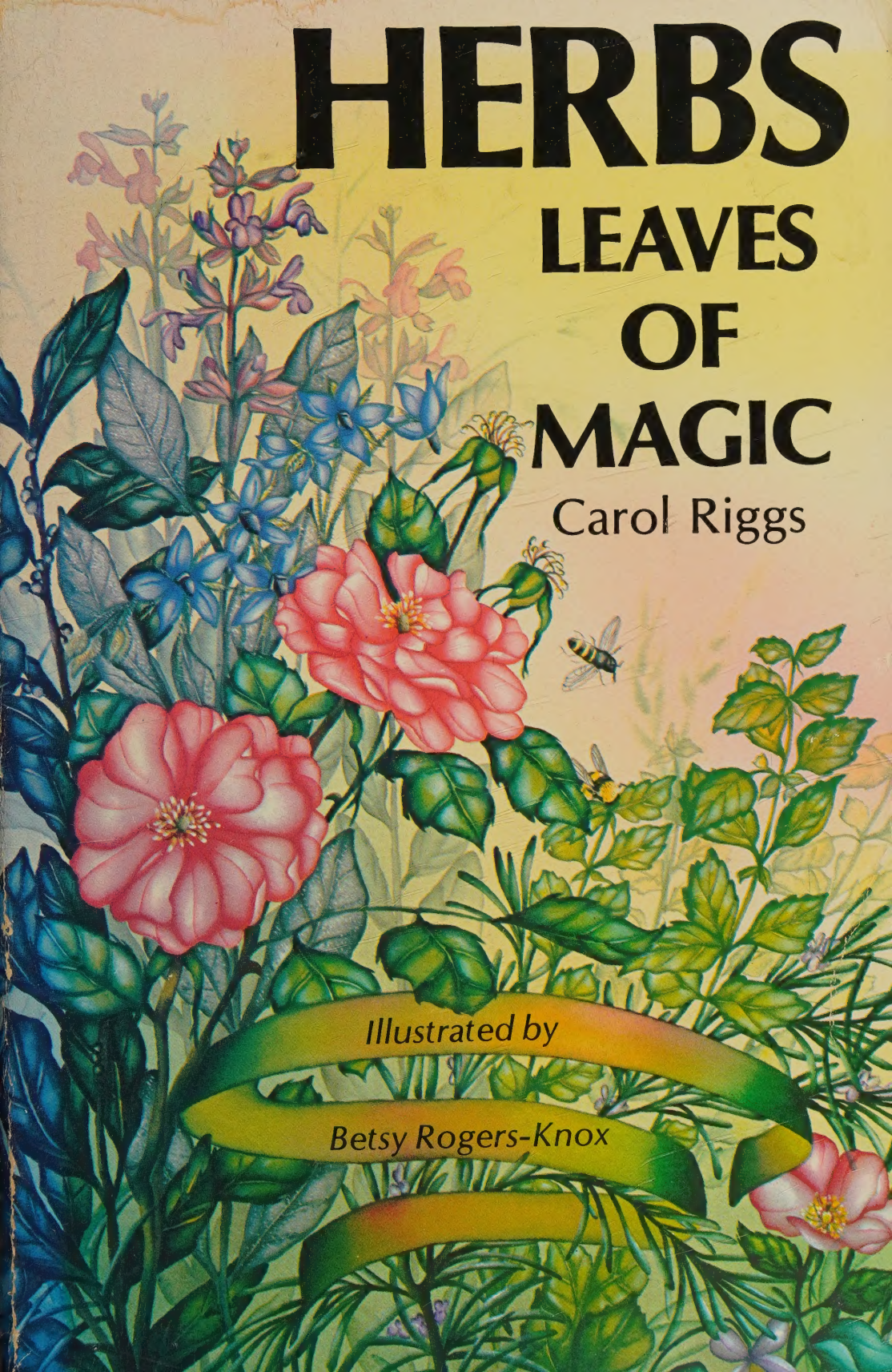
HERBS

LEAVES OF MAGIC

Carol Riggs



Illustrated by

Betsy Rogers-Knox

HERBS
LEAVES OF MAGIC

By Carol Riggs
Illustrated by Betsy Rogers-Knox

Sycamore Island Books
Boulder, Colorado

For Rick,
who over the years
happily taste-tested
all of my herbal
concoctions.

First Edition
Published by Sycamore Island Books, a division of Paladin Enterprises, Inc., Post Office Box 1307, Boulder, Colorado 80306

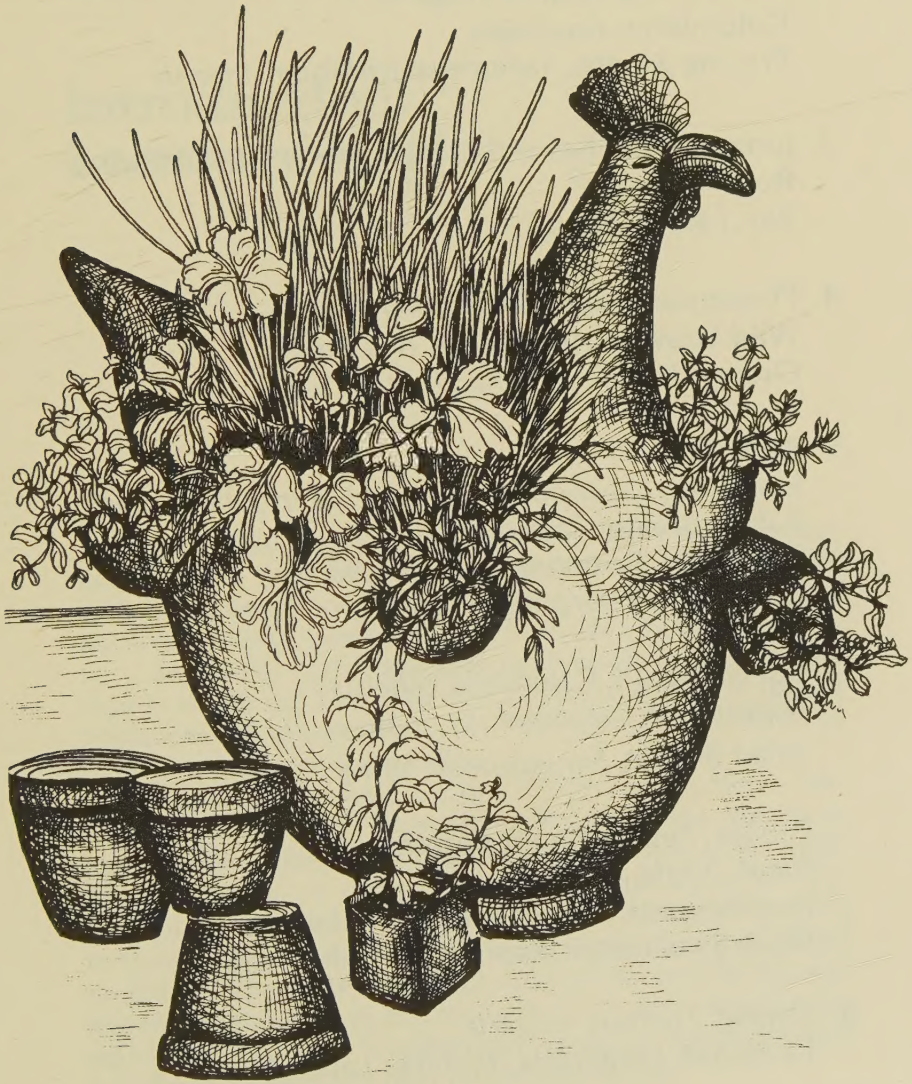
Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Riggs, Carol.
Herbs: Leaves of Magic.

1. Herbs. 2. Herb Gardening. 3. Cookery (Herbs)
I. Title.
SB351.H5R49 635'.7 78-27503
ISBN 0-87364-153-1

Contents

Index to Recipes



Color Plates

1. Beebalm, *Monarda didyma*
   Rufous Hummingbird, *Selasphorus rufus*

2. Fennel, *Foeniculum vulgare*
   Columbine, *Aquilegia*
   Praying Mantis, *Tenodera aridifolia sinensis*

3. Juniper branches and berries, *Juniperus communis*
   Rose "Baccara"
   Bay, *Laurus nobilis*

4. Pineapple Sage, *Salvia rutilans*
   Wild Strawberries, *Fraises des Bois*
   Orange Mine, *Mentha citrata*

5. Rose "Sonja"
   Lavender, *Lavandula vera* and *Lavandula dentata*
   Baby's Breath, *Gypsophila*
   Rosemary, *Rosmarinus officinalis*
   Geranium, *Pelargonium spp.*

6. Pot Marigold, *Calendula officinalis*
   Nasturtium, *Tropaeolum majus*
   Salad Burnet, *Sanguisorba minor*

7. Parsley, *Petroselinum hortense*
   Pansy, *Viola*
   Parsleyworm, *Papilio polyxenes asterius*
   Black Swallowtail, *Papilio polyxenes asterius*

8. Thyme, *Thymus vulgaris*
   Lavender, *Lavandula dentata, Lavandula vera*

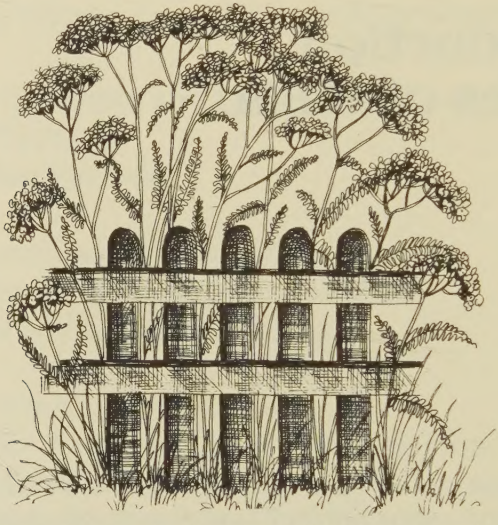
Introduction: Leaves of Magic

Herbs hold a unique position in Mother Nature's scheme. Unlike fruits and vegetables they have never been used as a major source of sustenance (although many do contain abundant nutrients). Unlike trees they are of little value for shade or shelter. It seems that herbs have been put here for no other reason than to enrich our lives with their brilliant spectrum of flavors, fragrances and foliages. Herbs are nature gone beyond the call of duty, literally the spice of life.

Herbs have always held a strong — some say mystical — fascination for mankind. They have been made into wreaths to honor heroes, strewn in the paths of priests and kings, made into potions for the casting out of devils. Herbs provided the impetus for old world commerce, inspiring daring adventurers to travel to the other side of the world in search of their exotic properties. The ancient Egyptians compiled a notable store of knowledge about herbs and their effects on physical and spiritual health. The herbal "freedom teas" symbolize a pivotal period in the early American's fight for independence.

Today herbs are as fascinating, and useful, as ever. They provide the creative cook with a world of flavors, fragrances and garnishes, that are healthy alternatives to chemical additives and colorations. They can be made into soothing teas and baths, fragrant sachets and potpourris. The ancient school of herbal folk medicine continues to thrive to this day.

Best of all, we can grow these priceless treasures practically anywhere for practically nothing. Herbs are not picky hybrids, they have not been genetically changed by scientists in laboratories. They grow in your garden just as they grow in nature: easily and abundantly.



This book is written to help you make the most of herbs, both as attractive ornamentals and as the basis for a healthful and free-spirited approach to cooking. It is dedicated to anyone who finds satisfaction in using what they have themselves created.

Herbs have brought a world of pleasure and fulfillment to me and my family. They can do the same for you. I hope this book will be of some help.

An Herbal History

Throughout the ages men's lives have been tied to the use of herbs for culinary, medicinal and cosmetic purposes. The first herbalist was probably a primitive man who wrapped his freshly killed game in leaves to protect it from the ashes and dirt of the open fire pit. He soon learned that some leaves added an agreeable fragrance or flavor to his meat. Some leaves made him feel good, while others made him sick. Without paper or pen, he compiled information on the herbs and plants around him and began to hand it down to his sons and daughters.

The first written herb records that we've found date back to 2000 B.C. when an Egyptian recorded the work of herbal doctors on a piece of papyrus. The Egyptians actually cultivated herbs for culinary and medicinal purposes. Coriander seeds found in ancient tombs have been sprouted and yield the same botanic variety that we know as coriander today. The herb garlic is reported to be the magic ingredient that gave Egyptian slaves the stamina to complete the great pyramids.

By the time the Greek and Roman civilizations were at their height, extensive textbooks on the medicinal values of herbs had been compiled by the forefathers of our modern medicine. In A.D. 60, Dioscorides compiled an herbal entitled *De Materia Medica* which accurately cataloged the virtues of over 600 plants. There were herbs to heal wounds, stop the flow of blood, relieve stiff joints and cure broken bones. There were even herbs that could reputedly make a person merry or melancholy. Herbs and their properties were often shrouded in myth and magic. They were used to cast both good and bad spells. Herbs were attributed with the ability to conjure up demons or provide protection from witches. There were herbs for mad dog bites and herbs prescribed to cure baldness. Some herbs were reported to remove wrinkles, restore lost beauty and make one more appealing to the opposite sex.

The Romans scented their baths extravagantly with hundreds of lavender blossoms. They honored their heroes with crowns and garlands of sweet scented herbs and strewed costly herbs and flowers on the ground before their Emperors.

Roman legions took their medicinal and culinary herbs with them on their campaigns and thereby spread them into other societies. They also returned home with new-found herbs, importing them from far and wide.

During the Dark Ages the medicinal uses of herbs were relegated to the monasteries. Monks cultivated and cataloged the herbs, adding greatly to the store of knowledge that had been built around them.

During the Renaissance herb growing reached another peak in the elaborate formal gardens of England, France and Italy. In the fifteenth century, with the advent of the printing press, the common herbal came into existence. John Gerard, an English surgeon-barber and avid gardener, published his herbal in 1597.

In the 1600s most of the medical treatments of the day were published in Latin. In 1649 Nicholas Culpeper translated these cures into English so they could be deciphered by the common man. Culpeper was one of the herbalists who had faith in the medical practice expounded in the "Doctrine of Signatures." The "Doctrine of Signatures" was based on the theory that "like plants cure like diseases." Plants shaped like lungs cured lung diseases, while those shaped like hearts cured heart ailments, and so on. Red stems, leaves or flowers were associated with blood and its diseases. Eyebright flowers looked like bloodshot eyes and were therefore used in lotions for eye infections. Plants that were abundant, like dandelion, yarrow and nettles, were

believed to be cure-alls. Culpeper describes each plant, gives its virtues and lists the planets and signs that govern that herb. Tansy was owned by Venus and could stop a miscarriage if its bruised leaves were applied to the navel. We scoff at Culpeper's mysticism and his astrological observations, but we forget that some of today's best farmers still plant and harvest according to the phases of the moon.

American colonists brought many herbs and herbals with them to the New World. The American Indians shared their knowledge of native American herbs with the settlers, giving them a broader range of herbs for medicinal and culinary purposes. Colonists hung bunches of tansy in their doorways to repel flies and ants. They treated their children's colic with dill seed tea and rubbed oil of marjoram on their rheumatic joints. In the days before refrigeration they put strong smelling herbs in their soups and stews to cover the odor of meat going bad. When the British taxed oriental tea, they mixed up "Freedom Teas" using combinations of the herbs that they'd brought with them and those growing wild in their new environment.

During the twentieth century, Americans began to move into the cities, abandoning their herb and vegetable gardens. Religious sects like the Shakers began to farm herbs for retail trade, but these herbs never really replaced the ones that the colonists had grown in their own gardens. With the advent of synthetic drugs, many housewives stopped making their own medical preparations. Without the constant and ready supply, herbs lost their popularity in the kitchen as well.

After World War II, American servicemen returned home with a new taste for Oriental and Mediterranean flavors, and the interest in herbs was rekindled. Pizza, ravioli, spaghetti and fettucine led to the popularity of oregano, basil, rosemary and thyme.

With today's stress on health foods, herbs are welcome fare. Herbs give flavor without artificial additives. As garnishes they add color without the harmful effects of the likes of red food dye #2. They also contain many necessary vitamins, minerals, and trace elements, even if only in small doses. Some herbs stimulate the appetite; others depress it (attention dieters!). Some herbs pick you up and others, like camomile, soothe and relax you after a hectic day. But the most appealing characteristics of herbs—and the biggest factors in their renewed popularity—are that they are easy to grow, easy to use, and have the power to turn an ordinary dish into something really special.

Planting an Herb Garden

An herb garden can be small and simple, large and elaborate, containerized, naturalized, or stiff and formal. Each gardener must choose the form that best suits his needs, his gardening space and his fancy.

If you live in an apartment you can raise almost any kind of herb on a sunny balcony or in a windowbox. If you're a vegetable gardener you can enhance the flavor and vigor of your crops and provide them with natural pest resistance by judiciously interplanting companion herbs with your vegetables. If you're a gourmet (or aspire to be) you can consider your herb garden your personal store of fresh and natural flavors, fragrances and colors—right outside your kitchen door.

If you would like lavender and other sweet-scented herbs to fill your linen closets you might want to plant only fragrant herbs amidst old varieties of scented roses. A flagstone path can be enhanced by planting creeping thyme or corsican mint between the stones. They withstand moderate amounts of traffic and perfume the air whenever anyone steps on them. A grey garden

of the various artemisias, lambs ear and grey santolina is a beautiful thing by itself or in combination with white-flowering annuals.

Many annual herbs, like opal basil, have beautiful flowers and attractive foliage that make them welcome additions to flower beds filled with other bedding plants. Similarly, perennial herbs often fit well into rock gardens or other perennial beds. They come back year after year to add their green or grey foliage as a backdrop for the more elaborately colored perennials. I like to space many of the bushier perennial herbs, like the grey artemisias, in front of spring flowering bulbs. In April the bulbs come up and bloom while the artemisia is still dormant. Bulb foliage should be allowed to die back naturally, and by the time it's unsightly the artemisia has filled in and obscured the bulbs' yellow, floppy, shriveled leaves.

Preparing the Plot

The steps for preparing any type of herb garden are essentially the same. First mark off the area that you've decided to plant with herbs. It should be in a sunny spot free from any large rocks or plant material. Pull any weeds so as to remove as much of their root system as possible. If there is a covering of sod it is best to rent a sod cutter and totally remove the grass cover. I've tried to rototill the sod into the existing soil, thinking that it would incorporate lots of nice organic material. The grass inevitably comes back from the dead however, and requires hours of unhappy labor picking it out. Rather than throw the sod away you may use it to patch weakened lawn in other places or add it to the compost pile.

