



Diann's Herb Newsletter

SUMMER 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

A garden was one of the few things in prison that one could control. To plant a seed, watch it grow, to tend it, and then harvest it, offered a simple but enduring satisfaction. The sense of being the custodian of this small patch of earth offered a taste of freedom.

-Nelson Mandela

How to Grow It

Although it's still spring as I write this, summer is certainly heating up with temps in the 90s. It may seem too late to start plants, it really isn't for those that like warm weather. The following is a continuation of the growing tips for many common culinary herbs, which I started in the spring newsletter:

Lovage: Although it may live only 3-4 years, it is a vigorous tall-growing herb; one of the first to return in spring. It loves full sun. Leaves have excellent celery flavor for soups, stews, and casseroles. Its hollow stems make a great garnish for a bloody Mary. Start from seed or plant.

Sweet Marjoram: Start from seed, cutting, or plant. It's a tender perennial in middle Tennessee, so plant it in a pot to keep in the garage over the winter. Fortunately, it loves our summer heat. It's the mildest form of oregano in case you find Greek oregano a little too strong but still like that distinctive Italian flavor.

Mint: One of the greatest culinary herbs comes in many flavors, spearmint, peppermint, lemon, orange, chocolate, pineapple, etc. Easy to grow, but needs to be confined unless you want it to cover your garden. The seeds that are available are for wild spearmint, so start with cuttings or plants.

Nasturtium: Start seeds early in the spring. Nasturtiums are cool weather plants that may be climbing or dwarf in growth habit. Both flowers and leaves contribute a peppery flavor to salads. It is also high in vitamin C.

Oregano: Greek oregano is one of the easiest culinary herbs to grow. Start from seeds, cuttings, or plants. It loves the summer heat and tolerates arid conditions. It's a hardy perennial that returns each spring, and is essential for Italian cooking.

Parsley: Another easy to grow herb. Parsley is a biennial that prefers cool spring weather, but thrives in our summer heat just as well. Although it can be started from seeds, it is best to buy plants because biennial seeds do not all germinate in one year.

Rosemary: There are many varieties of rosemary—some hardier than others. Arp is the only variety which is hardy in a typical Zone 7 winter; all other varieties are not hardy above Zone 8. Start in the winter with cuttings or buy plants. Since some varieties have been hybridized, seeds may not return true.

*The isles of
Greece, the isles
of Greece! Where
burning Sappho
loved and sung...
External summer
gilds them yet,
But all, except
their sun, is set.*

-Lord Byron, from
"Don Juan, Canto III »

Sage: There are many varieties of sage (salvia). Some start easily from seeds; some are better grown from plants or cuttings. Common garden sage is a hardy perennial in middle Tennessee, while pineapple sage, tricolor sage, golden sage, and many more are tender perennials need to have protection in the winter.

Savory: The 2015 Herb of the Year. Savory is easy to grow from seeds. There are several varieties of savory. Summer savory is an annual and is a salt substitute for those who need to avoid salt. Winter savory is a hardy perennial.

Sorrel: A perennial salad green which is easy to grow from seeds. It prefers cool weather, so gather those greens early in the spring. Just like dandelion, it gets bitter as the days heat up.

Stevia: Also known as sweet herb, it is 300 times sweeter than sugar. It's a tender perennial, so move it into the garage or basement over winter. It grows easily from seeds or cuttings. It transplants well. One variety can reach heights of 36 inches or more; there is also a smaller variety that has been developed for growing in pots.

French Tarragon: The only culinary Artemisia (**2014 Herb of the Year**), French Tarragon must be started from cuttings or plants because true tarragon does not bloom or make seeds. Seeds that are available are for Russian Tarragon, which is wild, invasive, and does not have a true tarragon flavor. Unfortunately, French tarragon does not like the excessive heat of middle Tennessee.

Thyme: There are more varieties of thyme than I can name. It is indispensable in French cooking. It is essential in bouquet garni even though other herbal ingredients may vary. Thyme is a hardy perennial which can be started from seeds, cuttings, or plants. There are many growth habits from tiny creeping to 12-inch upright.

