the garlic from the skin and reserve.

Roughly chop the olives and the walnuts and add them to the bowl of a food processor. Pulse several times, scraping down the sides of the bowl once or twice, until the mixture is crumbly. Add the roasted garlic to the bowl, and with the mixer running on low, gradually drizzle in the remaining 4 to 5 tablespoons of olive oil. (You're aiming for a spreadable puree that's still a little chunky.)

Transfer the mixture to a bowl and stir in the rosemary and pepper to taste. Serve immediately, or cover and refrigerate for up to several days.

--Merrill Stubbs, "Herb Spreads for Spring," *The Herb Quarterly*, Spring, 2011

Shrimp in Garlic-Sage Butter

2 servings

1 pound very large shrimp (10 to 16)
8 tablespoons (4 ounces) unsalted butter, cut into cubes
4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
Leaves from sage (16-20)
Coarse sea salt

Holding a shrimp with the legs pointing down, stick the tip of the bottom blade of a pair of scissors into the head end. Cut along the backside, slicing about a quarter of the way down into the flesh. Repeat with the rest of the shrimp. Rinse them under running water, removing the dark vein that runs along the backs. Pat them dry on paper towels.

Put the butter, garlic, and sage leaves in a large skillet over medium heat and stir from time to time. When the garlic begins to show the first signs of browning and the sage leaves are speckled with darker green spots, add shrimp. Stir them around, lower the heat to medium-low, and cook uncovered for 5 to 8 minutes, turning them once, or until the shells are pink, the shrimp curl a bit, and the flesh no longer looks translucent. Spoon the shrimp into warm shallow bowls and pour any remaining butter and sage leaves over the top. Sprinkle with salt or offer it in small dishes at the table. Peel the shrimp as you eat them and soak up the butter with crusty bread.

--Jerry Traunfeld. *The Herbal Kitchen*, 2005

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