The soil needs to contain enough nutrients to maintain the plants, and it should be porous enough to allow good air circulation around the roots. Above all, the soil must have good drainage so the plants don't sit in water.

Leveling

If the land isn't level water will drain to the lowest spot, robbing the high spots of moisture and drowning plants in the low spots. If the soil is stable and the incline is slight, you can plan to put mints and other water-loving herbs at the lowest points. However, if the soil shifts or the water runs off, the ground should be leveled. This can be done by removing the earth at the high spots or by building a wall of moss rock, railroad ties or cinder

blocks around the low points and then filling the forms with soil. Leveling is often a problem with rock gardens. Merely setting rocks along a slope won't hold the moisture or soil. The rocks must be positioned so they form terraces in a stair step effect with flat surfaces of planting land between actual walls of rock.

After the land is level and free of any plant material it should be raked smooth. Any clods or rocks left that are too large to go between the tines in the rake should be broken up or removed.

Peat Moss, Compost, Well-rotted Manure

Herbs are not picky hybrids; they have remained unchanged through the years. They have adapted to nature's whims and will usually survive and even do well in soil that is only moderately rich. The existing topsoil in different areas may be filled with clay or sand or naturally composted organic material. The nature of this topsoil will determine what you need to add to enrich that soil. Generally, applying three inches of peat moss and two inches of compost or well-rotted manure over the smooth, raked surface and tilling it into the existing topsoil to a depth of eight inches is sufficient. If your soil has a lot of clay you may need to add some sand. If you already have lots of organic material in your soil you may not need to add nearly as much peat moss, compost or manure. If the topsoil itself is really bad, remove it and bring in a load of good, clean soil.

Making your own compost is an efficient way to dispose of kitchen wastes while making a humusy, rich conditioner for your garden soil. When building a compost pile start with a two-inch layer of manure. This manure can be from sheep, cows, horses or chickens. Spread a twelve-inch layer of green material on top of the manure. Green material can be made of kitchen wastes, grass clippings, weeds or leaves. Don't put any animal fats or meats into this layer or you'll have raccoons and other animals rummaging through your compost heap at night. All green material should be shredded as fine as possible. It will decompose if it is left in large pieces, but it will break down much faster if it has been shredded fine. Over this layer sprinkle natural trace additives like rock phosphate, cottonseed meal, bone meal, lime or wood ashes from the fireplace. Put an inch of soil on top of the whole thing. Then start all over again, adding manure, green material, trace additives and soil until the heap is at least three feet tall. The smallest heap that will still work well is usually three feet tall by three feet wide and six feet long. If you have enough space and material for a five-foot heap, it will usually work faster and better.

Cover the whole pile with dirt or straw and water it in well. Bacteria in the pile will begin to digest the contents of the heap, causing the temperature to increase to about 160°. This heat dries up the pile so you'll have to add water occasionally. Turning the pile with a pitch fork once a week will increase the action and you should have a nutritious and humusy soil conditioner in no time at all.

Add a layer of compost to the garden in the fall and it will begin to condition the existing soil. Rototill in another layer in the spring before planting. You can never add too much compost to a garden. Unlike chemical additives it will never burn delicate seedlings or mature plants.

Soil pH

If you have trouble growing herbs in a certain spot, and feel your drainage, sunlight and water are sufficient, you might want to send a sample of your soil to the nearest agricultural extension service or test it yourself with a home soil kit to determine its pH. Most herbs do well in a pH range between six and seven. If your soil is too acidic (less than six), you can work limestone into it at the rate of five pounds for every one hundred square feet of soil. If your soil is too alkaline (more than eight) use three pounds of aluminum sulfate or one-half pound of ground sulfur for every one hundred square feet of soil.

Fertilizers

Herbs do not require a great deal of fertilizer. If their soil has been improved with nutrients from compost and well-rotted manure they probably won't need any additional chemical fertilizer. Chemical fertilizers, especially nitrogen, encourage plants to absorb large amounts of water, making them larger and heavier. This usually enhances their appearance, but their quantities of essential oils don't increase proportionately to their increased water weight. Therefore by adding a high nitrogen fertilizer you are simply selecting for more plant, not more fragrance and flavor.

Peat moss is merely a soil conditioner with little nutritive value. The nutritive value of your compost depends upon what you've put into it. Likewise, manure is mainly a conditioner for the soil and its nutritive value is determined by the grains and grass that the animals were fed. If you feel your compost and manure are not sufficient, adding a 5-10-10 fertilizer at the rate of five pounds

per one hundred square feet, and mixing it well into the soil before you plant will assure you of bigger, bushier plants. Care must be taken to mix the chemical fertilizer in well, as concentrations on exposed roots at planting time will kill an herb seedling, or even an established plant.

If you're adding herbs to an already established bed you may want to dig individual holes and put in one teaspoonful of a 5-10-10 fertilizer per six-inch hole. Cover the fertilizer with a layer of good soil and then set the plant into the hole.

If you have chosen to use chemical fertilizers, either scratch in granular 5-10-10 around the plants after six to eight weeks or water them in with a solution of water soluble 5-10-10. This fertilizing procedure should be carried on every six to eight weeks during the growing season.

No matter what fertilizer you choose or how you choose to apply it, it is always a good idea to water transplants quite heavily just after planting. This will tend to lessen any damage from fertilizers as well as decrease the chances of the transplant wilting.

Fertilizer requirements for individual herbs are discussed under each herb heading in this book. I often recommend a 15-30-15 fertilizer for indoor herbs, applied in water solution every four to six weeks. Indoor herbs usually aren't grown under prime conditions, and a commercially prepared 15-30-15 fertilizer seems to be the most readily available and easiest to use.

The Formal Garden

Herb gardens have a long and colorful tradition. Herbs are as beautiful as they are practical, and people have long given in to the temptation to use herb gardens as a means of artistic expression. The result can be most rewarding . . . there is something magical about sitting in the middle of an herb garden on a warm summer night.

One of the most popular—and practical—formats for an herb garden is the raised bed. Moss rock, redwood, concrete blocks or railroad ties make excellent sides for the raised beds (and excellent seats on those warm summer nights we were just talking about), and when used with a little imagination they have the potential to turn a backyard garden into a showplace. Raised beds are also beneficial if your soil is extremely poor, because in filling the beds you can create the exact soil porosity and mixture

of nutrients that best suits your needs. Raised beds provide easy access for planting and weeding (eliminating much of the stooping and stretching that sends so many gardeners to bed early), and are a favorite of people who are confined to wheelchairs.

Traditional wagon wheel patterns are also popular. These are made by planting the herbs between the spokes of an actual wagon wheel lying on its side, or within a wheel shape defined by brick or stone. A goosefoot is another common herb garden shape, and is perhaps the best of the traditional shapes for easy access to all parts of the garden.

Lovers of Shakespeare may want to plant the herbs that the Bard so often used as symbols in his plays. One interesting idea is to place wooden signs throughout the garden with short quotes from Shakespeare's writing that include mention of the herbs.

History buffs have often duplicated the elaborate knot gardens that were so popular among wealthy Europeans in the sixteenth century. During the Renaissance in England and France it became a status symbol to have a garden more elaborately designed and manicured than your neighbors. There are many herbs that adapt themselves through pruning to these stiff and formal patterns. The geometric patterns were copied from pattern books intended for lace makers and weavers working with silk and wool. These patterns were adapted to gardens, giving the effect of continuous ribbons of herbs carefully intertwined. As gardeners, the Mollet family became something of a dynasty from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. Members of the family worked for kings and nobles, and fashioned remarkably elaborate designs.

Sundials

The centers of most formal gardens were occupied by statues or bird baths or something else of interest as a focal point. The old fashioned, cone shaped, basket weave beehives were often used in the centers of herb gardens, either as a simple decoration or for practical use.

Sundials are probably the most popular objects of traditional design for herb gardens. The sundials in yesterday's herb gardens were always associated with deep sentiment, and often included mottos that reflected a preoccupation with life's passing and thoughts of eternity. Time was seen as a most wonderful and fleeting condition. It was an intangible, and it seemed fitting that its passing could be marked by an almost equally intangible

shadow. One of my favorite sundial mottos is:

I Count None But Sunny Hours.

Another dial in the middle of an English herb garden reads:

Life's But a Shadow
Man's But Dust;
This Diall Says
Dy All We Must.

For best coming directly to the point, I like the following verse that I found on a sundial in New England:

I Note The Time That You Waste.

My Own Knot Garden

After years of relegating our herbs to any area of the backyard that wasn't already densely cultivated, my husband and I decided to remove another chunk of lawn and try a simple knot garden. Planning started while the snow was still falling outside. Inside, I was surrounded by all my herb catalogs, reams of graph paper, colored pencils and lots of enthusiasm.

On graph paper we sketched the area we had designated for the garden in scale. For the knot we decided on a classic Renaissance plan of a square, surrounded by a circle that is bisected by four arcs. Normally this knot is done on a square lot, but for our space we had to adapt it to a triangular piece of ground. The circle, square and arcs in the larger triangle were drawn out on the graph paper with different colored pens. Each color designated which sections of the arcs should go over or under sections of the square and circle.

Then we had to decide which herbs we wanted for the knot pattern and the surrounding corners of the triangle. I spent days poring over catalogs and changed my mind at least a dozen times. I think all the seed catalog companies know something about the weather that surrounds the common gardener. On the worst day of the winter, our mailbox is always filled to the brim with catalogs from Burpee and Park and the White Flower Farm. Those spring and summer pictures of pansies, forget-me-nots, tall delphiniums and lavender blossoms are enough to cheer anyone in the winter. I can't resist all the color, and tend to order everything, forgetting the planting work involved in the spring.

We finally decided on green santolina for the circle, grey santolina for the square and lavender for the arcs. These three

herbs (along with germander and hyssop) are most easily shaped, and are therefore most often used in the foundation of a knot garden.

When spring finally came, we had all our graphs and planning done and were ready to start on the actual garden. The triangular bed sloped sharply to the east so we gradually built up the low end with a moss rock wall. We purchased a load of fairly sandy topsoil and added it to the bed until the soil surface was level. After raking the soil smooth, we applied three inches of peat moss, two inches of well-rotted manure and one inch of compost evenly over the soil. We turned the mixture over with a shovel to a depth of eight inches, then watered the bed thoroughly to make sure it would absorb the water in a short time without excess runoff.

With a tape measure we found the exact center of the bed and sunk a large rock two feet down into the soil. (This rock was to later hold the focal point of the garden, a sundial that my husband bought for me from a little shop in New Hampshire.) Then with rulers, tape, string and stakes we marked off our geometric pattern, pouring sand over the lines to keep them sharp and clear.

Next we placed the actual plants along the sand patterns at four-inch intervals, leaving them intact in their pots. This is a good time to step back and take a good look at your herb garden. I must have rearranged the pots a dozen times until they looked just right to me. The original arcs of lavender were changed to germander and the green and grey santolina were each tried time and again as both the circle and square with either germander or lavender as the bisecting arcs. Take your time and change the pots till the colors and shapes please you, for once the plants are out of the pots and into the ground they should remain there.

After planting the main pattern, we randomly arranged flagstone throughout the garden. These rocks are important as stepping stones. If your entire garden area is too large to reach from the edge, they provide easy access for pruning and weeding.

Then we planted each of the three corners with its own special herb. The lower left corner was planted with costmary in the center surrounded by lemon balm, both grown for their lemon fragrance and flavor. It's hard to walk by that corner of the garden without stopping to pick a sprig to rub between your fingers. The lower right corner was planted with opal basil surrounded by green basil. These herbs are both annuals and have to be replanted each year. The purple leaves of opal basil are a

pleasing change from the greens and greys of the other herbs. The third corner was given to pineapple sage, for its tall, beautiful fall spikes of red flowers can be seen over the rock and sundial.

We used creeping thyme to fill in the spaces around the flagstone steps, and wild strawberries as a border all around the triangle. We love wild strawberries for their small, slightly tart fruit and beautiful white blossoms, and their dried leaves are good in herb teas. Care must be taken to clip off the runners or the herb garden might end up a strawberry bed.

At first the herb garden didn't look full and I added a plant here and one there, paying no attention at all to my original plan. The plants took hold and began to spread and grow more quickly than I had ever imagined they would. Now I find I dig out more and more of my herbs each year and I'm right back down to my original drawings.

Make It Manageable

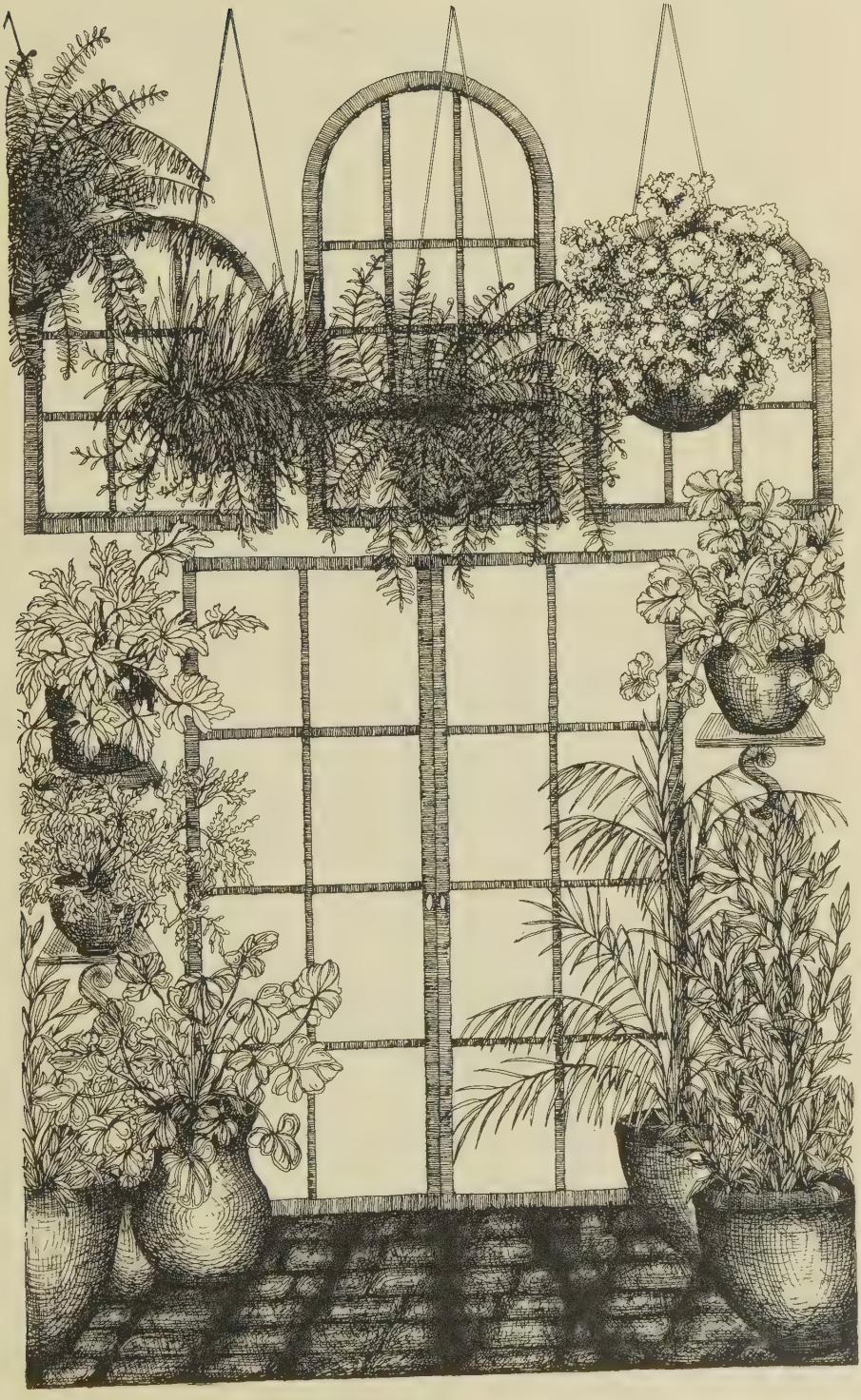
The type of herb garden you choose should obviously depend on your growing conditions, space and time. Be influenced by the herbs you like best, because they are usually the ones you'll really use and enjoy. My enthusiasm is generally greater than my time or energy, and I find that I often tackle too much. A small, well-managed garden is always more rewarding than a large, unruly one that demands too much time and attention and becomes a burden instead of the joy it should always be.

Growing Herbs Indoors

As we continue to move more and more into the city and the space between dwellings continues to decrease we find it increasingly difficult to exercise our green thumbs. Yet the psychological need to garden seems to increase as our space diminishes.

Having something green, alive and growing brings a breath of life to any closed, otherwise sterile building. It has been shown that mental patients suffering from depression seem to respond positively to surroundings that are filled with plants and flowers. Architects have increased morale and productivity by tearing down walls in high-rise office buildings and installing living hedges of indoor trees between office spaces. Children are especially impressed and pleased by the sight of a seed they have planted sprouting and growing; in fact children's mental and physical therapists use plant propagation techniques as a method of breaking down the barriers between doctor and patient.

Plants can adapt and survive any place man can. We can nurture them with artificial light and food and even grow them in



soilless media. But most apartment and city dwellers don't need to go to these extremes; anyone can grow plants with relative ease if they have a sunny window and a few minutes a day to care for their indoor herbs.

Light

Almost all of the herbs are sun lovers. When grown inside they require four to five hours of direct sunlight a day. This light may be supplemented artificially by plant lights or regular incandescent or fluorescent bulbs. To try to grow herbs under artificial light alone is much more difficult.

Start out with lights intended specifically for plants. These come in a range of wattages, in either tubes or spotlights. It's hard to find tubes greater than forty watts so you'll need several tubes to get adequate illumination. Spotlights that fit into normal porcelain sockets can be obtained in 75, 100 and 150 watt sizes. With the spotlights, you can shine light down to the top of the plant, up from the bottom, in towards the middle or all three, and the plant will be able to utilize the light. The lights should be eight to twelves inches away from the herbs, depending upon the wattage. Once the light is further than six feet away it really won't help an herb enough to be effective. Artificial lights generally need to be left on at least twelve to fourteen hours a day. Experiment until you learn which light setup is best for you. If the herbs become long and leggy with increased spaces between the leaf axils, they aren't getting enough light and should be moved into a brighter window or given more artificial light.

Drainage

Herbs hate to have wet feet. Therefore containers for herbs grown indoors should be equipped with good drain holes. The ideal set-up is to place a saucer filled with gravel under the pot. When the herbs are watered the excess collects under the gravel where it continually evaporates, increasing the humidity around the herb. This is especially helpful in the winter months when furnace heated air works to further dry out plants.