Lemon Verbena: Those wonderful culinary lemon herbs include lemon verbena. It is a small shrub, which grows quickly from cuttings or plants. You may start seeds; however, they may be slow germinating. Best grown in pots, which can be moved into the garage or basement for the winter.

--some info from 2014 Richters Herb Catalogue

Herbal Workshops

"Plant a Fairy Garden" workshop is July 8.

"Making Herbal Oils and Vinegars" workshop is August 22.

"Making Herbal Breads" workshop is October 11.

For more information about the 2014 Herbal Workshops go to www.diannsgreenhouse.com.

Market News

The **Downtown Market** in Clarksville is going strong. I will be there through the month of June. After June, **please call me and come by anytime you would like plants.**

*Behave so the
aroma of our
actions may
enhance the
general sweetness
of the atmosphere.*

--Henry David
Thoreau

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Recipes

Gazpacho

(4 servings)

1½ pounds vine-ripened tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped
Tomato juice
1 cup cucumber, peeled, seeded, and chopped
½ cup chopped red bell pepper
½ cup chopped red onion
1 small jalapeno, seeded and minced
1 medium garlic clove, minced
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 lime, juiced
2 teaspoons balsamic vinegar
2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
½ teaspoon toasted, ground cumin
1 teaspoon kosher salt
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons fresh basil leaves, chiffonade

Fill a 6-quart pot halfway full of water, set over high heat and bring to a boil. Make an X with a paring knife on the bottom of the tomatoes. Drop the tomatoes into the boiling water for 15 seconds, remove and transfer to an ice bath and allow to cool until able to handle, approximately 1 minute. Remove and pat dry. Peel, core, and seed the tomatoes. When seeding the tomatoes, place the seeds and pulp into a fine mesh strainer set over a bowl in order to catch the juice. Press as much of the juice through as possible and then add enough bottled tomato juice to bring the total to 1 cup. Place the tomatoes and juice into a large mixing bowl. Add the cucumber, bell pepper, red onion, jalapeno, garlic clove, olive oil, lime juice, balsamic vinegar, Worcestershire, cumin, salt and pepper and stir to combine. Transfer 1 ½ cups of the mixture to a blender and puree for 15 to 20 seconds on high speed. Return the pureed mixture to the bowl and stir to combine. Cover and chill for 2 hours and up to overnight. Serve with chiffonade of basil.

-- Alton Brown, 2014 Television Food Network

Easy Focaccia Bread with Herbs

(9 inch by 13 inch)

½ cup olive oil
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme
1 tablespoon chopped fresh rosemary
¼ teaspoon black pepper
1 cup warm water
2¼ teaspoons active dry yeast (1 envelope)
¼ honey
2½ cups all purpose flour
1 teaspoon salt

In a cold medium saucepan or skillet, combine olive oil, minced garlic, thyme, rosemary and the black pepper. Place pan over low heat then cook, stirring occasionally 5 to 10 minutes or until aromatic, but before the garlic browns. Set aside.

In a large bowl, combine the warm water, yeast and honey. Stir a few times then let sit for 5 minutes. Now, add 1 cup flour and ¼ cup infused garlic-olive oil mixture. Stir 3 to 4 times until the flour has moistened. Let sit for another 5 minutes.

Stir in the remaining 1 ½ cups flour and salt. Once the dough comes together, transfer to a floured board and knead the dough 10 to 15 times until smooth. Transfer to a large oiled bowl, cover with a warm, damp towel and let rise for 1 hour.

After 1 hour, heat oven to 450 degrees F. Then, use two tablespoons of the remaining garlic-olive oil mixture to oil a 9-inch by 13-inch rimmed baking sheet.

Transfer dough to the baking sheet then press it down into the pan. Use your fingers to dimple the dough then drizzle the top with the remaining 2 tablespoons of the garlic-olive oil mixture. Let the dough rise for 20 minutes until it puffs slightly then bake 15 to 20 minutes or until golden brown. Transfer focaccia bread to a cooling rack and cool.

--Easy Recipes for Home Cooks at <http://www.inspiredtaste.net>