



Diann's Herb Newsletter

SUMMER 2015

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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

To be overcome by the fragrance of flowers is a delectable form of defeat

--Beverly Nichols

Interesting Herbal Ramblings

Recently I've come across some interesting bits of herbal information that I think you might find as enlightening as I have.

Milkweed for Monarchs from *Herb Quarterly*, Summer 2015

"A national effort to plant milkweed along 'monarch highways' has paid off. The World Fund reports that between 2013-2014 the number of these colorful butterflies in North America increased substantially—from 33.5 million to 56.5 million. Unfortunately, that's still down from 1 billion monarchs in 1960.

Political leaders have started paying attention to the alarming decline in numbers. Last year, President Barack Obama, Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto, and Canadian Prime Minister Steven Harper announced a joint task force to save the continent's monarchs. Stateside, the Fish and Wildlife Service has begun encouraging land owners to plant 'living roadways' of milkweed along monarch migration routes like Interstates 25 and 35. (Monarch larvae eat *only* milkweed.) Meanwhile the Mexican government is fighting illegal deforestation in the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere, a 140,000-acre forest in central Mexico where monarchs live from November until March. And the Canadian government is considering funding breeding habitats for monarchs on farmlands, roadsides, and utility corridors."

Herbs Taste Good from Johanna Dwyer, *Nutrition Today*, Sept.-Oct.

You'd think it wouldn't be necessary to waste research funds to determine that herbs and spices make food taste better. The goal of the study was to show that "flavorful eating" would encourage people to eat healthier diets. If a healthful food is bland, people may opt for something that tastes better but is not good for them. People who add herbs and spices to their food tend to have more nutritious diets than people who are non-herb eaters. Researchers at Tufts University School of Medicine analyzed 16 different scientific articles on the benefits of herbs and spices and discovered that they can improve health on five levels:

- Low-fat meals are more appealing with the addition of herbs and spices.
- People who regularly cook with spices and herbs end up consuming less sodium.

- Red pepper spices can make people feel full faster and also boost metabolism, which can help with weight management.
- People who eat antioxidant herbs and spices (black pepper, cinnamon, cloves, garlic, ginger, oregano, paprika, rosemary, and turmeric) have reduced risk factors for heart disease.
- Cinnamon can help regulate blood glucose levels and insulin sensitivity, which are risk factors for Type 2 diabetes.

Whom Can You Trust? from "Herbal Healthwatch" by Michael Cattleman, *Herb Quarterly*, Summer 2015

Recently the New York State Attorney General's office accused four major retailers, GNC, Target, Walmart, and Walgreens of fraud, alleging that most of the herbal extracts sold under these store brands contained little to no herbs specified on the items' labels. As a result, herbal products were ordered off the shelves in these four retailers' shelves in New York.

However, Mark Blumenthal, executive director of the Austin, Texas-based American Botanical Council (ABC), the nation's leading herbal education organization, and Stefan Gafner, Ph.D, Chief Science Officer and Technical Director of ABC's Botanical Adulterants Program, have issued a statement that the Attorney General's findings are based on inaccurate testing. The findings were based on DNA testing, but standard production of herbal extracts typically removes the plant's DNA while preserving its active constituents. As a result, a brand of ginkgo might not indicate any ginkgo DNA when tested, yet it will still contain plenty of the ginkgolides, the medicinally active components.

Other organizations that have gone on record saying that other tests will more accurately indicate the herb content in extracts include The American Herbal Products Association, the New York Botanical Garden and the University of Mississippi's National Center for Natural Product Research.

So, what's a person to do? Look for brands you can trust. Ask questions. Talk to others about brands they trust. As much as you can, grow your own and/or make your own supplements. Here are some sources I have found reliable; you may want to check them out: www.mountainroseherbs.com, www.frontiercoop.com, and www.healingspiritsherbfarm.com.

My Summer Schedule:

- Almost every day - Find me at Diann's Greenhouse
- Saturdays now through June 27 - Downtown Market
- July 9 - Plant a Fairy Garden Workshop at Diann's Greenhouse
- July 15 - Herbal Teas and Desserts Workshop at Tree of Life
- August 5 - Herbal Breads Workshop at Tree of Life
- August 22 - Oils & Vinegars Workshop at Diann's Greenhouse
- September 16 - Lip Balm & More Workshop at Tree of Life

Go to www.diannsgreenhouse.com or call 931-648-8701 for more information about any of the above items.

Tea began as a medicine and grew into a beverage.

--Okakura Kukuza

Recipes

Zucchini Ribbon Salad with Feta, Mint, & Pine Nuts (6 servings)

Fresh, light, and easy to prepare, the colorful ribbons of zucchini make a playful presentation. Even better, you can serve this salad on a bed of sliced heirloom tomatoes seasoned with sea salt and pepper. This is a great way to try one of those finishing salts in your cupboard or available at markets now. Maldon English sea salt, Himalayan pink salt, Hawaiian red salt or black lava salts, smoked salts, and so on.

- 1 lb zucchini
- 1 lb yellow zucchini
- 4 green onions, trimmed
- 3 Tbls chopped fresh mint leaves or 8 mint leaves, torn in pieces
- ½ cup sliced radishes
- ½ cup toasted pine nuts
- 3 cups baby arugula, washed and dried
- 2 Tbls fresh lemon juice
- 6 Tbls extra virgin olive oil
- Kosher salt
- Fresh ground black pepper
- ¾ cup coarsely crumbled feta

Trim the ends of the zucchini. Using a vegetable peeler, make lengthwise strips of zucchini until you get to the center seeds. Turn the zucchini and repeat. Discard the center seeds. Put zucchini strips in a large bowl.

Cut green onions in thin diagonal slices. Add green onions, mint, radishes, pine nuts, and arugula to the bowl.

In a small bowl, whisk together the lemon juice and olive oil. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Toss the vegetables with the dressing and season again with salt and pepper to taste. Add crumbled feta and toss lightly. Serve immediately.

--Roxanne O'Brien, *Herb Quarterly*, Summer 2015

Basil Jelly (Makes 6 half-pints)

This recipe is adapted from author Sue Gronholz, and the Basil's strong, sweet flavor goes great with warm brie or cream cheese.

- 6 half-pint jelly jars
- 4 cups water
- 2 cups firmly packed fresh basil leaves, finely chopped
- 1 package powdered fruit pectin (approx. ¾ ounce)
- 3 drops green food coloring (optional, although it really perks up the color)
- 5 cups sugar

In a large saucepan bring the water and basil to a boil. Remove from heat, cover, and let the mixture stand for 10 minutes. Strain and discard the basil. Return 3½ cups of the liquid to the pan. Stir in the pectin and food coloring and return the mixture to a rolling boil over high heat. Add in the sugar and boil for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Remove from heat and skim off the foam.

Carefully ladle the jelly mixture into sterilized (according to standard canning procedures) half-pint jars, leaving ¼-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles, wipe rims, and adjust lids. Process for 15 minutes in boiling water or a canner.

One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well.

--Virginia Woolf

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