Soil Mixtures

Indoor plants require a porous potting mixture. A soil that retains too much moisture won't allow enough air to the root system or let the roots dry out quickly enough. Perlite or vermic-

ulite should keep the soil from compacting. Our indoor herbs seem to do well in a mixture of 1/4 peat moss, 1/4 sand, 1/4 perlite or vermiculite, and 1/4 topsoil. If your topsoil is already quite sandy you may not need to add sand and can use 1/3 topsoil, 1/3 peat moss and 1/3 vermiculite or perlite. This soil mix may be given a boost in nutrients by mixing it half and half with compost, well-rotted manure or earthworm castings if they are available. If you don't have a compost pile, a cow or an earthworm, you can add the nutrients in the form of a water-soluble houseplant fertilizer every four to six weeks. Almost all of the 15-30-15 fertilizers with added essential minerals can be used effectively. The first 15 stands for percent by weight of available nitrogen, 30 for phosphorus and the last 15 for potassium.

Watering

Indoors, herbs should be watered when the soil feels dry to the touch. Some gardeners schedule set intervals for watering their plants and follow those schedules no matter what else happens. House plants never dry out exactly the same way in any given period of time. If it's hot and sunny outside they'll dry out more quickly than if it's cold and humid. The increased or decreased number of hours of daylight available at different times of the year also affects a plant's ability to dry out.

The best way to water a plant is to test the soil first to see if it is dry. The most accurate testing is done with a moisture meter. If you don't have a moisture meter, simply stick your finger into the soil and you should be able to tell whether it is dry enough to need water.

Indoor plants are always on show and will therefore need more regular maintenance than outdoor plants. Any flower buds, seed heads or dying or yellowing leaves should be immediately removed. Let the plant put all its energy into leaf, stem and root formation, unless you are growing the herbs for their seeds. And above all, the plants should be kept clean to discourage pest infestations.

Container Gardening

If your gardening space is limited, or you live in an apartment without a yard, you might want to look into growing herbs and vegetables in containers. Container gardens are especially effective in places where water is restricted, because you water only the contents of the container and not the area around it. Container gardens can be large or small, fancy or plain, mixtures of many plants or single varieties by themselves. They can be used indoors or outside and they can be moved from one area to another.

Gift Planters

For a child confined in bed a lemon scented garden in a bright container is always a treat. Plant a yellow pot with lemon balm, lemon verbena, lemon thyme and a lemon scented geranium. Tie a yellow and white gingham ribbon around it and you'll have something that can be smelled, touched and tasted, as well as watered and cared for from a bed.

My children often give peppermint planters to their friends for birthday gifts. They plant a red pot with a peppermint scented

geranium and attach a red and white bow with peppermint candies tied to it.

The types of containers that can be used for herb gardening are limited only by your imagination. Almost any container can be used as long as it is large enough to accommodate an herb's root system and has a drain hole.

Strawberry Jars

Strawberry jars are decorative containers with side pockets that can hold several herbs in a relatively small space. The herbs planted in these jars should be trailing types like thyme, summer savory, winter savory, marjoram and oregano. For the best overall balance the herbs planted on top should include chives, parsley, salad burnet, basil or any of the other uprights. The pockets on strawberry jars dry out very quickly and usually need to be watered daily. In our dry Colorado climate we find that we have to water the top and side pockets in the morning and then go back to water the side pockets again in the afternoon.

Mint Planters

Some gardeners won't plant mints because they tend to spread rapidly by their underground root systems and crowd out other less aggressive plants. When confined to a container, however, mints are well-behaved. Several different varieties of mint in one large pot make an attractive container garden; just make sure there is ample root room. The more you pick the mint for iced tea and fruit punches the more it will branch, giving you a full, bushy plant. Last summer I planted a large pot of mixed mints. Their apple, peppermint, spearmint and orange fragrances all combined nicely together, and by the end of the summer they were cascading out of the pot in profusion.

Gardens of parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme delight all Simon and Garfunkel lovers. A mouse planter full of catnip is a great gift for a cat lover. Weight watchers appreciate a salad planter that's full of herbs that can be snipped to add extra flavor without calories to green salads and cottage cheese. A crockery pig full of parsley or a chicken filled with chervil might be just the right touch for a sunny kitchen corner.

Hanging Baskets

Herbs can also be grown in hanging baskets indoors or outside. For indoor gardening, put trailing herbs in a clay pot. Fill a saucer with gravel and put it under the pot to collect the excess water and add humidity to the air around the herbs. The pot, plants and saucer can all be hung with a macrame or wrought iron chain hanger.

Sphagnum moss (unmilled peat moss that still contains long fibers) can be used to make attractive hanging gardens for herbs. First you should soak the sphagnum for three to five minutes in a bucket of warm water. When it is saturated just lift it out of the bucket and begin layering it into a wire basket. Overlap the sphagnum so the inside of the basket is completely lined with at least one inch of moss. Then make holes in the side walls of the sphagnum and insert an assortment of herbs. Fill the basket with a good potting soil and top it off with some additional plants on the surface.

Sphagnum baskets are best kept outdoors or in a conservatory where the floor under the basket can get wet. They should be watered slowly from the top, making sure the water trickles through the entire basket. Since moisture evaporates from all sides, the baskets dry out very quickly. If it's windy, hot or dry you may have to water them twice a day.

An imaginative hanging basket can be a pleasing addition to your home or garden. For additional color try alternating marigolds with your herb plants. One of my favorite hanging herb planters is a spaghetti basket filled with every herb I need to make my homemade spaghetti sauce.

Vegetable Planters

Herbs may be grown in redwood planters and tubs, old whiskey barrels or bushel baskets. It's a good idea to combine herbs and vegetables in these containers. Basil and tomatoes are good companion plants in the kitchen as well as the garden, and our containerized tomatoes always seem to do so much better if we grow a basil plant with them.

There are many new hybrid tomatoes developed especially for containers. The "Patio" variety is a medium-sized, red fruit that has been hybridized to do well when its root system is restricted. Its flavor is good but it has a thick skin that some people object to. "Tiny Tim" and "Sugar Lump" are two excellent cherry tomatoes for container gardening. Containers for tomatoes and herbs

should be at least fourteen inches in diameter and twelve inches deep, with anything between fourteen and thirty-six inches in diameter being acceptable.

Eggplants and peppers may also be grown in containers in combination with herbs. Here again we often add a few marigolds for color and pest control.

Containers of salad greens with different types of lettuce mixed with parsley and chervil can be attractive. Stick to the leaf lettuce varieties instead of the head types. "Black Seeded Simpson," "Salad Bowl" and "Oak Leaf" are all good in salads and decorative in pots. If you pick the outer leaves of leaf lettuce, parsley and chervil, new leaves will continue to come from the middle of all the plants for successive harvest.

With containers you can prolong the growing season. Herbs planted in containers in early spring can be set out during the day and brought in at night until all frost danger has passed. Likewise, containerized herbs that have been outside during the summer can be left out on nice fall days and brought in at night until the first snow falls.

Many of my potted perennial herbs that are not hardy spend every summer outside and every winter inside. I always treat lemon verbena that way. My rosemary now looks like a natural bonsai from years of being pot bound and heavily pruned. We love to use its stems for basting brushes for our barbecued chicken and the leaves for all our other favorite rosemary dishes.

Weeds are easily kept to a minimum in containers if you carefully select weed-free potting soil.

With their restricted root room and smaller quantity of soil, herbs and vegetables grown in containers should be fertilized regularly for maximum growth. A water-soluble 15-30-15 fertilizer can be added to the containers every four weeks during active growth.

Gardens in containers are attractive and easy to care for. They save water, space and weeding time. With containers the apartment dweller and the suburbanite can have fresh herbs and vegetables throughout the season.

Propagation

Seeds

Most of the herbs may be grown from seed. Some, like cress, germinate overnight whereas others, like parsley, may take weeks to sprout. Lavender and rosemary are not only slow to germinate, but grow so slowly at first that it may be a year before you can harvest any of the plant. As a general rule, annual herbs are the most easily grown from seed. By their very nature they germinate quickly, grow rapidly, set seed and die. Annuals are only one-season plants. Some perennials (the plants that die back at the end of a season but come up again year after year) such as sage, thyme, oregano, catnip and the mints, grow quickly from seed. Most of the perennials, however, require a great deal of time and patience before they can be harvested if they're grown from seed. Some, like perennial French tarragon, do not produce viable seed at all and can be grown only from cuttings or division.

For outdoor gardening in areas with lengthy growing seasons, herb seeds may be sown directly into the ground. They may be sown late in the fall where they'll stay dormant during the winter and come up early the following spring, or they can be sown directly in the spring. Each gardener must experiment to find the best method for his area. With our sporadic winter weather in

Colorado, we may have a December of snowy, cold weather followed by a January of sunshine and 70° temperatures, only to be followed by a very cold March. Under these conditions if I plant my seeds in the fall the herbs may germinate in January only to die back in March. When we gardened in Vermont, it stayed cold until spring. The plants knew when to rest and when to sprout, so fall seeding there was fine.

In areas with short growing seasons, seeds should be started indoors in February and March then transplanted outside as seedlings as soon as the frost danger has passed. For indoor gardening, seeds may be started at any time during the year.

Seeds contain their own nutrients and seem to germinate best in a mix that is relatively nutrient-free. Seeds are also very susceptible to fungus diseases, damping-off and stem rot. A sterilized seed starting mix seems to decrease the chances of these fungus diseases getting started. There are several commercially prepared soilless mixtures, such as Jiffy Mix and Redi Earth, that are sterile and will work fine. Straight peat moss or peat moss mixed with vermiculite or perlite are also good growing media for seeds.

The sterilized potting medium should be put into trays with adequate drainage. Parallel depressions or rows should be made one-fourth inch deep and one inch apart. Seeds should then be scattered along the rows, allowing each type of seed its own specific space. Rows should be labeled with the herb name and the date. A fine covering of sand may then be placed over the rows. This sand keeps the seeds from washing away when they are watered.

Seeds may also be started in the new Jiffy 7 peat pots. Jiffy 7's are flat, hard, round discs of peat moss. When you add water to a Jiffy 7, it expands into a 1-inch column of peat. Three seeds should be placed on top of the Jiffy 7 and kept moist until they sprout. If all the seeds make it, thin them to one per pellet. When you thin the seedlings cut them off with a knife or scissors. Never pull the unwanted seedlings out or you may damage the root system of the remaining seedling. The discarded seedlings are always a welcome addition to any green salad.

As roots begin to appear around the Jiffy 7, transplant the peat pellet into a larger container.

Seeds should be watered with a fine mist often enough to keep the potting medium barely moist. Watering is the most critical factor in seed germination. Too much water will rot the seeds, but too little water will kill them just as quickly. Clear plastic may

be tented over the tray to keep in moisture and humidity, but be careful that fresh air can still freely circulate inside the tent.

Heat tapes are not necessary, but if they are placed under the trays the seeds will germinate more rapidly. Bottom heat is especially helpful with bay, parsley and lavender seeds. Seeds dry out more quickly with bottom heat thus lessening the chances of damping-off diseases, but the heat also increases the chances of underwatering.

When seedlings appear the seed trays should be placed in a bright window. If they are covered with a plastic tent it should be removed at this time. The tray should be turned daily because the seedlings tend to grow toward the light. Seedlings that are weak or spindly usually aren't getting enough light. They should be moved to a brighter window or have their light intensity supplemented by artificial lights.

If seedlings begin to show signs of stem rot or damping-off, or if mold or mildew appear on the germinating surface the affected plants should be removed and the tray should be watered with a fungicide. One of the best fungicides can be made by mixing one teaspoon of camomile flowers in a quart of water that has been brought just to the boiling point. The flowers should be strained from the liquid and the liquid should be cooled to room temperature. Watering with this camomile tea will discourage most fungus problems.

The herbs should be transplanted into a nutrient-rich potting soil as soon as they develop their first set of true leaves. They may

be placed in small clay, plastic or peat pots that are no larger than three inches in diameter. At this point, sinking the seedlings deeper into the new soil than they grew in the seed flats will encourage them to develop side roots along the stems. This is one of the few times that you can bury an herb deeper than it has been growing. Once an herb is established the soil level should always remain the same.

When these seedlings fill up their new pots with roots, they should be transplanted to larger pots or moved outside into the garden. Pinching back terminal buds at this seedling stage is important to encourage new branching growth so the plant will eventually be bushy and full.

Herbs such as chervil, basil, dill, fennel, anise, caraway and coriander may be sown every three weeks during the year inside, and every three weeks for the first two months of the growing season outside. These annual herbs go to seed quickly and successive sowings will keep a fresh supply of new leaves continually available. During the end of July and all of August it's usually too hot to continue to sow these seeds, and if they do germinate they tend to bolt and immediately start producing seeds themselves.

Cuttings

A great many herbs may be propagated by cuttings. Cuttings are especially important when you're trying to duplicate a plant exactly. A particularly handsome tri-color sage or an unusually scented mint may not breed true from seed, but will produce an exact replica of itself if propagated by cuttings.

Cuttings may be taken from established plants at any time during the year. They should be taken from the new tip growth of the plant as the older, woody tissue is difficult to root. These sprigs or cuttings (about three to four inches long) should be removed from the parent plant with a sharp knife. The cut should be made through the stem at a slight downward angle. Pinching the cuttings off with fingers or removing them with scissors is not recommended as these methods tend to bruise and seal the stems. The severed end of each slip should then be dipped into a commercially prepared hormone rooting powder. These powders also contain a fungicide that protects the cuttings from fungus diseases. Each slip should be placed in a propagation medium in a container that has open drain holes. Good propagation media are sand, perlite, vermiculite, peat moss or a combination of any of these four.

The propagation medium should be kept barely moist. Misting several times a day helps resupply water that is lost from the leaves, and tenting with clear plastic boosts the humidity around the cuttings. The tent should always be open at both ends to allow free air circulation.

Bottom heat supplied by heat tapes will accelerate the rooting process, but is not absolutely necessary. The cuttings should be kept in a warm spot with good, bright light. If the soil stays cold the slips will not pump as much water and this increases their chances of rotting. Tepid water should be used when misting or watering to keep the soil warm. Slips usually root in three to six weeks and should be placed in regular potting soil as soon as their roots are at least an inch long.

One Christmas I gave several friends centerpieces made with a variety of herbs surrounding a bayberry candle. Weeks after Christmas they called to say their centerpiece was still beautiful and alive. As the candles burned down the herbs appeared to get taller and finally we realized that they actually were taller. All the herbs—the rosemary, the scented geraniums, the wormwoods, santolina, thyme and lavender—had rooted into the floral foam that held the centerpiece and were happily growing together. Maybe florist's oasis is the rooting medium I should be recommending.

Divisions

Many perennial herbs may be propagated by root divisions. Chives, tarragon, all the mints, lemon balm, thyme, woodruff, tansy, yarrow, hyssop and beebalm are among the easiest to divide.

After three or four years many of these perennial herbs begin to look rangy. Digging up the entire clump, dividing it, discarding the original central section, and replanting the new sections in separate areas of their own will encourage strong new growth. Some root systems can be pulled apart with a gentle tug, whereas others have to be separated with a sharp knife.

Layering

Sage, the mints, the upright thymes, rosemary, lemon balm, lavender and hyssop are among the herbs that may be propagated by ground layering. In the spring a flexible bottom stem from the parent plant should be bent down until it touches the ground ten to twelve inches away from its tip. The lower surface

of the stem where it touches the ground should be scraped with a knife and dusted with a root-stimulating hormone. A three-inch diameter hole should then be dug where the stem touches the ground. The stem in the hole should be covered with enriched soil and marked so that it will be easy to find. The buried stem will usually root in six to eight weeks. Separate it from the parent plant when it starts to produce new growth.

Layering may also be done indoors by fastening the flexible stem from the parent plant down into a separate pot of soil. Keep this soil barely moist until roots develop on the layered stem.

Recommended Propagation Methods

Herb	Seed	Cuttings	Divisions	Layering
Artemisia		✓	✓	✓
Angelica	✓			
Anise	✓			
Basil	✓			
Bay		✓		
Beebalm		✓	✓	
Borage	✓			
Calendula	✓			
Camomile				
Anthemis			✓	
Matricaria	✓			
Catnip	✓	✓	✓	✓
Chervil	✓			
Chive	✓		✓	
Comfrey			✓	
Coriander	✓			
Costmary			✓	
Dill	✓			
Fennel	✓			
Germander		✓	✓	✓
Horehound	✓		✓	
Hyssop		✓	✓	
Lavender	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lemon Balm	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lemon Verbena		✓		
Lovage	✓		✓	
Marjoram	✓	✓		
Mints	✓	✓	✓	✓
Nasturtium	✓			
Oregano	✓	✓	✓	✓
Parsley	✓			
Rosemary	✓	✓	✓	✓

Herb	Seed	Cut-tings	Divi-sions	Layer-ing
Rue	✓	✓		
Salad Burnet	✓		✓	
Sage	✓	✓	✓	✓
Summer Savory	✓			
Tansy	✓		✓	
Tarragon		✓	✓	
Thyme	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winter Savory	✓	✓	✓	✓
Woodruff			✓	

Pests and Diseases

For a long time man has been changing the balance of nature. When left alone insects and plants grow in harmony; whenever plants are cultivated this delicate balance is disturbed. Insects become pests and man sometimes has to step in and wage war against infestations. Too often this has been done with harsh chemicals and insecticides that destroy the beneficial insects as well as the harmful ones.

Healthy plants that receive the correct amounts of light, water and nutrients will best be able to resist harmful insects. Those grown in soil that is porous and well-drained will not be subject to root rot and its consequent fungus and wilt diseases.

Indoor herb plants may be kept pest free by a weekly washing in mild soapy water followed by a thorough rinse in plain water. Removal of dead, dying and yellowing leaves will also keep your plants more attractive and less susceptible to insect infestations and disease.

Outside I try to let nature run its course for as long as possible. My outdoor herbs are never perfect specimens. They always have a few leaves that are chewed around the edges. Some even occasionally have more hole than leaf, but I know that they're

free of pesticides. When I bring them in I have to wash them extra hard to get rid of the caterpillars and aphids, but it's always reassuring to know that the bugs didn't die from eating my parsley and neither will I.

Home Remedies for Insect Infested Plants

Garlic Spray

Put three cloves of chopped garlic with enough water to cover them in a blender. Blend until fine and strain through several layers of cheesecloth. Dilute this garlic blend with water, using one part garlic to twenty parts water, and put it in a spray bottle. This spray can be used effectively against aphids and many other insescts without harming the plants or anyone that comes into contact with the spray. If you add a few drops of soap to the liquid it will stick to the plants better.

