

# Children's Garden Club

Volume # 7, Sheet # 6

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Tasting Herb & Recipes – Vinegar - Butter  
Gilberg's Perennial Farms  
2906 Ossenfort Road, Wildwood

## Welcome to the June Meeting

I would like to Thank You all for coming and especially Cindy for Hosting this month's Meeting. Cindy & Doug have decided to close this retail operation here as of June 11, 2006. Cindy will still be apart of the Children's Garden Club with great topics but from different locations. Cindy is still going to be apart of the horticultural business doing consulting, Landscape design and writing.

How everyone is's hanging basket doing from last month? Next month will be on July 8<sup>th</sup> /06 due to 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend. We will be at Sappington Garden Center, 11530 Gravois, the topics will be Summer Flowering Shrubs & Horticultural Therapy with Gary Wanger with St. Louis Children's Hospital. How many of you were with us when we visited the rood top

garden? Gary will let us know how he is enjoying Horticultural Therapy at Children's Hospital.

Today we are going to learn bout the tastes of Herbs and how to use them with recipes we have enjoyed herbs for thousand of years; herbs have been one of the most important plants in the life of man. Herbs have played a vital role in cultures all over the world and the importance they play in our

history. Particularly they have been indispensable in medicine, seasonings, flowering and preserving foods. Herbs are a part of folklore, legends, superstitions and parts of wedding ceremonies.

Herbs, according to popular wisdom, can flavor a roast, repel mice, ward off vampires, or keep your love true, depending on which problem is most urgent and which herb is used. No wonder herb gardens enjoy a new found popularity along with getting back to nature.

The definition most acceptable as the definition of “Herb” is: “plant, seed, or plant part valued for its medicinal, savory or aromatic qualities”.

Historically, most plants that can be categorized as herbs contain some substance in the root, bark, leaf, flower or fruit that at one time has been used in medicine. This does include commonly viewed weeds as Purslane and Dandelion.

Most herbs can be started from seed at home indoors and may also be seed sown directly in the garden, or purchased heavy well established plants from your local garden center, or from hear just look at the selection.

Herbs can be classed as annuals or perennials or biennials. Basil a good example for an annual, and chives or oregano are good perennial examples and Parsley as biennials.

Herbs generally do well in our soil if you can produce a well composted, well drained, and garden. Too rich of soil results in lush foliage, which can lessen the fragrance and the flavor. Generally use 1 ½ to 2 pounds of 5-10-5 per 100 square feet during cultivating or turning over the soil in spring preparation.

Although herbs may have an air of mystery about them, growing herbs does not need to be. It’s as straight forward as growing flowers and much less

demanding than growing vegetables. The majority of herbs are relatively pest and disease free and require little more than a well drained or raised planter, ( A CONTAINER GARDEN ) a sunny site, the more the better to thrive. The ideal ph range for most herbs is 6.5 to 7.0 which is slightly acidic to neutral.

The flavor and aroma of the culinary herbs comes from the volatile Essential oils stored in small glands in the leaves, seeds and fruits. Harvesting plants at their proper time retain their flavor. Fresh, young tender leaves can be harvested and used anytime during the growing season.

If you wish to harvest herbs for drying, a rule of thumb is to complete your harvest while plants are in bloom. Best to wash always even if you don't use pesticides, your neighbor might. When washing, use cold water and then dry as rapidly as possible in a darkened well ventilated area. When storing leaves with stems use colored glass and don't use paper or cardboard to store because they can absorb and take the essential oils from the herb.

Growing herbs, annuals, perennials, plants in general is like cooking with herbs - it is often a process of trial and error. Don't give up the ship; the school of hard knocks is some times the best way of learning.

The pleasure of herbs goes beyond growing and cooking on to Potpourris, pomander balls, rose balls, herbal flora arrangements, dried herbal baskets, garlands, nose gays or Tussie Mussie, soaps and scented candles.

## BE CREATIVE AND ENJOY - GROWING HERBS IN CONTAINERS

Many herbs can be grown successfully in containers on a patio, balcony or terrace. There are many reasons why you may want to grow herbs in containers rather than in the garden. First, many of them are small and tend to get lost in a landscape; growing them in containers brings them closer top the viewer. This is especially true of ornamental herbs that have unique qualities

that should be view up close. Container growing is especially recommended for herbs that need good drainage and tend to rot in overly wet garden soils, or for tender herbs that need to be over wintered indoors. Containers are easily transported and can be arranged in attractive groupings with containers of flowering plants.

Choosing your container, any container is suitable for growing herbs as long as it has a drainage hole. Clay & terra cotta pots are often preferred, some clay base glazed are also great, because they are more porous than plastic. Other containers that work well include windows boxes, strawberry jars, and hanging baskets.

The soil mix you should use should be loose and well-drained. A recommended mix for container grown plants can be made by mixing equal parts of potting soil, peat moss, and perlite (or vermiculite). Now you can find some packages marked Container mix.