Garlic, Pepper and Onion Spray

Blend three cloves of garlic, three hot, red peppers and one onion in two cups of water on the highest speed on your blender. Strain this mixture through cheesecloth, dilute it one to twenty with water and apply it to your plants with a spray bottle.

Nasturtium Spray

Place nasturtium leaves in a pot and cover them with water. Bring the water just to the boiling point then remove the pot from the fire and let the leaves steep for an hour. Strain the leaves from the water and dilute this mixture four to one with plain water. Put in a spray bottle and use for controlling white fly.

Harmful Insects

Mealybugs

Mealybugs are members of the Family Pseudococcidae in the Order Homoptera. They injure plants by sucking sap and spreading fungus and disease. They have small, soft, segmented bodies that are covered with a white powdery wax that extends outward in filaments. Adult females deposit between 300 and 600 eggs in cottony masses at the axils of branching stems or leaves. The eggs normally hatch out in ten days.

In order to get rid of the mealybug it is critical to remove the cottony egg cases as soon as they become apparent. A Q-tip swab dipped in alcohol is an ideal tool. Sprays will not penetrate the egg cases, and the bugs will continue to hatch and move to other sections of the plant as long as the egg cases are intact.

Garlic sprays will usually kill the adult mealybugs, but if the infestation is too severe Malathion may have to be used. Malathion will normally have to be sprayed at weekly intervals to be effective, depending upon the severity of the infestation. Follow the directions on the bottle carefully.

"No Pest Strips" that give off Vapona may also be used against mealybugs. Place the affected plant and the "No Pest Strip" in a clear plastic bag. Tent the bag and leave an opening at the bottom so air can circulate. If you've removed all the egg cases the Vapona vapors should kill the adult mealybugs in four or five days. Wash the plants thoroughly with mild soapy water after the "No Pest Strip" procedure and wait several days before harvesting the leaves.

There are some natural predators that feed on mealybugs. Green lacewing larvae, ladybugs and praying mantises are all beneficial in the garden, because they eat great quantities of insects like mealybug.

Mealybugs often lay their egg cases underneath the rims of herb pots. Window ledges or any metal, brick or wood surfaces that are close to your herb pots should be checked for white cottony masses. Take care to remove all these egg cases and wipe down any surfaces that the plants are near before spraying.

Most mealybugs stay on the surface of plants and their leaves; however, there is one variety called root mealybug that lives only in the soil. Infested plants should be dug out of the garden and destroyed along with the soil.

Aphids

Aphids are the most common pests of garden and indoor herbs, but luckily they are the easiest to control. They come in a variety of forms and colors. Most are small, soft-bodied and pear-shaped. They may be black, green, pink, red, yellow, lavender, brown or grey. Young nymphs may change colors as they form into wingless adults, and then change colors again as they become winged adults.

All aphids secrete honeydew, a sugary material produced from plant sap. This honeydew attracts ants and forms a medium for the growth of a black fungus known as sooty mold. Aphids suck plant juices, sometimes causing the plants to be stunted, flowers and buds to be deformed, and leaves to curl or pucker. Aphids transmit mosaic and other virus diseases.

Aphids are generally found concentrated on the new growth of plants where they can be easily removed by hand. Garlic sprays as well as pyrethrum and rotenone are effective aphid

killers, and Malathion may also be used for severe infestations. Aphids will be attracted to nasturtiums if they are planted in the garden. This concentrates the aphids in one place and makes removal easy. Ladybugs, green lacewing larvae and praying mantises love to eat aphids.

Scales

Scales are generally not much of a problem with herb plants, but there are a few varieties that will attack and weaken a plant to the point that it eventually dies. Most scale insects cluster on plants and suck out the juices with their tiny, tubelike beaks.

Scales may be from 1/25 inch to one inch long, depending upon the species. They are called scales because of the waxy or scaly shell that covers their bodies. Some scales have hard shells and others have soft shells (mealybugs are actually soft-shell scales).

Bay is one example of a plant that is sometimes infested by a hard-shell scale. These scales are normally dark brown and attach themselves to the stems and the leaves of the bay tree.

Scale is one of the hardest insects to eradicate. Some of the most lethal insecticides are commonly used on scale, but they are usually systemics that are taken into the body of the plant and cannot be used for edible herbs. Malathion is not a systemic and with frequent application it can be used to kill all the different varieties of scale.

Green lacewing larvae are natural scale predators. They kill scales without doing any harm to the plants.

Removing scales by hand is a long and tedious process, but it is usually quite satisfactory. Start by removing any large scales, and then wash the whole plant with soap and water and rinse it thoroughly. My favorite bay has had scales for years, but washing it every week has kept them under control and kept my bay tree happy and healthy.

White Flies

Adult white flies have two pairs of broadly rounded wings that are covered with a snow white, waxy powder. They lay eggs that are only 1/100 of an inch long on the undersides of leaves. The eggs hatch in four to twelve days into pale yellow, six-legged crawlers. These nymphs can do considerable damage to a plant by sucking its sap; they secrete a sappy fluid called honeydew through an opening on the upper surfaces of their bodies. They molt twice before they turn into the four-winged adults that can fly. You can tell when a plant is infected because clouds of white flies will flutter around it when it is disturbed.

To eradicate white flies wash off any egg cases with mild soapy water followed by a clear rinse. Garlic, nasturtium or Malathion spray will kill the adults if you can get them before they fly away.

Putting the plants in a clear plastic bag with a "No Pest Strip" for a few days can be an effective way to kill the adult white flies. Wash off any egg cases before you bag the plant. Make sure the plastic bag is clear so that the plant will continue to receive light. Loosely tent the bag around the plant leaving openings so that air can continue to circulate in the bag. The plastic and the "No Pest Strip" should never actually touch the plant. If you have to resort to the "No Pest Strip" or Malathion spray wait several days before harvesting the leaves, and wash them well with soap and water before using.

Spider Mites

Mites can be a nuisance on indoor and outdoor herb plants. There are many different kinds of mites; they have small, almost microscopic bodies, and may be yellow, green, white or red. Foliage damaged by mites turns a sickly grey or may be mottled with pin pricks of yellow. Webs are often found between the leaves, or over an entire flower bud. Females lay as many as 200 eggs on the undersides of a plant's leaves in a three- to four-week period.

When the temperature is warm spider mites increase at a rapid rate. A female can reach an adult egg laying stage in five days at 75° temperatures, whereas it takes forty days at 55°. This temperature variance explains why mites get out of hand so quickly inside in the winter when we have the thermostat turned up to 70°.

Generations of spiders quickly build up resistance to different pesticides. Garlic sprays may be used every three days on four different occasions to get the successive stages as they hatch out and before they begin laying eggs. Washing the webs and the eggs from the undersides of the leaves with mild soapy water is another safe way to eradicate the mites. If you persevere and keep washing you should be able to keep them under control.

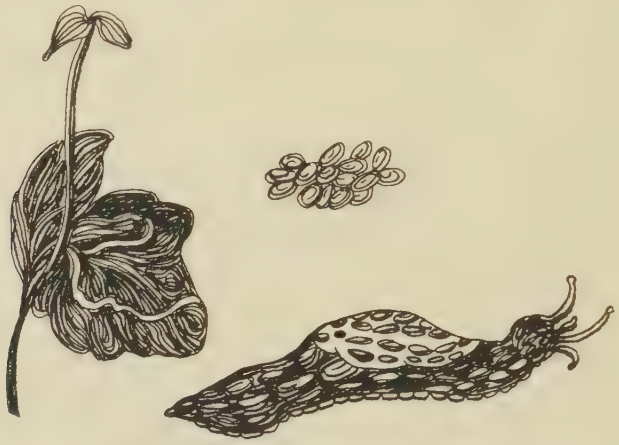
If garlic sprays and soapy washes prove ineffective, Malathion or Kelthane may be used at the same intervals. Make sure you follow the directions on the bottle carefully. Avoid getting the insecticide on you or inhaling it.

Spider mites commonly attack indoor ivies, scheffleras and impatiens. Isolate any plants that are infested while you spray.

Check your outdoor shrubs that grow close to the house for mite infestations. You might have mites coming in on the window sills, or you and your dog or cat may be bringing them in from those outside plants.

Slugs and Snails

Slugs and snails are not actually insects. They are mollusks with soft, unsegmented bodies. Snails have shells; slugs do not. Shell or no, these mollusks have voracious appetites and can eat a new herb seedling right down to the roots.



Snails have a foot that contains mucus glands and muscles that allow them to crawl. If a snail is disturbed it can draw up entirely into its shell. If it finds conditions really unpleasant it will become dormant, sealing the opening of its shell with a mucus sheet. A snail can remain dormant for as long as four years.

Slugs range in length from one-quarter inch to eight or ten inches long. They can be whitish yellow, brown, black or even mottled. They don't like the sun and hide during the day under decaying leaves, boards, logs or garden debris. Slugs come out at night, gliding on a trail of slime that is secreted by their bodies. These slime trails are evident in the morning as are the holes slugs leave in your herbs.

There are several slug and snail baits on the market which may be put out at night. They are normally round and hard and expand into a cone-shaped form when watered. Slugs are drawn to them and die when they feed on the bait because it contains arsenic or other harmful chemicals. Slug bait may be dangerous if you have small children or animals around that might accidentally eat it.

Slugs are attracted to beer. If you put out a low container of beer at night, in the morning you will find that several of the slugs have crawled in and drowned themselves in drunken revelry.

Remove any logs or garden debris that slugs like to hide under during the day. Put cantaloupe or watermelon rinds out at night with the skin side up; the slugs will crawl under them and in the morning you can clean them up in one easy sweep.

Gravel or sharp sand may be scattered around the outside of the garden. Slugs and snails don't like to go over sharp objects and will be discouraged. Don't forget, however, the Helix garden snail, better known as *escargot*, is a delicacy that you can eat with parsley and garlic butter.

Plant Diseases

Herbs can get fungus and virus diseases. However if your plants are kept clean and are grown in good light with adequate nutrients they won't be susceptible. Herbs should have good air circulation and good drainage. Plants don't dry out quickly enough in stagnant air. If drain holes are plugged the plants will sit in water and their roots will rot and they will become susceptible to subsequent fungus diseases.

Plants should be watered early in the morning so they can have the better part of the day to pump water. Plants watered late in the day sit all night in soggy soil which may cause their roots to decay.

There are chemical fungicides, such as Maneb and Zineb, which can be used on vegetables and herbs. However, many fungicides are systemic and should never be used on edible crops. Read fungicide labels carefully before applying any of them to your herbs.

Powdery mildew is a common fungus on perennial herbs in late fall. It often occurs if plants are crowded or kept too moist, and looks like a thin grey felt on the leaves' surface. Since the days become shorter and temperatures drop in the fall, perennial herb plants don't need as much water as they do during the hot summer months. If you cut back any of the foliage that is covered with the mildew and destroy it, the new growth in the spring will probably not be affected.

Plants with rusts, blights and viruses should be destroyed along with the soil that they are grown in. Luckily all of these plant diseases are fairly uncommon on herbs.

Beneficial Insects

Mantises

The praying or preying mantises are one of the few beneficial insects of the grasshopper order, Orthoptera. These carnivorous members of the Mantidae Family are cannibals with voracious appetites, eating other mantises as well as many other beneficial and harmful insects. There are twenty mantis species in North America. They all exhibit a highly movable, triangular head and very large eyes; by late summer they have usually reached a length of four to five inches. Their long front legs are fitted with grooves and spines for grasping and holding. From the day they are born they begin to consume aphids in large quantities, going up to much larger insects as they grow themselves.

Mantis egg cases may be purchased from garden centers in the spring. They are light brown cornucopias made up of a series of chambers. Each egg case looks like dried foam and contains about 200 eggs. The cases should be tied to shrubs or tall grasses to keep them off the ground. The eggs will rot if they sit in any puddles of water made by a quick spring shower.

My children love to watch for the mantises, and they kept one large specimen (named Gerome) all summer. Indoors they gave him the run of the house, much to our jealous dog's dismay. They placed Gerome on the window screens in their rooms and let him clean up all the flies and spiders for them.

Ladybugs

Ladybugs, or ladybird beetles, are beneficial insects that prey on aphids, scale and mealybugs while in both their larval and beetle stages. Ladybugs are small, 1/6 to 1/4 inches long, and oval shaped. They are red or tan with black spots or black with red spots. They are members of the Coccinellidae Family, all of which are beneficial insects except the Mexican bean beetle and the squash beetle.

Ladybugs may be purchased by the cup or the pint from garden centers in the spring. (A pint is a lot of ladybugs!) Ladyugs will stay dormant while cold, so take your pint container home, sprinkle a little water on top of the ladybugs, put a few air holes in the container lid and make sure the lid is securely fastened to the container. Put the container in the refrigerator as far away from the freezer compartment as you can get it. When the temperature outside begins to cool off at night, take a few of the ladybugs out of the container and put them on any infested plants. If it's too warm outside they'll fly off, but if it's cool they'll settle down and by morning will begin to feed on the insects. Ladybugs fly away just as soon as the insect population really begins to diminsh so by applying only a few when needed you will conserve your supply. In the meantime they may be kept refrigerated for four weeks if you occasionally sprinkle them with a few drops of water.

Ladybugs should begin to reproduce naturally once you've introduced them to an area. A female can lay as many as 1,500 eggs over a two-month period. Ladybug larvae eat about 25 aphids a day and ladybug adults consume about 50!

Lacewings

Green lacewings, with their gauzy green wings and long hairlike antennae, are beautiful and beneficial insects. Adults lay their oval eggs singly at the ends of hairlike stalks that they attach to leaves. This protects the larva from being eaten by its cannibalistic brothers and sisters as they hatch. The larvae are called aphid lions and they puncture and suck the juice from aphids, scale, mealybugs, thrips and mites.

There are many other beneficial insects, as well as toads, frogs and birds that keep the harmful insect population in check. Toxic chemicals tend to kill everything whether it's harmful or beneficial. It would be wonderful if each of us in our own gardens could again achieve a natural system of checks and balances that would keep the plants, insects, birds and animals living together in harmony.

Companion Planting

My grandmother used to have a set way of planting her vegetable garden that made no sense to me, but I listened and learned and, out of habit, began to plant my garden the same way. I understood then that rows should go north-south for the best light, with the taller plants positioned so they didn't block the light going to the smaller ones. She put some plants close together and kept others as far away from everything else as possible. I didn't understand why she did that, and I'm sure that she had no idea at times either, but she was following an age-old pattern that always seemed to work.

She put the fennel off in a corner by itself saying that the other plants didn't like it. The basil went next to the tomatoes and both of them grew better for it. Chamomile flowers appeared among the cabbages and onions, and even as a child I realized my grandmother's cabbage was better than anything we could get in the store. She put tansy with the roses, raspberries and anywhere the ants tried to invade her gardense. Thyme grew randomly in the

garden, blossoming profusely and bringing in the bees to pollinate the vegetable crops.

There were brightly flowered marigolds all through Grandma's vegetable and flower gardens. Her marigolds were not the fancy hybrids that I plant now, but the old-fashioned kind with their super strong odor. They kept out the nematodes and beetles. Nasturtiums surrounded the garden, drawing aphids to themselves and thereby keeping them off the other garden plants. Dill went close to the cabbages but away from the carrots where chives served as a welcome companion plant. The summer savory went with the beans and onions in the cooking pot as well as in the garden. She was always weeding and her rows were straight and perfect except for the occasional clumps of garlic that were placed haphazardly throughout the garden to discourage pests.

Recently, the scientific community has begun to pay more and more attention to some of these tried and true, "old fashioned" farming methods. It has found that certain plants really do seem to like each other and grow better when planted in close proximity. The reverse is also true, and plants that dislike each other will often become stunted or deformed when planted together.

It has been determined that some plants do well together because they do not compete for the same nutrients or space. A shade loving plant might grow better in the shadow of a sun lover. Some plants grow slowly and others grow quickly. Some have shallow roots, others have deep roots. These plants would not compete on the same soil level. The plants with the deep, strong roots might pave the way for an entirely different set of plants that need to set deep roots but aren't able to penetrate hard pan.

Some plants become the food for predators that eat pests that attack neighboring plants. And some plants give off excretions that either hinder or help their companion plants. A plant may excrete a substance that hinders germination of nearby plants. Some secrete substances that break down soil, releasing bound up nutrients and making them available to all the plants in the area.

To combat pests, many plants have evolved defense mechanisms such as thorns, slippery secretions or actual poisonous or repellent compounds. Insects may either be attracted or repelled by the odor a plant gives off, and these attributes may help not only the plant itself, but its neighbors as well.

I've never had a garden quite as nice as my grandmother's. It may have been the dark brown Kansas soil, the rich manure, the water or the way she followed the traditions of companion planting, but vegetables and herbs out of her garden were truly delicious. She was in tune with the plants and all their needs. She didn't know about chemical fertilizers or insecticides or automatic sprinkling systems. Plants were watered when they needed water, not when a timer went off. They were mulched with compost, and every year she put manure, compost, wood ashes and bone meal into the soil to replace the nutrients that the plants had depleted.

Life was probably simpler, quieter and a lot less sophisticated in her day. Her way of gardening might not feed the hungry masses in today's crowded world, but those ways might be beneficial for anyone who wants to grow vegetables and herbs on an enjoyable and rewarding small-family basis.

Companion Planting

Flower, Herb, Vegetable	Interplant	Avoid
Asparagus	Basil, Calendula, Parsley, Tomatoes	
Basil	Asparagus, Savory, Tomatoes	Rue
Beans	Cabbage, Carrots, Cauliflower, Cucumbers, Marigolds, Nasturtium, Potatoes, Rosemary, Savory	Garlic, Onions
Beebalm	Tomatoes	
Beets	Cabbage, Kohlrabi, Onions	Pole Beans
Borage	Squash, Strawberries, Tomatoes	
Broccoli	Beets, Dill, Mint, Onions, Rosemary, Sage	Pole Beans, Strawberries, Tomatoes
Cabbage	Beets, Camomile, Dill, Onions, Peppermint, Potatoes, Rosemary, Sage, Thyme	Pole Beans, Strawberries, Tomatoes

Flower, Herb, Vegetable	Interplant	Avoid
Calendula	Asparagus, Tomato	
Camomile	Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Kale, Kohlrabi, Onions	
Caraway	Throughout garden to loosen soil	
Carrots	Chives, Leeks, Lettuce, Dill Onions, Rosemary, Sage, Tomatoes	
Catnip	Plant in borders to repel flea beetle (but watch out for cats!)	
Cauliflower	Beets, Camomile, Celery, Dill, Mint, Onions, Rosemary, Sage	Pole Beans, Strawberries, Tomatoes
Chives	Carrots, Garden border	Beans, Peas
Corn	Beans, Cucumbers, Peas, Potatoes, Pumpkin, Squash	
Cucumbers	Beans, Corn, Nasturtium, Peas, Radishes	Sage
Dill	Cabbage, Cauliflower, Kale	Carrots
Eggplant	Beans	
Fennel	Keep out of garden!	
Garlic	Beets, Lettuce, Raspberries, Strawberries, Tomatoes	Beans, Peas
Horseradish	Potatoes, Tomatoes	
Hyssop	Cabbage, Grapes	Radishes
Lettuce	Carrots, Cucumbers, Radishes	
Lovage	Here and there throughout the garden. Make sure it doesn't shade other plants.	

Flower, Herb, Vegetable	Interplant	Avoid
Marigolds	Here and there throughout the garden. Discourages nematodes.	
Marjoram	Here and there throughout garden.	
Mint	Cabbage, Tomatoes	
Nasturtium	Cabbage, Cucumbers, Melons, Radishes, Squash, Tomatoes and around border to attract aphids.	
Onion	Beets, Lettuce, Savory, Strawberries, Tomatoes	Beans, Peas
Parsley	Asparagus, Tomatoes, Garden border.	
Peas	Beans, Carrots, Corn, Cucumbers, Radishes, Turnips	
Potato	Beans, Cabbage, Corn, Horseradish	Pumpkin, Squash
Radish	Carrots, Chervil, Lettuce, Nasturtium, Peas	Hyssop
Rosemary	Beans, Broccoli, Cabbage, Carrots, Sage	
Sage	Cabbage, Carrots, Rosemary	Cucumbers
Spinach	Strawberries	
Squash	Borage, Corn, Nasturtium	Potatoes
Strawberries	Beans, Borage, Lettuce, Spinach	Cabbage
Summer Savory	Beans, Onions	
Tansy	Fruit trees, Raspberries	
Tarragon	Here and there throughout the garden.	

Flower, Herb, Vegetable	Interplant	Avoid
Thyme	Cabbage. Here and there throughout the garden. Brings bees to aid pollination.	
Wormwood	Plant around borders to discourage animals.	
Yarrow	Plant with aromatic herbs. Increases their essential oils.	

Harvesting and Preserving the Herbs of Summer

Most herbs are best picked and used fresh the same day, with a few exceptions like marjoram and oregano whose flavors actually improve with drying. Herbs grown outdoors in good soil, fresh air and bright sunlight grow so prolifically that even a small herb garden usually produces more than an average family can use during the growing season. Luckily these herbs can be dried, frozen, or salt cured easily and quickly without significant loss of taste or quality. Stored in airtight containers, these herbs add flavor and a springtime freshness to all your winter meals.

Most herbs can be harvested for drying three or four times a year. Their flavor is usually best when the plants are in full bud, but before their flowers are open. Plants may be cut two-thirds of the way down during each harvest. They respond well to this pruning and come back with vigorous new growth that is full and

bushy. The last harvest of perennial herbs should be done early in the fall several weeks before the first hard frost. Perennials need to get re-established before that frost if they're to make it through the winter months. When harvesting annuals in the fall, pull the whole plant, roots and all, and you won't have that cleanup job facing you in the spring. A few annuals may be left to go to seed.

Herbs are generally at their most fragrant and flavorful peak early in the morning just as the dew has lifted. Harvest them early on a clear, dry day. They should be dried as quickly as possible to retain their color and fragrance, so avoid harvesting them on cloudy, rainy or cold days, or when the humidity is high.

Herbs should be clean when dried. If you spray them with water the day before you harvest, it will usually rid them of any soil or dust. Mulching low-growing herbs will keep them from contact with the ground, and lessen the chance of soil buildup on the leaves. If they are still dusty or soiled after you pick them, rinse them with clear water and dry them between paper towels. Curly leaves like parsley may need two or three rinses to get them clean. Take care not to bruise any of the leaves when you dry them. Discard any yellow or brown leaves at this time.

Air Drying

Sort the clean herbs, grouping like kinds and stems of equal lengths together. At this time any mixtures of herbs may be combined. *Fines herbes* or *bouquet garni* combinations may be dried together. Tie herbs in bunches with string or rubber bands. The rubber bands work well, as they naturally constrict while the herbs dry. Hang the bunches in a well-ventilated room being careful to keep them out of direct sunlight.

When drying herbs with seed heads, like dill, coriander or fennel, you'll want to harvest the seeds as well as the leaves. If you simply hang them the seeds will fall to the floor and be lost. Instead you can put paper bags around the herbs with the seed heads suspended just above the bottom of the bag. Close the bag around the herb stem and secure both bag and stem with a string. Hang the bag in an airy room. The herbs should swing freely in the bag and the bag should be perforated with holes for good air circulation around the seed heads and leaves. Seeds generally take longer to dry than leaves. Bagging any herbs whether they have seed heads or not will keep them clean during the drying process, but they will take longer to dry because of the restricted air circulation.

Seeds can also be harvested while the plants are still in the garden. Stake plants like dill or fennel and bag the heads while the plants are still growing.

Bunches of herbs hanging freely from beams in an old-fashioned kitchen are picturesque, but this is probably not the best method for drying herbs and retaining their essential oils. Herbs that hang indefinitely after they've dried lose their flavor and color. Still, a sprig or bunch of herbs tied with a decorative ribbon will enhance anyone's kitchen. If you have large quantities of rosemary or bay they may be shaped into wreaths while green and hung to dry naturally in the kitchen. If you don't have enough bay or rosemary add a sprig of bay along with other herbs and stick cinnamon, whole cloves and nutmegs to a straw or artemisia wreath base. These dried wreaths can be used in cooking but are best left as decorative accents that enhance the kitchen with their bright ribbons and herbal scents.

Oven Drying

Herbs may also be dried in an oven set at around 150°. Leave the door slightly ajar and watch the herbs, carefully turning or stirring them occasionally. This is a much faster method than air drying, and the herbs usually maintain more of their color, flavor and fragrance with this method.

In the spring and summer when I pick fresh herbs for dinner salads I usually end up with several leftover sprigs. I'll stick these in the oven overnight and the heat from the pilot light is usually enough to dry them. I put the sprigs into a small pot that one of my daughters made me in a ceramics class. The pot sits next to the stove, and whenever I need a little seasoning for a dish, I'll

take it out of that pot. Using these we've discovered some unlikely herbal combinations that we probably would have never tried otherwise. Herbs may also be dried in a microwave oven. This takes only a few seconds, so watch them carefully.

After the herbs have thoroughly dried, strip the leaves off the stems and store them in opaque, airtight containers. Save the stems for the fireplace or to throw onto a charcoal fire when you are grilling outside. Leaves may be crushed or finely ground with a mortar and pestle before storing, or they may be left whole if you like to crush them just before you add them to a recipe. *Fines herbes* mixtures can be stored together in jars and *bouquet garni* combinations can be tied together in cheesecloth bags. These bags should then be put into airtight containers. Check your bottled herbs for the first few days after drying. If there is any trace of moisture in the jars, remove all the herbs and continue to dry them until they're crisp. Herbs that haven't been sufficiently dried will become moldy and will have to be discarded.

Freezing

Almost all of the herbs freeze well. Chives, chervil, basil, parsley and mint seem to retain more of their flavor, fragrance and color if they are frozen instead of dried.

Herbs for freezing must be clean. Rinse and pat them dry if they are soiled. No blanching is necessary. Simply put them into plastic bags, tie with twistems, label and place them in the freezer. Freeze just enough herbs for individual servings in each bag.

Fines herbes or *bouquet garni* herbs may be frozen together. Basil may be frozen after it is made into pesto sauce. It will hold its bright green color and spicy flavor for six months after freezing.

Herbs may also be frozen in water in ice cube trays. After freezing, remove the cubes from the trays and store them in plastic bags in the freezer. Mint frozen this way will enhance iced tea and fruit punch all year long.

There is no need to thaw frozen herbs before you use them. In fact if they are to be minced it's easier to chop them while they are still frozen. They should never be refrozen, so remove only the amounts needed from the freezer, and throw them into soups, stews or casseroles.

Frozen herbs are not satisfactory for garnishes or fresh salads. They become limp and unattractive when thawed, but are perfectly fine for combining in a dish that needs to be cooked.

Salt Curing

Making herb salts is another good way to preserve your herbs for winter use. Salts may be made with fresh or dried herbs in an endless number of combinations.

There are two ways to make herb salts with fresh herbs. The easiest method is to take two or three handfuls of clean, towel-dried leaves and put them in a blender with one-half cup sea salt and blend until fine. Spread this herb and salt mixture on cookie sheets and place it in a warm oven until the mixture is thoroughly dry. Drying this way usually takes an hour or two. During the drying time, stir the herb salt frequently to break up any lumps and to make sure the mixture dries uniformly. When you're sure the mixture is totally dry, it can be bottled in an airtight container.

The other method of making herb salt from fresh herbs goes back to the days when the early colonists cured their herbs by salt drying. They simply alternated layers of herbs with layers of salt in a crock that was covered tightly, and put it in a cool, dark place for several weeks. The colonists usually removed the salt and used only the herbs, but grinding the entire mixture in a mortar and pestle makes a delicious blend as some of the herbs' flavor has actually penetrated the salt.

Herb salts may also be made by mixing dried herbs with salt. Simply add four or five tablespoons of a dried herb mixture to one-half cup salt. Grind with a mortar and pestle or put them through a blender for a few seconds. You can make up any kind of herb combination, but it is usually best to stick with three or four different herbs plus the salt. Too many flavors together merely confuse the taste buds.

A spaghetti sauce–salt combination might include basil, oregano, parsley and thyme. Beef combinations of marjoram, celery leaves, parsley and thyme can be used. Rosemary or tarragon might also be a predominant flavor in a beef salt combination.

Marjoram, oregano, parsley, rosemary, sage, summer savory, tarragon or thyme can be mixed in any combination for delicious poultry seasoning. Poultry seasoning with a hint of lemon is made by blending one-half cup sea salt with one tablespoon lemon balm, one tablespoon tarragon, one tablespoon marjo-

ram and one tablespoon parsley. Sage, marjoram, and celery leaf is a good mixture to sprinkle on pork roasts and chops. That same combination is a good addition to poultry stuffing. Lamb seasoning should include mint or rosemary. Rosemary, thyme and lemon balm is particularly delicious sprinkled over leg of lamb.

If you send your kids off to school with hard boiled eggs in their lunches you might want to include a small packet of herb salt. Chives, parsley and chervil make a good combination for egg dipping. Eggs also go well with dill, garlic, marjoram, rosemary, summer savory and thyme, and a combination of any of those might be more to your liking.

Vegetable salt combinations usually include a mix of marjoram, parsley, chervil, savory or thyme. You can get even more specific and mix basil and oregano for tomato dishes; dill and chervil for cucumbers; mint and parsley for peas; rosemary and thyme for zucchini; and chervil, parsley and chives for potatoes.

Try making up your own favorite combinations. Add a little paprika if you want a red color. A favorite herb-salt combination in a decorative container is a nice gift for any cook. With ribbon, tie on a list of the herbs you used and a recipe for one of your best dishes using that specific salt.

Bob and Alice's Flank Steak

1 3-pound flank steak
1 large green pepper cored and finely diced
1 large mild purple onion finely diced
1/4 teaspoon finely minced fresh thyme
1/4 teaspoon finely minced fresh savory
1 teaspoon finely minced parsley
1 pound bacon strips

Pound the flank steak until it is no more than 1/8 of an inch thick. Mix the pepper, onion, and the herbs together. Sprinkle this mixture evenly over the flank steak. Roll the flank steak up and cut it into 1½ inch sections as if you were making cinnamon rolls. Wrap each 1½ inch section with a piece of bacon and secure with a toothpick. Grill over charcoal fire until done. Serves 4.

Cooking with Herbs

The key to cooking with herbs is experimentation, seasoning each dish to your own individual taste. You don't need an elaborate French cookbook or an early American household herbal filled with recipes. You can adapt all your own favorite recipes to herbed dishes. Don't be afraid to add a little fresh or dried herb to something that you already know.

Even a simple hamburger can become something new and exciting if you add a little thyme, marjoram or savory to the patties before broiling. Your garlic bread will take on a new flavor if you add chopped chives, minced parsley and chervil to the butter. Drizzle vinegar and oil over some sliced tomatoes, sprinkle them with some freshly chopped basil, and make an everyday vegetable into something special.

Start out with just a pinch of the herb. The herb should enhance the flavor of the dish, not mask it. I love a dish in which the seasoning is understated just enough that I can't tell what it is in the first few bites.

Try just one herb to a dish so you can determine whether you like its flavor. You can usually use one-fourth teaspoon of a dried herb to flavor a pound of meat. The same one-fourth teaspoon will sufficiently flavor four servings of another food. It will take a teaspoon of the fresh herb to season the same amount of meat or other foods. After experimenting you may want to increase these amounts.

Thyme is a good herb to start with, as it goes with almost everything. After you've determined your individual likes and dislikes, then start combining herbs. Mix your thyme with some oregano and parsley for meat dishes. Use only one strong herb, like sage, rosemary, or tarragon, to a dish. You can use the single strong herb alone, combine it with a milder herb, or use it with a combination of milder herbs like chervil, parsley, and summer savory.

In most soups and stews you can add herbs for the last hour of cooking time so that their flavors mingle with the other ingredients. In quick-cooking foods the herbs are often added after the dish has been removed from the fire. For cold soups and drinks the herbs should chill with the other ingredients for several hours before serving. Herbs improve the flavor of salad dressings if they are chilled with the likes of vinegar and oil, sour cream or mayonnaise for a few hours before serving.

Remember that these are all just suggestions; there are no hard and fast rules for herb cookery. Your taste is your best guide. The only problem is that continual tasting makes for fat cooks. If you end up on a diet you're still in luck, for herb-seasoned foods are especially good for weight watchers. Herbs can add flavor and aroma to any bland diet—minimizing the need for sugar and salt. Those herbal aromas make any dish more appetizing and start the digestive juices flowing.

Be creative. Taste each dish as you cook and adjust the seasonings to please you. No two cooks will ever season similar dishes the same way if they are seasoning to taste. I experiment at almost every meal and find the only shortcoming is that it's sometimes difficult to remember exactly what I did with a dish that has turned out particularly well. I'm always adding a pinch of this, tasting, adding a pinch of that, and tasting again. By the time the dish is served, I can't remember how many pinches I used, let alone which "this" or "that."

Herb cookery should be fun, inventive, and enjoyable for you and your dinner guests. Don't tie yourself to a cookbook. Be adventuresome.

Bouquet Garni

A *bouquet garni* is a mixture of herbs that is normally enclosed in a cheesecloth bag. The bag is immersed in soups, stews, broths or stocks while they cook and removed before serving. A traditional *bouquet* usually includes sprigs of parsley, thyme and a bay leaf. Different combinations of herbs are sometimes added to the traditional three. Chives, marjoram, thyme, basil or even whole cloves may be included. More elaborate *bouquets* may contain carrot slivers, celery leaves, chopped leeks or onions.

Fresh herb sprigs may be used in these *bouquets*. Simply tie the sprigs together with string so they can be easily lifted from the cooking pot before serving. The sprigs may also be enclosed between two pieces of celery that you tie together with string. The celery adds flavor too.

A *bouquet garni* can be made with dried herbs tied up in a cheesecloth bag. Make up extra cheesecloth bags of your favorite combinations when you're drying herbs. Tied with ribbon they make nice gifts, especially when you've included an appropriate recipe to go with them.

Fines Herbes

Fines herbes is a mixture of finely minced herbs. These herbs are usually added to food during the last moments of cooking time, or immediately before the food is served.

Combinations for *fines herbes* usually include three or four herbs with parsley being predominant. The French refer to any minced mixture of parsley, basil, chervil, chives, sweet marjoram, thyme, rosemary or tarragon as their *fines herbes*. Tarragon is the strongest of these, and you must be careful if you add it to a mixture. When used in quantity it will overpower all the others.

Fines herbes combinations are often added to sauces. Parsley, chervil and chives make a good *fines herbes* combination to add to white sauce or mayonnaise. Tarragon, parsley and chervil are

often blended into *sauce Bearnaise*. Chives, parsley and chervil make a good mixture in a hot butter sauce to pour over vegetables like boiled potatoes. Chives, parsley and chervil, or thyme, parsley and chervil mixtures are sprinkled over omelets just before they are folded. Burnet combined with parsley and thyme gives foods a mild hint of cucumber flavor. This burnet mixture is especially good added to sour cream for vegetable dips. The *fines herbes* combination of chives, parsley, chervil and burnet may be added to sour cream for dips and spreads and is also excellent on whole wheat bread or toast.

Fines herbes are best made from fresh herbs. The various combinations may be left in bowls on the dinner table and each guest can season his own soup or salad with a mixture to his liking.

Herb Breads

Herb breads can be plain or fancy. They can take minutes to prepare or you can watch them rise, punch them down and watch them rise again. My husband claims that breadmaking releases all my pent-up aggressions. I'm fierce when I knead, and unmerciful when I punch down. After the tensions are gone I can calmly roll, shape and bake, and nothing is more rewarding than the smell of homemade bread, laced with herbs, coming out of the oven.

My favorite white bread recipe is the basic buttermilk bread that follows. You can omit the herbs when you make it and add

them later when you butter the bread if you like. Dill butter made with just a dash of lemon is excellent with buttermilk or plain white bread. Parsley, chervil, and chive butter is also good with it. If you're having an Italian meal try oregano, basil and marjoram, or oregano, basil and thyme butter. Rosemary gives white bread a delicious fragrance and a small amount of sage will give bread added warmth. Any of these herbs can be added to the dry bread ingredients before they are mixed with the wet ingredients. You can use either fresh or dried herbs; just remember that you have to use twice as much fresh herb as dried to get the same amount of flavor.

If you already have a favorite basic bread recipe, it should be easy to add a few herbs to it. If not, try the following recipe and add your own herb combination.