Small and slow – growing herbs look best in containers. Some examples are variegated sage, purple sage, golden sage, parsley, Greek oregano, rosemary, marjoram, bush basil thyme, chives, and summer savory. If you have a large container Cindy has suggested a Pizza Herb Theme using basil, oregano, and thyme with possibly a tomato next to it. Another suggestion is you can combine is lemon verbena with mint since it is suggested not to plant mint in the garden unless you do not care of it taking over. The Container keep it somewhat in confinement.

Watering herbs in containers can be a difficult part of container gardening. Plants growing in containers dry out faster than in the ground. On a hot sunny day, a container may require water once or twice a day. Of course, the water requirements vary to allow a small amount to come out the drainage holes in the bottom of the container. Since most herbs do not require high fertility, you should not fertilize them as much as you would other container-grown plants such as flowers, vegetables or houseplants. During the growing season, pinch the plants back to keep them bushy and compact and remove any dead or unhealthy leaves.

## **GROWING, HARVESTING AND USING HERBS IN THE MIDWEST**

**The following list contains a few herbs one can grow in St. Louis.**

### **PERENNIALS**

#### **CULINARY**

Anise Hyssop  
Bee Balm (Bergamot)  
Catnip  
Chives  
Cilantro/Coriander (reseeds)  
Chervil (reseeds)  
Garlic Chives  
Bronze Fennel  
French Tarragon  
Lavender (if well-drained!)  
Lemon Balm  
Mints  
Oregano (tends to go wild)  
Sage  
Salad Burnett  
Thyme (upright and creeping, both somewhat tender)

#### **ORNAMENTAL**

Artemisia (Silver King, etc.)  
Baptisia  
Catmint  
Comfrey  
Coreopsis  
Dianthus  
Germander  
Lady's Mantle  
Lamb's Ear  
Rue  
Sweet Woodruff  
Tansy  
Violets  
Wild Ginger  
Yarrow

#### **TENDER PERENNIALS (MUST BE TAKEN IN FOR WINTER)**

Bay Tree  
Lemon Verbena  
Rosemary  
Scented Geraniums

## **ANNUALS**

Dill

Nasturtiums

Pansies/Johnny Jump-ups

Parsley

Peppers

Pineapple Sage

Summer Savory

## **How to Use Herbed Vinegars. . . . .**

Make a salad dressing by mixing with olive oil (or use your own favorite recipe in place of the standard vinegar or lemon juice.

Add to buttermilk with a little sugar and dehydrated onion flakes for a quick and unique salad dressing.

Use as a marinade for meats, poultry or fish before grilling. (Lemon-mint is very good with lamb.)

Add a dash to your favorite homemade vegetable soup.

Add a tablespoon of tarragon vinegar to the water when poaching eggs in water. In addition to helping keep the egg together, this adds a very delicate flavor.

Shake into gravies, sauces, stews or chili for extra zip.

Good on baked potatoes and kids will love herbed vinegar on French fries.

Try adding basil vinegar to pasta white sauce.

Raspberry vinegar is a light refreshing change for fruit salad, chicken salad or simple crisp greens.

Overnight pickles may be made with herbed vinegar over slices of carrots, cucumbers, squash, green peppers or tomatoes.

Steamed string beans take on a new personality with a dash of herbed vinegar instead of butter.

Basil vinegar is good in tomato juice or Bloody Marys.

Raspberry or lemon-mint vinegar is good with raw spinach, coarsely chopped red cabbage, sliced apples and toasted walnuts. Try adding a teaspoon of honey and teaspoon Dijon mustard to olive oil and vinegar.

A special creamy dressing for sliced fruit may be made of 4 Tablespoons Raspberry Vinegar and ½ cup mayonnaise, 2 teaspoons powdered sugar and ½ cup heavy cream. Blend well and refrigerate before using.

Add herbed vinegar to stir-fry vegetables instead of soy sauce.

Use your imagination – herbed vinegar is often a wonderful alternative to salt or butter for those on a restricted diet.

St. Louis Herb Society

## **HERB BUTTERS**

Herb butters add a special surprise to foods and an elegant touch to the simplest of meals. They can be melted over broiled meat, poultry, fish or seafood, added to baked potatoes or cooked vegetables, spread on French bread or to season croutons and the list goes on.

Salted butter or margarine may be used, but for those on sodium restricted diets, unsalted sweet butter is preferred. Whichever type you choose, it should be at room temperature before blending and then allowed to mellow for several hours before using. When making herb butters with fresh herbs keep the butter refrigerated and use within several days or freeze until needed.

Herb butter may be used with a variety of foods. When in doubt, use the Herb & Spice section in the beginning of the book for recommendations under the predominate herb or spice used in the Herb Butter Blend. You will be amazed at how versatile an herbal butter can be.

For those concerned about cholesterol, the following recipe will cut the quantity of saturated fats in half.

### **BUTTER BLEND**

In a blender or food processor, blend 1 cup soft butter with 1 cup sunflower oil, corn oil or oil of your choice and 1/2 tsp. salt if desired. When well blended, put in containers and refrigerate until needed for the following recipes.