Bonnie's Buttermilk Bread

2 cups buttermilk
1/4 cup sugar or honey
2 teaspoons salt
1/4 cup shortening
1/2 cup warm water
2 packages yeast
1 tablespoon minced onion
1½ teaspoons baking soda
7 cups sifted flour
1½ teaspoons dried herbs
OR
3 teaspoons finely minced fresh herbs

Combine buttermilk, sugar, salt and shortening in a saucepan. Heat until bubbles appear around the edge and the shortening is melted. Cool to lukewarm. Measure warm water into a large mixing bowl and sprinkle the yeast in the water, stirring until it dissolves. Add lukewarm milk mixture. Add baking soda, 3 cups flour, and the herbs. Beat until smooth. Add enough of the remaining flour to make a soft dough. Turn onto a floured board and knead until the dough is smooth and elastic. This usually takes about five minutes (just enough time to work out all your aggressions). Put the dough into a large, greased bowl. Turn it over to bring the greased

side up and cover it with a damp towel. Let it rise in a warm place (85°), free from drafts, until it doubles in volume. (I let mine rise over the pilot light on the stove.) It will usually double in size in an hour or an hour and a half. Punch the dough down and let it rise again. This time it usually takes about 30 minutes. Don't let it quite double in size. Grease two cookie sheets. Punch down the dough again and turn it out onto a floured board. Knead it just enough to distribute the air bubbles and divide it in half. Shape each half into a loaf, put on a cookie sheet, brush with melted butter and cover. Let rise for 20 minutes and bake in a preheated 425° oven for 25 to 30 minutes. The bread is done if you thump it and it sounds hollow.

Another good bread to warm you on a cold winter day can be made with bacon, sage and cheese.

Sage, Bacon and Cheese Bread

1/2 cup milk
1/3 cup butter
1½ tablespoons sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt
3 eggs
1 teaspoon sage
1 teaspoon thyme
4 pieces of bacon fried and crumbled
3¼ cups sifted flour
1½ cups shredded cheddar cheese
1 package dry yeast
1/4 cup warm water

Heat the milk and butter just until the butter melts and pour into a mixing bowl. Add the sugar and the salt and let cool to lukewarm. Add the eggs one at a time and beat until smooth. Dissolve the yeast in the warm water. Add the herbs and the bacon to 2 cups of the flour mixture and mix well. Add the yeast and the flour-herb mixture to the egg and milk mixture and beat until smooth. Add the remaining flour and the cheese and beat with a wooden spoon

until all the ingredients are mixed well. Turn out onto a lightly floured board and knead until the dough is smooth and elastic. Place in a well-greased bowl. Turn the dough so the greased side is up and cover with a damp towel. Let the dough rise until it doubles, punch down again and knead lightly. Put the dough into a well-buttered 2-quart round casserole. Cover and let it rise until almost double. Brush the top with beaten egg white and bake in a preheated 350° oven for 35 minutes. Let it cool slightly. Run a knife around the inside of the casserole and turn the loaf out onto a dish. Serve hot.

If you're one of those people who had an overdose of sage in turkey stuffing as a child and can't stand to even smell it, omit the sage and bacon entirely. Add instead a teaspoon of marjoram, a teaspoon of oregano and a teaspoon of chopped chives. It will taste a little like pizza that way, but it's still delicious hot out of the oven.

I have several flour canisters. One is filled with whole wheat flour, one with rice flour and two with white flour. If I've been cooking and have a few sprigs of a dried herb left over, I'll remove the dried leaves from the stem and add them to one of my white flours. After a few weeks the flour is speckled green. I never know exactly what herb combination it holds, but it makes a delicious flour to roll chicken in before frying. I've used it satisfactorily in pizza crust, herb bread and herb rolls. The only trouble is that if it comes out really well there is no easy way to duplicate it.

For a delicious apple pie or cobbler crust add a little dill weed to the crust's dry ingredients. Pieces of rosemary make a crunchy crust for cherry cobbler. Sage and cheese are good additions for meat pie crusts. Sage and cheese added to waffle batter make delicious waffles that you can cover with creamed chicken or turkey.

When you are in a hurry but you still want a special bread for dinner, you can add herbs to any canned biscuits or rolls. Melt one-fourth cup butter in a saucepan and add two tablespoons minced herbs. Try any one or combinations of savory, sage, parsley, chervil, thyme, marjoram, chives, rosemary, dill or fennel. Take the rolls out of the can, dip them in the herb butter mixture and arrange them in a baking dish with the buttered side up. If you use crescent rolls you can sprinkle finely minced herbs on the dough before you roll it into crescent shapes.

BASIL

Sauces	Salads	Dressings
Barbecue	Chicken	French
Butter	Egg	Mayonnaise
Cheese	Green	Sour Cream
Curry	Macaroni	Vinegar &
Marinade	Meat	Oil
Spaghetti	Seafood	
Tomato	Shrimp	
White	Tomato	
	Vegetable	

Soups	Breads Pastries	Fruits Vegetables	Cheeses	Beverages
Chili	Biscuits	Carrots	Balls	Bloody
Minestrone	Croutons	Cauliflower	Cottage	Marys
Onion	Pizza	Cucumbers	Cream	Hot Tea
Oxtail	Crust	Eggplant	Rarebits	Tomato
Pea	Rolls	Green	Sauces	Juice
Potato	White Bread	Beans	Souffles	Vegetable
Tomato		Lima	Spreads	Juice
Turtle		Beans		
Vegetable		Onions		
		Peas		
		Potatoes		
		Spinach		
		Squash		

Meat	Poultry	Fish	Eggs	Misc.
Aspic	Chicken	Lobster	Casseroles	*Fines*
Beef Pies	Baked	Mackerel	Deviled	*Herbes*
Ham	Roasted	Mussels	Fried	Garnish
Boiled	Duck	Shrimp	Omelets	Jelly
Lamb	Goose	Stuffing	Scrambled	Potpourri
Roast	Grouse		Souffles	Purple Basil
Liver	Pheasant			Vinegar
Meat Balls	Stuffing			Rice
Pork				Tomato
Rabbit				Preserves
Steaks				
Stuffing				
Veal				
Venison				

CHERVIL

Sauces	Salads	Dressings
Bearnaise Butter Fish Marinade Shellfish White	Chicken Egg Green Potato Seafood Tuna	French Mayonnaise Vinegar & Oil Yogurt

Soups	Breads Pastries	Fruits Vegetables	Cheeses	Meat
Leek Sorrel Spinach Vegetable Vichyssoise	Croutons Biscuits Rolls White Bread	Beans Beets Carrots Chard Cucumbers Green Peas Potatoes Spinach	Casseroles Cottage Cream Dips Rarebits Sauces Souffles	Beef Roast Stew Lamb Meat Balls *Ragouts* Veal

Poultry	Fish	Eggs	Beverages	Misc.
Chicken Baked Broiled Creamed Roasted Stuffing Turkey	All Fish especially Crab Fish Balls Haddock Halibut	Deviled Fried Salad Scrambled Souffle Omelet	Vegetable Juice	

CHIVES

Sauces	Salads	Dressings
Barbecue	Chicken	French
Brown	Egg	Mayonnaise
Gravy	Green	Sour
Butter	Macaroni	Cream
Fish	Potato	Vinegar &
Shellfish	Seafood	Oil
Spaghetti	Tuna	Yogurt
Tomato		
White		

Soups	Breads Pastries	Fruits Vegetables	Cheeses	Beverages
Bouillabaisse	Biscuits	Chard	Balls	Tomato
Chicken	Cheddar	Cucumbers	Dips	Juice
Chowder	Cheese	Beans	Casseroles	Vegetable
Gumbo	Bread	Green	Cottage	Juice
Leek	Corn	Lima	Cream	
Minestrone	Bread	Eggplant	Souffles	
Oyster Stew	Cottage	Mushrooms		
Tomato	Cheese	Potatoes		
Turkey	Bread	Squash		
Vichyssoise	Croutons	Zucchini		
	Potato			
	Pancakes			
	Rolls			

Meat	Poultry	Fish	Eggs	Misc.
Beef	Chicken	All fish	Casseroles	Arrangements
Barbecue	Turkey	especially	Deviled	Dry
Stew	Stuffing	Fish cakes	Fried	Fresh
Lamb		Fish balls	Omelets	*Fines*
Meat Pies			Rolls	*Herbes*
Pork			Scrambled	Rice
Pot Roast				Vinegar
Rabbit				
Spareribs				
Venison				

DILL

Sauces	Salads	Dressings
Apple	Chicken	French
Butter	Cole Slaw	Mayonnaise
Cheese	Egg	Vinegar &
Fish	Fruit	Oil
Shellfish	Green	Yogurt
Sour Cream	Macaroni	
White	Seafood	
	Tuna	
	Vegetable	
	Waldorf	

Soups	Breads Pastries	Fruits Vegetables	Cheeses	Beverages
Bean	Biscuits	Apples	Dips	Tea
Borscht	Bread	Avocado	Cottage	Seed
Chowder	Cottage	Beans	Cream	Weed
Cream	Cheese	Beets	Spreads	Vegetable
Potato	White	Cabbage		Cocktails
Tomato	Cake	Carrots		
Vegetable	Applesauce	Cauliflower		
Vichyssoise	Pound	Cucumber		
	Cookies	Eggplant		
	Fritters	Green Pepper		
	Apple	Potato		
	Pie	Squash		
	Apple	Tomato		

Meat	Poultry	Fish	Eggs	Misc.
Beef	Chicken	Crab	Deviled	Garnish
Corned		Haddock	Hard Boiled	Pickles
Kidney		Halibut	Omelet	Relish
Lamb		Lobster	Poached	Vinegar
Chops		Mackerel	Salad	
Roast		Salmon		
Pork		Shrimp		
Chops				
Veal				

LEMON BALM

Sauces	Salads	Dressings
Butter Fish White	Green Seafood	Sour Cream Vinegar & Oil Yogurt

Soups	Breads Pastries	Fruits Vegetables	Cheeses	Beverages
Asparagus Fruit Greek Lemon	Cookies Custards Ice Cream Ices Sherbets	Mixed Fruit Cup	Cream	Fruit Punch Lemonade Tea Hot Iced Wine

Meat	Poultry	Fish	Eggs	Misc.
Lamb Roast Shish-ka-bob Pork Stuffing	Stuffing	Baste Garnish	Deviled	Garnish Potpourri Sachets Vinegar

MARJORAM

Sauces

Butter
Gravy
  Brown
Mustard
Pizza
Spaghetti
Tomato

Salads

Chicken
Egg
Fruit
Green
Tuna
Vegetable

Dressings

French
Vinegar &
  Oil

Soups

Chicken
Clam Chowder
Onion
Oyster Stew
Tomato
Turtle
Vegetable

Breads Pastries

Bread
  Cheese
  White
Biscuits
Croutons
Dumplings

Fruits Vegetables

Beans
  Green
  Lima
Broccoli
Carrots
Green
  Peppers
Onions
Peas
Potatoes
Spinach
Squash
Zucchini

Cheeses

Balls
Casseroles
Cottage
Cream
Dips
Rarebits
Souffles

Beverages

Fruit Punch
Lemonade
Tea
Tomato Juice
Vegetable
  Cocktail

Meat

Beef
  Hash
  Roast
  Stew
Brains
Lamb
Meat Loaf
Pork
  Chops
  Roast
Rabbit
Veal
Venison

Poultry

Chicken
  Baked
  Broiled
  Stew
Duck
Goose
Pheasant
Quail
Stuffing
Turkey

Fish

Crab
Salmon
Trout

Eggs

Deviled
Omelets
Scrambled
Souffles

Misc.

Jelly
Potpourri
Rice
Sachets
Vinegar

MINT

Sauces	Salads	Dressings
Butter Dessert Fish Lamb Marinade Shellfish	Cole Slaw Fruit Green	Honey & Mayonnaise Vinegar & Oil

Soups	Breads Pastries	Fruits Vegetables	Cheeses	Beverages
Bean Fruit Split Pea Vichyssoise	Cake Devil's Food Candies Cookies Custards Fudge Gelatins Ice Cream Pie Chocolate Sherbets	Beans Green Carrots Compotes Fruit Peas Potatoes Spinach	Cream Dips	Chocolate Hot Fruit Punch Juleps Lemonade Tea Hot Iced Wine Cups

Meat	Poultry	Fish	Eggs	Misc.
Hamburger Patties Lamb Roast Shish-ka-bob Stew Meat Balls Pork Chops Veal Roast	Chicken Baked Stuffing	Any mild fish	Souffle	Bath water Garnish Honey Insect Repellent Jelly Potpourri Sachets Scented Pillow Syrup

OREGANO

Sauces

Barbecue
Butter
Fish
Marinade
Mustard
Pizza
Spaghetti
Tomato
White

Salads

Green
Potato
Seafood
Tomato
Vegetable

Dressings

French
Vinegar & Oil

Soups

Bean
Beef
Borscht
Chili
Chowder
Minestrone
Onion
Tomato
Vegetable

Breads Pastries

Bread Sticks
Cheese Bread
Croutons
Pizza Dough
Rolls

Fruits Vegetables

Beans
  String
Broccoli
Cabbage
Eggplant
Leeks
Mushrooms
Onions
Peas
Potatoes
Spinach
Tomato

Cheeses

Casseroles
Dips

Beverages

Tomato Juice
Vegetable Juice

Meat

Kidney
Lamb
Meat Balls
Meat Loaf
Oxtails
Pork
  Chops
  Roast
Rabbit
Tamale Pie
Sausages
Sweetbreads
Venison

Poultry

Chicken
Duck
Pheasant
Stuffing

Fish

Clams
Crab
Lobster
Stuffing
Whitefish
  Baked

Eggs

Souffles

Misc.

Arrangements
Potpourris
Tobacco Substitute
Vinegar

PARSLEY

Sauces	Salads	Dressings
Butter	Cole Slaw	French
Barbecue	Chicken	Sour Cream
Court Bouillon	Macaroni	Vinegar & Oil
Gravy	Potato	
Meat	Seafood	
Mustard	Tuna	
Spaghetti		
Tartar		
Tomato		
White		

Soups	Breads Pastries	Fruits Vegetables	Cheeses	Beverages
Bean	Bread	All vegetables	Balls	Tea
Beef	Corn		Cottage	Hot
Bisques	White		Cream	
Bouillabaisse	Croutons		Dips	
Chicken	Rolls		Souffles	
Chowder				
Cream				
Gumbo				
Minestrone				
Mushroom				
Onion				
Potato				
Vegetable				

Meat	Poultry	Fish	Eggs	Misc.
All Meats especially	All Poultry especially	All Fish especially	Casseroles	*Bouquet Garni*
Beef	Chicken	Cod	Deviled	*Fines Herbes*
Pies	Duck	Crab	Fried	Garnish
Roasts	Goose	Haddock	Omelets	Hair Rinse
Stews	Pheasant	Halibut	Scrambled	Jelly
Hamburger Patties	Turkey	Lobster	Souffles	
Lamb	Stuffing	Mackerel		
Tongue		Red Snapper		
Veal		Salmon		
Venison		Shrimp		
		Trout		
		Tuna		

ROSEMARY

Sauces	Salads	Dressings
Butter Barbecue Gravy Brown Marinades Mustard Tomato	Chicken Fruit Potato Seafood	Honey & Mayonnaise Vinegar & Oil

Soups	Breads Pastries	Fruits Vegetables	Cheeses	Beverages
Chicken Cream Potato Split Pea Turtle	Biscuits Bread Corn White Cake Pound Wedding Corn Meal Mush Croutons Pie Cherry Pizza	Beans Green Cauliflower Chard Cherries Eggplant Fruit Cup Mushrooms Potatoes Raspberries Spinach Squash Turnips	Cream Dips Souffle Spreads	Fruit Juice Fruit Punch Vegetable Juice Wine Cups

Meat	Poultry	Fish	Eggs	Misc.
Beef Roast Stew Lamb Liver Pate Meat Balls Meat Loaf Rabbit Sausage Stuffing Veal Venison	Chicken Goose Grouse Pheasant Quail Stuffing	Crab Halibut Salmon Stuffing	Omelets Souffles	Aroma Garnish Honey Jam Jelly Potpourri Sachets Vinegars Wreaths

SAGE

Sauces	Salads	Dressings
Butter Gravy Marinade Mustard	Tomato	Vinegar & Oil

Soups	Breads Pastries	Fruits Vegetables	Cheeses	Beverages
Chowder Consomme Cream Onion Potato Tomato	Biscuits Bread Corn Stick Croutons Crust for meat pies Waffles	Cabbage Eggplant Lima Beans Onions Peas Potatoes Tomatoes	Cheddar Cottage Cream Dips Spreads	Tea Wine

Meat	Poultry	Fish	Eggs	Misc.
Beef Hamburger Patties Lamb Liver Meat Loaf Pork Chops Rabbit Sausage Stews Stuffing Venison	Chicken Duck Goose Pheasant Stuffing Turkey	All Fish Stuffing	Casseroles	Hair Rinse for Grey Hair Honey Kitchen Potpourri Pickles

SAVORY

Sauces	Salads	Dressings
Butter	Bean	French
Fish	Cole Slaw	Vinegar & Oil
Gravy	Green	
Horseradish	Potato	
	Tomato	

Soups	Breads Pastries	Fruits Vegetables	Cheeses	Beverages
Bean	Croutons	Asparagus	Souffles	Tea
Chowder	Biscuits	Avocado		Tomato Juice
Consomme		Beans		Vegetable Juice
Lentil		Brussels Sprouts		
Split Pea		Cabbage		
Tomato		Cauliflower		
Vegetable		Cucumbers		
		Eggplant		
		Peas		
		Sauerkraut		
		Squash		
		Tomatoes		

Meat	Poultry	Fish	Eggs	Misc.
Ham	Chicken	All Fish	Deviled	*Bouquet Garni*
Hamburger	Duck		Fried	*Fines Herbes*
Kidney	Seasoning		Omelet	Honey
Liver	Stuffing		Scrambled	Rice
Meat Balls	Turkey		Souffle	Vinegar
Meat Loaf				
Pork Roast Stuffing				
Rabbit				
Sausage				
Stews				
Stuffing				

TARRAGON

Sauces

Bearnaise
Butter
Fish
Hollandaise
Marinades
Mayonnaise
Mustard
Shellfish
Sour Cream
Tartar
White

Salads

Chicken
Crab
Green
Lobster
Potato
Seafood
Shrimp
Tomato
Tuna
Turkey
Vegetable

Dressings

Mayonnaise
Sour Cream
Vinegar &
Oil

Soups

Chicken
Chowder
Mushroom
Tomato
Turtle

Breads Pastries

Croutons

Fruits Vegetables

Artichokes
Asparagus
Beets
Broccoli
Cabbage
Carrots
Cauliflower
Greens
Kale
Mushrooms
Peas
Spinach
Tomatoes

Cheese

Cottage
Cream
Rarebits

Beverages

Bloody
Marys
Tomato
Juice
Vegetable
Cocktail

Meat

Aspic
Beef
Filet Mignon
Pot Roast
Sirloin Steak
Tenderloin
Lamb
Rabbit
Veal
Venison

Poultry

Chicken
Duck
Goose

Fish

All Fish

Eggs

Fried
Deviled
Omelets
Scrambled

Misc.

Fines
Herbes
Garnish
Sour Pickles
Vinegar

THYME

Sauces	Salads	Dressings
Barbecue	Aspic	French
Butter	Chicken	Vinegar &
Cheese	Green	Oil
Creole	Potato	Sour Cream
Fish	Seafood	
Gravy	Tomato	
Mustard	Vegetable	
Seafood		
Tomato		
White		

Soups	Breads Pastries	Fruits Vegetables	Cheeses	Beverages
Bean	Biscuits	Beans	Cottage	Benedictine
Borscht	Bread	Green	Cream	Bloody
Chowders	Cheese	Beets	Dips	Marys
Consomme	White	Broccoli	Rarebits	Clam
Gumbo	Croutons	Brussels	Spreads	Juice
Oyster Stew	Rolls	Sprouts		Tea
Potato		Carrots		Tomato Juice
Tomato		Eggplant		Vegetable
Vegetable		Mushrooms		Cocktail
		Peas		
		Potatoes		
		Spinach		
		Squash		

Meat	Poultry	Fish	Eggs	Misc.
Beef	Chicken	All fish	Deviled	*Bouquet*
Hamburger	Baked		Omelets	*Garni*
Lamb	Broiled		Shirred	*Fines*
Chops	Creamed		Souffles	*Herbes*
Roast	Pies			Honey
Stew	Stew			Jelly
Meat Balls	Roasted			thyme-apple
Meat Loaf	Duck			thyme-grape
Pork	Goose			Potpourri
Rabbit	Pheasant			Vinegar
Veal	Stuffing			
Shish-ka-bob	Turkey			
Venison				

Herb Butter

Herb butters are delicious on bread, rolls and biscuits. They enhance cooked, hot vegetables, casseroles, and sauces. Herb butters make a delicious garnish for broiled steaks, chops and fish. Omelets, as well as scrambled, fried or poached eggs may be cooked in herb butters. And herb butter bastes add flavor to chicken and turkey.

Herb butters are easily made by adding one tablespoon of a freshly minced herb to one-quarter pound of softened butter. If you don't have the fresh herb use one and one-half teaspoons of the dried herb. One herb or combination of herbs may be used. Lemon juice, mustard, bacon, garlic salt, onion salt or paprika may also be added to the herb or herb combination.

Anise seed butter is good on hot carrots.

Basil butter is good over peas or sauteed zucchini.

Caraway butter makes either cabbage or green beans delicious.

Chive, chervil and parsley butter is great over boiled new potatoes.

Dill butter is good on cooked carrots, new potatoes or green beans. It may be used to baste fish.

Fennel seed butter is excellent poured over hot beets or cabbage.

Fennel weed butter is good with fish.

Marjoram butter can be served over cooked mushrooms.

Marjarom and basil butter may be served over hot cheese bread.

Mint butter with lemon is good over peas or carrots. It's also good with lamb.

Nasturtium butter for canapes can be made with the flower petals for color and with the minced leaves for a peppery flavor.

Parsley, chives and lemon juice mixed with butter are good over any cooked vegetable.

Rosemary butter gives a crunchy taste to hash browns. It's just right for lamb. Serve it over hot zucchini or string beans.

Savory butter can be served over hot green beans, peas, zucchini or cauliflower.

Tarragon butter is a good chicken baste.

Tarragon and thyme butter is delicious on new beets.

Thyme butter is great spread on the crackers that you serve with clam chowder.

Herb Jellies

Mint jelly is a popular topping for lamb but it's only one of the many varieties of herbal jellies that you can use to flavor meat. Rosemary jelly is equally good with lamb, pork, poultry or veal. Marjoram jelly goes well with pork chops, pork roast or venison. Pork and all kinds of poultry are also enhanced by sage, savory or tarragon jellies. When you tire of that old familiar mint jelly try

some green sorrel jelly, with its sharp and biting taste, to liven up your leg of lamb.

Lavender, rose geranium and rose petal jellies are delicious on hot biscuits, crepes, French toast or pancakes. Jelly made from spring violets gives a beautiful lavender touch to cakes, cookies and desserts. Basil jelly is green and glorious. Spread crackers with cream cheese and top with a dollop of green basil jelly for an unusual canape, or combine basil with tomatoes for a unique preserve.

Herbs can be combined with fruits to give wonderful jelly combinations. Any herb can be added to an apple base. You can combine mint with currant, or thyme or mint with grapes. Rosemary mixed with raspberries, oranges or lemons makes a complementary jelly for a pork roast.

Rose hip jelly is full of vitamin C. Rose geranium jelly made with honey is sweet and mild. Rose petals make a wonderful preserve.

Sweet woodruff jelly is clear and golden and simply made by adding a woodruff infusion to an apple base. May wine, lemon and orange can also be added with the woodruff infusion for a delightful jelly.

Herb jellies are foolproof if you use commercial pectin. Follow the recipe inside the box for mint jelly, substituting any herb or herb combination that you want. Herb jellies can also be made by

cooking the herbs along with fruit if you are making an herb-fruit combination.

If you can't find the time to make herb jellies, you can buy commercially prepared jams or jellies and simply add freshly minced herb leaves to them. Add a little rosemary to orange marmalade or fresh thyme leaves to grape jam.

Herb jellies are usually pale golds and greens, pinks and bronzes. If you place a sprig of the herb in the sterilized jars before you pour in the cooked juice, it will add flavor and color and be its own identification label.

Herb Teas

A quiet moment with the delicate flavor, aroma and color of an herb tea served in a fine porcelain cup is my idea of luxury. Herb teas are usually pale green, yellow or bronze depending upon the herb or combination of herbs used to brew them. They may be served hot or iced, but I must admit a definite preference for hot herb tea. The beautiful fragrance that's released in the warm steam from the teapot is something that can't be matched in an iced cup.

Herb teas not only taste good but also give an extra bonus of vitamins and minerals. Many of the herb teas increase the appetite or improve digestion. Some are wonderful nightcaps inducing a peaceful sleep. A few of them give an exhilarating effect, but none contain the tannin or caffeine stimulants that are found in regular tea and coffee.

I usually prefer my herb teas plain, but will occasionally sweeten them with a dab of honey. A slice of fresh lemon adds color and vitamin C.

Fresh or dried herbs may be used to blend teas. I often use dried leaves for brewing and garnish the cup with a sprig of the fresh herb. Most herbs for teas are best if they are never boiled. If you steep them in water that has been heated just to the boiling point they'll maintain their delicate flavor without getting bitter. Generally one tablespoon of a fresh herb or one teaspoon of a dried herb will flavor one cup of water. If you're making tea in a pot, use one level measure for each cup of water the pot holds and then throw in one extra measureful for the pot. Before brewing rinse a non-metallic pot in hot water to warm it and then add the herbs. Pour water that has reached the boiling point over the herbs, and let them steep for three to five minutes. After steeping, pour the tea into cups through a tea strainer. A few herbs like lemon balm and sweet woodruff may need to be steeped longer. Horehound and oswego tea should be simmered in water in a non-metallic pan for ten to twenty minutes to bring out their true flavor. Herb seeds need to be crushed in a mortar and pestle before steeping, and usually take longer to release their flavor.

Tastes in tea vary with the individual. Experiment with different herbs and different combinations of herbs as well as steeping times. If you want a stronger tea it is usually best to add more of the herb than it is to steep it longer. The longer it steeps the greater its chances of being bitter.

Herb teas made to be iced should be stronger, as their flavor will be diluted by the melting ice. One and one-half teaspoons of the dried herb or four teaspoons of the fresh should flavor one cup of water for ice tea. Herbs may be placed in a clear glass jar with cold water, capped with a lid and placed in the sun to release their fragrance and flavor. After several hours strain the herbs from the water and chill the tea in the refrigerator until serving time. Garnish with sprigs of the fresh herb. Iced tea may also be made from an infusion of hot water. Pour boiling water over the herbs that you've placed in an earthenware pitcher. Let the herbs steep for five minutes. Remove the leaves and cover the pitcher and store it in the refrigerator until the tea cools.

Herbs may be preserved by freezing them in ice cube trays. The cubes can be floated in punches or fruit drinks and are perfect for iced tea.

Alfalfa tea stimulates the appetite and is a good source of vitamins and minerals. It is best when combined with spearmint or peppermint. It contains vitamins A, D and E.

Angelica tea is brewed from the fresh or dried leaves of the angelica plant. It is reputed to cure headaches.

Anise tea made from an infusion of dry or fresh anise leaves is best served hot. Anise tea made from an infusion of crushed seed is pleasant, aromatic and soothing. It's one of the few herb teas that's good with milk or cream and sugar. Taken before bed it soothes jangled nerves and induces a restful sleep.

Balm, lemon balm, or Melissa tea may be brewed from the fresh or dried leaves of the lemon balm plant. It is good alone or combined with any of the mints. Serve it hot or cold and garnish with a lemon slice.

Basil tea is peppery and clovelike.

Borage tea is made from an infusion of dried or fresh borage leaves. Float some of the blue star-shaped flowers in the cup. The flowers enhance the flavor and look of the tea. Borage tea is high in calcium and potassium and gives an exhilarating feeling.

Burnet tea tastes mildly of cucumbers. It may be made from an infusion of the fresh or dried leaves.

Camomile tea is one of my favorites. It's soothing and relaxing and perfect after a hectic day at work. It has a fruity aroma reminiscent of apples. Camomile tea was Peter Rabbit's favorite when he wasn't feeling up to par. Make camomile tea from the dried flower heads of the plant. Brew it for just three to five minutes until it's a beautiful, intense yellow. Europeans drink it to aid their digestion. Serve it in a demitasse for an after-dinner drink. It's a good nightcap and is reputed to prevent nightmares. Drink it alone or mix it with mints or fresh grated ginger. Camomile tea also makes a good hair rinse for blonds.

Catnip tea may be made from an infusion of dried or fresh catnip leaves. It is aromatic and minty, high in vitamin C, and good mixed with strawberry leaves and other mints.

Comfrey tea made from dried comfrey leaves is full of vitamins and minerals. Just a few of the huge leaves dried will keep you in comfrey tea for the winter. Again, this tea is good mixed with mints.

Costmary tea made from dried costmary leaves has a minty, lemony taste. Steep for only three minutes. It is also good mixed with mints, and was a favorite of the American colonists.

Dill tea may be made from crushed dill seed, or dried or fresh dill weed. It was used in early America to ease colic pains in babies.

Fennel tea is made from an infusion of the dried fennel seeds. It was also used to cure colic. This tea gives a warm and pleasant feeling to the stomach.

Fenugreek tea is made from the crushed and dried seed heads of the fenugreek plant. It is a favorite Mediterranean tea where it is used for its soothing qualities. It tastes like maple syrup.

Horehound tea was another early American favorite for curing coughs, colds and sore throats.

Hyssop tea may be made from the dried or fresh leaves of the hyssop plant. It is quite bitter and best mixed with other herbs.

Lavender blossoms may be added to other herb teas for a sweet exotic flavor. Lavender blossoms, mint, rose geranium leaves, lemon verbena, and rosemary make a good combination tea.

Lemon verbena tea made from the fresh or dried leaves of lemon verbena gives a distinct lemon fragrance and flavor. It is good blended with regular tea or mints.

Lovage tea made from dried lovage leaves tastes like celery. Sprinkle herb salt on hot lovage tea and drink it as a clear soup.

Marjoram leaves dried and added to dried mint leaves make a pungent tea. Marjoram tea mixed with sage, catnip and peppermint is supposed to be good for a headache.

Mint teas are the favorites of young and old alike. They may be made from the fresh or dried leaves of apple mint, pineapple mint, spearmint, peppermint, orange mint, Egyptian mint or anise mint. Mint teas combine well with many of the other herbs; they aid digestion and may be served either hot or cold. They are good garnished with lemon or orange slices.

Oswego, beebalm or monarda tea has a strong, minty taste. It was one of the herb teas that the Indians introduced to the American colonists. Tea is made from the fresh or dried leaves. It must be simmered for at least ten minutes to bring out its full flavor.

Parsley tea is rich in vitamin C. It is used as a hair rinse, bringing out the hair's natural sheen.

Rose geranium tea made from dried rose geranium leaves is slightly spicy. It is good added to mint teas. Add a few cloves or grated orange peel for a unique blend.

Rose hip tea is full of vitamin C.

Rosemary tea is fragrant and best mixed with other herbs, such as mints and lavender flowers. It is reputed to cure mild headaches.

Sage tea can be made from the fresh or dried leaves of the sage plant, used alone or mixed with other herbs. Sage tea has long been reputed to aid digestion, increase memory and cure all kinds of ills. The Chinese found sage so desirable that they were willing to trade us one part of sage for four parts of their Oriental tea. If you make up a batch and don't particularly care

for it you can use it as a hair rinse to cover up the grey.

Strawberry leaf tea is pleasant and fragrant and good mixed with other herbs. The leaves must be thoroughly dried before infusing because a toxic substance produced during the wilting process only disappears when the leaves are totally dry. Strawberry leaves do contain some tannin and are rich in vitamin C. Raspberry and blackberry leaves can also be added to herb teas.

Thyme tea is spicy and pungent and goes well with other herbs. Lemon thyme gives a nice citrus addition to herb teas.

Woodruff tea is made from the dried leaves of the sweet woodruff plant. It is mild and yellow-green. It smells of new-mown hay and will need to be steeped quite a while to release its pleasant flavor.

Cocktails and Mocktails

If you've given up drinking alcoholic beverages and don't particularly care for soft drinks, nothing is harder than to go to a cocktail party and walk around empty-handed. At our parties we like to serve—and dress up—the non-alcoholic beverages just as much as the alcoholic ones. Soda water served over ice with a dash of bitters and a sprig of lemon balm is a cooling, refreshing and beautiful bronze drink. Ginger ale and bitters can be garnished with balm or mint. Tonic water is great iced and served with costmary or lemon balm.

Luckily, mineral water is regaining popularity and you can sometimes find it at a party; add ice and a twist of lemon and feel like a part of the celebration. Perrier, the naturally carbonated mineral water, is delicious with mint or lemon balm.

The mint julep is one of the most popular herb cordials. Muddle together three ounces of bourbon, three ounces of water, two teaspoons of powdered sugar and a handful of mint leaves. After the mint leaves have been thoroughly macerated, strain the mixture, throwing away the spent leaves. Pack chilled glasses with crushed ice and pour two tablespoons of the strained syrup into each glass. Fill the glasses with bourbon. Work a long-handled spoon up and down in the mixture until the glasses begin to frost. Dip mint sprigs in water, sprinkle with sugar, chill until frosty and use to garnish the top of the finished mint julep glasses.

Wine can be made from camomile, lemon balm, scented geraniums or comfrey. One of the best herb wines is called May wine. It is a Rhine wine that is made with sweet woodruff, and it is traditionally imbibed on the first day of May.

Bloody marys are delicious with or without alcohol. We garnish ours with a stalk of lovage or celery, or a sprig of tarragon or salad burnet. Green basil will give the tomato cocktail a spicy clovelike flavor. Lemon thyme may also be used as a bloody mary garnish, or you can sprinkle dried oregano over the top of the glass to give it a unique flavor. You could serve bloody marys for a year every Sunday morning and never have to use the same herb garnish twice.

Vinegars

My kitchen windows are lined with all sizes and shapes of bottles that contain herbal vinegars. The vinegars are pale shades of bronze, yellow, deep opal and lavender. Each has a sprig or blossom floating in it from the herb or herbs that give it is distinct flavor and color. Herbal vinegars are just another way to preserve your harvest of summer herbs so that you can enjoy their fragrance and flavor throughout the year. Use them in soups and stews. They give distinct flavors to marinades for meat, fish and game. They add an herb flavor to salad dressings, fruit dressings, sauces, drinks, deviled eggs and gravies.

As in any other culinary process, there are several ways to make herb vinegar. Some recipes call for cider vinegar, others for red wine vinegar and still others for white wine vinegar. I prefer the white wine as it is mild enough that it doesn't mask the taste of the herb and it is colorless so that even the faintest herb tint is allowed to come through.

It takes approximately two cups of a fresh herb to flavor one quart of vinegar. I find fresh herbs give the best flavor to vinegars, but dried herbs or the dried seed heads of herbs may be used if fresh herbs are not available. One cup of a dried herb or half a cup crushed seed will flavor a quart of vinegar.

Different herbs may be used in combination to make vinegar. Shallots, garlic, citrus peels, flower heads and petals, cloves or other spices may also be added along with the herbs to give unique blends.

The herb or herb combination should be placed in a clear glass bottle and vinegar should be poured over the standing herbs. Close the bottle with a cork or non-metallic lid. Vinegar reacts with metal so resist the temptation to stir it with a metal spoon, put it in a metal container, or close it with a metal stopper. At this point, I simply let my herb vinegar sit in a warm place for two to three weeks. Some people insist on aging it in the sun and one old herbal even suggests burying it in the snow, but I've always found a warm room the easiest condition to maintain and the most satisfactory for colorful and flavorful herb vinegar.

After two to three weeks, taste the vinegar. If it's not strong enough, add a few more herbs or just let it sit as is for two or three more weeks. When it reaches a flavor right for your individual taste pour it through a non-metallic strainer into glass bottles. These bottles may be as decorative or utilitarian as you wish. At this time I add a fresh sprig or flower head of the herb to the bottle and then cork it. The piece of herb serves to identify the vinegar, making labels unnecessary.

Attractive bottles with homemade herb vinegar are personal and inexpensive presents. Attach a favorite recipe to the bottle and you're sure to please any cook.

Basil vinegar made with opal basil can be pale pink to deep burgundy depending upon the amount of purple basil used and the length of time it ages. It may be made with a combination of green and opal basil sprigs or with opal basil alone. Green basil sprigs alone give the vinegar a delicious flavor but not the rich burgundy color. Basil may also be combined with garlic or shallots for a delicious vinegar. Sprinkle basil vinegar over sliced tomatoes. Add a dash to tomato juice, tomato soup or a vegetable cocktail. Mix it with oil for dressing leafy greens and vegetables or use it in marinades and meat sauces.

Borage vinegar is good in salad dressings and fruit punches. Add a few bright blue borage flowers to the finished bottle.

Burnet vinegar tastes like cucumbers and cucumbers are deli-

cious marinated in it. It makes a good salad dressing mixed with oil.

Caraway vinegar is made with bruised caraway seeds. Use it in dressing for fruit salads. It is also excellent with cooked red cabbage.

Chives may be made into a vinegar by using them alone or by combining them with almost any other herb. Either garlic chives or regular chives may be used. The vinegar is enhanced by a chive flower head floating in the bottle. Use chive vinegar in salad dressings and meat marinades.

Coriander seed vinegar may be used in dressings for fruit salads.