### **CREAM CHEESE**

You can substitute cream cheese including no-fat cream cheese in any of these recipes.

### **BASIC HERB BUTTER**

½ cup unsalted butter, softened  
2-6 Tbs. fresh herbs or 1-3 Tbs. dried herbs

½ tsp. lemon juice or white wine vinegar (optional)

½ tsp. salt (optional)

The following Herb Butters are made with fresh herbs unless otherwise specified. To substitute dried for fresh, use half the amount called for and in tsp. garlic powder for each clove of garlic.

Simply mix together the ingredients until well blended and refrigerate for several hours before serving.

#### BASIL BUTTER

½ cup butter, softened

¼ cup finely chopped basil

½ tsp. minced garlic, if desired

½ tsp. lemon juice or white wine vinegar

For variation add 2 Tbs. grated Parmesan or Romano cheese. Use on baked potatoes, cooked vegetables, broiled or baked fish, meat, scrambled eggs.

#### CHILI BUTTER

½ cup butter, softened

1 tsp. chili powder

½ tsp. ground cumin

Use on beets, potatoes, green beans, or melt and serve on popcorn.

#### CHIVE BUTTER

½ cup butter, softened

2 Tbs. chopped chives

1 clove garlic, minced

1 Tbs. chopped parsley or chervil

1/2 tsp. rosemary

Use on hot vegetables, meats, fish, poultry, bread.

#### CURRY BUTTER

½ cup butter, softened

1-2 tsp. curry powder, depending desired hotness.

Spread on crackers, bread, broiled fish, lamb chops or use to season vegetables.

#### DILL BUTTER

½ cup butter, softened

¼ cup chopped dill weed or 1 1/2 Tbs. dried dill weed or dill seed

1 tsp. lemon juice or white wine vinegar

For variation, use 1 Tbs. fresh dill weed or dill seed and 1 Tb. fresh oregano.

Use with cooked vegetables, French bread, fish, seafood.

#### FINES HERBES BUTTER

½ cup butter, softened

1 Tbs. chopped Parsley

1 tsp. each chopped chervil, tarragon and chives

Or use 1 ½ Tbs. dried Fines Herbs blend

½ tsp. tarragon wine vinegar

Use with cooked vegetables, chicken, fish, eggs, bread.

#### FLOWER PETAL BUTTER

This blend is a truly spicy delicacy. ½ cup butter, softened, ¼ cup fresh flower petals of your choice.

Choose from one of the following or blend according to taste: rose, calendula, carnation, violet, lilac, nasturtium or scented geranium flower petals.

For a very specific flavor, consider one of the following highly flavored herb flowers: chives, mint, thyme, rosemary, basil, dill, sweet marjoram, lavender, oregano, etc. For added color, include a few dandelion flowers.

After blending, refrigerate for 8-10 hours before serving.

NOTE: BE SURE THAT THE FLOWERS/PLANTS HAVE NOT BEEN SPRAYED WITH PESTICIDES OR HERBICIDES.

#### HERBAL LEMON BUTTER

½ cup butter softened

¼ cup fresh chopped lemon balm or 2 Tbs. chopped lemon verbena.

Few drops lemon juice or 1/2 tsp. finely grated lemon peel

Use on baked chicken, lamb, veal, fish or seafood.

#### ITALIAN HERB BUTTER

½ cup butter, softened

1 clove garlic, minced

2 Tbs. chopped parsley

½ Tbs. Woodland Herb Farm Italian Seasoning or Italian blend of your choice.

Use on French bread or to make croutons.

#### MIXED HERB BUTTER

½ cup butter, softened

2 Tbs. chopped parsley

½ tsp. each chopped rosemary, tarragon, thyme, sage and mustard powder

1 clove minced garlic (optional).

Use on vegetables, meats, poultry, fish, bread.

#### TARRAGON BUTTER

½ cup butter, softened

1 Tbs. each chopped tarragon and chervil

1 tsp. tarragon wine vinegar

Use on vegetables, broiled chicken, steak or fish.

#### ZESTY HORSERADISH BUTTER

½ cup butter, softened

3 Tbs. prepared horseradish

1 Tbs. Poppy seeds or ½ Tbs. black mustard seeds

½ tsp. mustard powder

2 Tbs. onion, finely chopped

Serve with cold meat sandwiches (ham, beet; pork) or with poached fish.

Culinary Uses for Herbs and Spices, From Woodland Herb Farm

Written by Pat Bourdo, 1984

### Vinegar Recipes

#### RED WINE RAVIGOTE VINEGAR

Combine in a quart jar and bruise lightly the following herbs, using leaves and stems and packing loosely: 2 cups salad burnet, 1 cup each basil and tarragon, ½ cup thyme, plus 1 red pepper (uncut) and 1 clove garlic. Pour red wine vinegar over and let stand 2-3 weeks (no more than 3 months). Strain and bottle.