Dill vinegar may be made with dill weed, fresh dill seed heads or crushed, dried dill seed. The seed heads and the delicate foliage are pretty floating in the bottles. Use dill vinegar in potato salad. Sprinkle it over fresh vegetables like tomatoes. Use it in French, or vinegar and oil salad dressings. Add a bit to tomato juice, or use it as a baste for poultry.

Fennel vinegar makes a good fish marinade or salad dressing.

Lavender vinegar is a beautiful blue-purple when it's made from lavender blossoms. Lavender vinegar can be used in the bath or for facial rinses. Vinegar tightens skin pores and helps either oily or dry complexions; it also helps reestablish the skin's natural acid balance.

Marjoram vinegar is a good meat marinade. It especially enhances the flavor of game. Make the game marinade with two thirds cup marjoram vinegar, two thirds cup oil and two thirds cup broth seasoned with salt and pepper. Marinate the game for twenty-four hours to give it full flavor and tenderness.

Nasturtium vinegar may be made with both the blossoms and the leaves of the nasturtium. This vinegar is best if green onions or shallots, garlic and fresh black peppercorns are added to it. Use it over wilted lettuce, salads and in meat and fish sauces.

Mint vinegar can be made with any of the mints. Orange mint vinegar is good on fruit salads. Spearmint, peppermint and English mint make excellent vinegars for marinating lamb. Use it as a marinade especially for lamb shishkabobs. Mint vinegar mixed in equal parts with brown sugar and minced mint leaves makes a good lamb sauce. Simmer it gently over low heat until it thickens. Mint vinegar makes a refreshing facial rinse when combined with warm water. One teaspoon mint vinegar and one teaspoon honey mixed into a cup of boiling water makes a refreshing tonic. Mint vinegar in compresses is reputed to be good for an aching head. I wonder if that was the kind of

vinegar Jack used with his brown paper compress when he and Jill fell down the hill.

Rose-geranium vinegar may be used in fruit salads, punches, and gelatin desserts.

Rosemary vinegar is good for marinating lamb and other meats. Use it in fruit salads and add just a drop to cherry pies.

Savory vinegar is good for tenderizing roasts and steaks. Use a dash in bean soup. It's good on cabbage and mushrooms.

Tarragon is probably the most popular herb vinegar. Use it in salad dressings and in fish and meat marinades. Put it in *sauce Bearnaise*. It's delicious on new beets or spinach. It may be combined with garlic or shallots for a spicier vinegar. Tarragon doesn't grow well indoors, so when I need it fresh in the winter I simply remove a tarragon sprig from the vinegar, rinse it off and use it as I would the fresh.

Thyme vinegar is good in meat marinades, cocktail sauce for fish, and salad dressings. Use it on cooked cabbage or cauliflower.

Violet vinegar is a beautiful blue-purple. Use it in fruit salad dressings.

Vinaigrette Dressing

½ cup herb vinegar
1 cup oil
2 tablespoons chopped green onion
½ garlic clove chopped
1 tablespoon sugar
1 teaspoon dry mustard
¼ teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons chopped *fines herbes*

Combine all ingredients in a tightly capped jar. Shake well to blend flavors. Refrigerate for two or three hours before using.

Herbal Specialties

Long before the advent of aerosol spray air fresheners and room deodorizers, herbs and sweet-scented flowers were hung from ceilings and strewn on floors and walkways to perfume the air and cover the smells of the poor sanitary conditions of the day. Large urns filled with roses were buried in Egyptian tombs. As the roses rotted they perfumed the chambers of the departed pharaohs. These pots full of rotting roses were probably the first potpourris. "Potpourri" is taken from the French verb *pourrir* meaning "to rot," and has come down through the ages to mean a mixture or medley of different things. An herbal potpourri is a mixture of herbs and sweet-scented flowers enclosed in a decorative glass jar. When the lid is removed the fragrance of the mixture is released into the air. The potpourri can include spices, citrus, oil and fixatives. They can be sweetly scented, musky, citruslike or spicy. Ingredients can be mixed moist or dry, but any way potpourris are made they are a delightful way to preserve the fragrance of summer through the winter months.

Flowers, Herbs and Spices

Almost any herb can be added to a potpourri. Lavender blossoms and leaves are the most traditional. Lemon verbena, lemon balm and orange mint add a citrus fragrance. Scented geranium leaves and flowers can add a wide variety of smells either spicy or sweet. All of the mints and costmary are good for a clean, clear mintlike scent. Sweet marjoram, basil, oregano, sage and rosemary can be added to any mixture and are wonderful combined with spices in a kitchen potpourri. Sweet woodruff smells like new-mown hay and contains its own built-in fixative, coumarin, which helps the leaves retain their own scent. All the artemisias add their beautiful grey colors as well as their individual fragrances to potpourris.

For a spicy potpourri you can add ground spices like cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, cloves and anise. Whole spices like stick cinnamon, whole cloves, star anise and coriander seeds are both decorative and fragrant. The dried peels of oranges, lemons, limes and tangerines add color and the aroma of citrus.

Dried flower petals and whole flower heads and buds may be used. White, yellow, red and pink roses are the most popular flowers used. Lilac, carnation, delphinium, borage, beebalm, calendula and violet flowers all add color. These flowers are usually best if they are dried in sand, borax or silica gel. Covered with any of these media, it usually take only three to four weeks to dry the petals or the whole flower heads. Dried in any of these media, they retain their color and shape.

Fixatives and Essential Oils

Fixatives are essential ingredients that are added to a potpourri to fix or hold its fragrance. Most fixatives can be found in drug stores and herb shops. Orris root taken from the rhizome of the Florentine iris is the most commonly found fixative. Vetiver is a good fixative, adding a subtle odor of its own that resembles sandalwood. The resin, gum benzoin, from the bark of the spice bush may also be used. Musk, ambergris and civet are all animal fixatives. They have strong scents of their own and should be used sparingly, but they will fix the odor of the potpourri for long periods of time.

There is a variety of essential oils available from herb shops and perfume suppliers. The addition of these oils is not necessary, but they will give the potpourri a much stronger and longer-lasting fragrance. The most popular oils are rose, lavender and mint essences.

When making a potpourri you can use the following proportions:

1 quart of dried petals, leaves and flowers
1 tablespoon fixative (some recipes will call for as much as ½ cup fixative to a quart of petals, but I find that large amounts of fixative overpower the other fragrances)
1 tablespoon spices
1 tablespoon crushed herb seeds
2 tablespoons dried citrus peels
10 to 15 drops of an essential oil

There are two distinct methods used in mixing potpourri ingredients: the dry method and the moist method.

The dry method is easiest and makes the most attractive potpourri. If you want to keep your potpourri out in the open in decorative glass jars, this is the method you should use. A dry potpourri keeps its scent for one to two years.

Our Victorian grandmothers made potpourri by the moist method. The end product is not quite as nice to look at, but the fragrance will last indefinitely; in fact potpourris made by the moist method have been handed down from one generation to the next.

Dry Method Potpourri

Mix all the potpourri ingredients together after they have been thoroughly dried. Stir them well, taking care not to damage any

whole flowers that you've preserved. Let the potpourri sit in a tightly covered container for five to six weeks. Stir or shake it every few days so that all the ingredients and fragrances will blend together.

After six weeks, ladle the potpourri into decorative jars. Some potpourri can be ground fine in a mortar and pestle and used to fill sachets and scented pillows. The sachet material should be light enough to let the fragrance through, but tightly woven so that none of the fine sachet powder can escape. Sachets placed in drawers and linen closets will perfume their contents. Sachets made with southernwood, wormwood and lavender not only perfume woolens, but they also keep away moths.

Several sachets may be put into a lining along with pillow stuffing to make scented pillows. Different combinations in pillows were used as love potions or sleep inducers. Spearmint, roses and cloves were among the ingredients found in a potion that was believed to cure melancholy.

Moist Method Potpourri

1½ quarts partially dried petals, leaves and flowers
2 tablespoons crushed orris root
1 cup coarse salt
1 tablespoon allspice
1 tablespoon cloves
¼ cup brown sugar
3 tablespoons brandy
10 drops of rose oil

Mix the partially dried flowers and herbs with the orris root. In a separate container mix the

salt with the spices and sugar. Alternate layers of the leaf mixture with the salt mixture in a crock. Pour the brandy and the rose oil over the layers. Stir this mixture and tightly cap it. It will take four to six weeks for the mixture to cure, and it should be stirred every few days so that all the ingredients are thoroughly blended together.

After the mixture has cured ladle it into jars with tight-fitting lids. To use this moist potpourri as an air freshener simply remove the lid and stir the ingredients. When the mixture needs revitalizing freshen it with a few tablespoons of brandy. It should last for years.

Herbal Wreaths

Making herbal wreaths and garlands is an ancient art that dates back to the Ancient Egyptians. Each herb had a special symbolic meaning to the ancients and great care was taken to use the right herbs for a specific occasion. Through the years wreaths, garlands and chaplets were used in weddings, funerals, rites of sacrifice and festivals for the gods. They played a major role in ceremonies to honor heroic generals, noted scholars and victorious athletes. Rue was a temple herb, laurel was for victors and scholars, rosemary was for brides, and thyme was used at a variety of festivals.

The height of the Roman civilization was also the height of the floral industry. Wreaths and garlands were the fashion of the day for decorating house and body. An entire quarter of the Athens market place was called the "Wreath Market," and wealthy, fashion conscious Romans spared no expense in ordering beautiful and costly wreaths, chaplets and garlands.

Early Christians looked upon the use of wreaths and garlands as pagan practices of the Greeks and Romans, and forbade their use. However, through the years, the tradition of hanging wreaths and garlands crept into Christian ceremonies, and their symbolic nature was changed to reflect Christian teachings. Lavender was dedicated to the Virgin Mary, symbolizing purity and virtue. Sage became the Christmas herb of immortality and domestic happiness. Thyme and rosemary were two of the manger herbs (there is a lovely story about how rosemary changed its flowers from white to blue when Mary put her blue cape over them after Christ was born).

Today herbal wreaths for Christmas are again gaining popular-

ity. They can be simple or elaborate, symbolic or utilitarian, or simply an attractive fragrant addition over a fireplace or a kitchen sink.

The easiest way to make an herb wreath is to purchase a straw wreath frame to use as the base. Tie your herbs in small bunches with florist wire and layer them along the straw base securing them with fern pins. You can use either fresh or dried herb pieces to make this type wreath. Lamb's ear, santolina and artemisia are all good grey herbs for the base. Oregano blossoms, lavender flowers, dried chive flower heads, tansy buttons, yarrow flowers and teasel pods give texture and color. Circlets of rosemary and thyme will add fragrance and can be later removed to adorn a lamb or pork roast. Spice balls, cinnamon sticks, whole nutmegs and cloves stuck into calamondin oranges will turn your herb wreath into an herb and spice wreath that would be sure to delight any good cook. If you're lucky enough to have an excess of bay leaves, their dark, shiny green leaves alone with a bright red velvet bow make a beautiful wreath. Rosemary is pliable, and again, if you have enough it makes a beautiful wreath when simply tied with a plaid or gingham bow.

Whether for fashion, tradition or cooking, the muted colors and delightful fragrances of an herbal wreath will surely please someone on your Christmas list.

Herbal Arrangements

Centerpieces made entirely of different herbs are a delight during any meal. The different scents mingle provocatively and the varied leaf shapes and shades of green and grey are all the contrast and color you need if you have bright dishes or a multi-patterned tablecloth. With a muted table setting, you might want to add garden flowers or chive, borage, beebalm, lavender, hyssop or nasturtium blossoms to the centerpiece. Baby's breath is a nice filler for all herb centerpieces. It makes the arrangement light and airy and the delicate white flowers merely accent the herbs without overpowering them.

For a spaghetti dinner try a centerpiece made of basil, oregano, marjoram, parsley, chives and chervil or any combination of herbs that you've included in your spaghetti sauce. If leg of lamb is the main course, serve it with lots of mint sauce and give everyone a small individual centerpiece with several varieties of mint in it.

To me a Thanksgiving centerpiece should be shades of bronze, gold and rust. Use up those last garden mums and add a few dried sprigs of tansy buttons or yarrow flowers. For bold greens fill in the arrangement with sage or green santolina, or give the mums a feathery backdrop with green or bronze fennel.

Christmas centerpieces should have one large candle or three to five tapers in them. Prune back your indoor herbs, such as rosemary, bay and scented geraniums to mix with Christmas greens like noble fir and incense cedar. Juniper is an excellent long-lasting Christmas green and is especially fragrant if you can find pieces with the berries still attached. For a very elegant Christmas centerpiece use only dark green herbs, fragrant evergreens and bright red Baccara roses.

When none of my vases seems to fit a special dinner party occasion I simply strew herbs down the middle of my table. This effect is especially nice if you put two or three brass candlesticks on the table and place the herbs thickly around their bases. Pick these herbs right before you call your guests to the table because they won't hold up long without water. Scatter a few flower blossoms or petals throughout the herbs if you need more color, and bruise a few herb leaves as you put them on the table to release their fragrance.

Before anyone arrives at the table you can put sprigs of dill or fennel, or a bunch of watercress, parsley, chervil or mint leaves on their chilled salad plates. These sprigs aren't meant to be eaten; they're just for decoration and fragrance. But you'll be surprised how many of your guests incorporate them into their salads with great relish.

Garnish a warm dinner plate with a pungent herb like sage whose fragrance will be released by the heat. Put a sprig of mint between the napkin and napkin ring. When your guests remove their napkins they'll crush the mint leaves and release a minty fragrance that will stimulate their appetites.

Fingerbowls aren't just for elegant dinner parties. The next time you're having fried chicken or barbecued spare ribs on the patio set out fingerbowls with a sprig of lemon balm and a twist of lemon floating in them. Lavender blossoms and lavender sprigs are beautiful and fragrant in any container that would pass for a fingerbowl.

Decorating the table with herbs shouldn't be reserved for holidays and special dinners. Make every meal an occasion and stimulate appetites with the minty, fruity, spicy or sweet smell of herbs.

The Herbal Bouquet

Where Chamber is swept and wormwood is strown,
No flea for his life dare abide to be known.
Thomas Tusser

Artemisia

One of the most beautiful sights I've ever seen was a grey garden made entirely of artemisias shimmering in the light of a full moon. I kept waiting for Queen Titania or a group of flower fairies to come marching out from under a wormwood leaf. Some artemisias are grey-green, others grey, and still others are white. They were once widely cultivated for their medicinal properties, but are now grown more in perennial borders, rock gardens and herb gardens for their attractive leaf shapes and colors. Some artemisias are prized for their scented foliage while others are grown for their insect and animal repellent qualities. A few are still cultivated for culinary purposes.

All the artemisias are hardy perennials that may be propagated from cuttings, root divisions or seed. They are not too picky about soil requirements but will do best in a porous, well-drained soil that is moderately rich. If peat moss, well-rotted manure or compost is added to the existing topsoil the artemisias will thrive and reach their maximum heights, which in some varieties exceed eight feet. They will spread laterally at a fairly rapid pace once they are established. Pruning will keep them bushy and full.

Many of the artemisias are attractive in dry arrangements. At any time during the growing season the artemisias may be harvested and the branches hung to dry. I have often picked a mixed bunch of artemisias and arranged them in a vase without water. This way they dry into the form of an arrangement and they don't have to be disturbed. When artemisias are dried in hanging bunches or arrangements the leaves tend to curl. They still look graceful and natural when curled, but if you would rather have flat pieces that show off the lacy foliage, dry the artemisias between pieces of absorbent paper placed under weights.

Pieces of fresh artemisia can be shaped into decorative wreaths. Harvest this artemisia just after the seed heads have formed in late summer. A wreath can be made entirely of artemisia or you can use artemisia for the base and add other herbs and spices for decoration around the main body of the wreath.

Wormwood (Artemisia absinthium) is a bushy, spreading perennial that reaches heights of one to four feet. Its stems are ribbed and its leaves are silky and hairy and vary from two to five inches. It has a bitter astringent flavor. From the time of ancient Egyptian civilizations to colonial American days, *Artemisia absinthium* was used as a wormer for children and animals. This led to its common name of wormwood. It was also used as a strewing herb to repel fleas and when mixed with water was used as a disinfectant wash in sickrooms.

Wormwood contains substantial amounts of absinthin, a highly toxic substance when concentrated. The French aperitif, absinthe, was banned in 1915 for its narcotic effects. It was made with wormwood, and those who over-indulged in it suffered from signs of narcotic poisoning and insanity. Some vermouth is still flavored with wormwood and it has been used as a tonic and diuretic. Extreme caution should be used when experimenting with wormwood. It's probably best to treat it as an ornamental and use it for those purposes alone.

Artemisia abrotanum, southernwood, is a hardy perennial with finely divided grey-green foliage. It grows from two to five feet tall and has threadlike one to two and one-half inch leaves that that have a sweet, lemonlike fragrance. Southernwood, when with other aromatic herbs, makes a pleasing sachet ingredient. It is reputed to be a good moth repellent and may be tucked into drawers and linen closets to keep the contents pest free. In medieval times southernwood was nicknamed "lad's love" as it was believed that ashes from the burned herb would help

promote the growth of a youth's beard. It was also burned as an incense to mask cooking odors.

Mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*) is often called "Indian wormwood." It grows two to seven feet tall on purplish-red ridged stems. The leaves are downy when young. As the plant matures the leaves become green above and white and wooly beneath. Another variety of mugwort, *Artemisia lactiflora*, grows to three feet tall and has very attractive white fragrant flowers and white leaves.

Mugwort was used to flavor beer and ale when hops were not available. It was used as a seasoning for game and cut its wild taste. It was also used to season fatty meats. An old English recipe for Christmas goose calls for stuffing the entire body cavity of a goose with mugwort, and another recipe adds minced mugwort leaves to the stuffing.

Angelica

Through the ages angelica has played a part in Christian and pre-Christian rites. Pagans wore angelica leaves around their necks to guard them from witches and evil spirits. In a vision during Christian times an archangel revealed that angelica would cure the plague. Angelica supposedly bloomed on May 8, the day of Michael the Archangel, giving rise to its classification as *Angelica archangelica*.

Angelica grows into a very large plant. It may reach heights of seven feet, with older leaves being more than one foot in

diameter. The large green leaves are bi- and tripinnate. Stems are large, hollow, round and grooved. Greenish-white flowers may appear in large terminal compound umbels from May through August. Fruits are oblong and composed of two yellow winged seeds.

Angelica is usually defined botanically as a biennial. A biennial is a plant that requires two seasons to complete its growth cycle. The first year the seed sprouts and forms a low rosette plant; the second year it flowers, goes to seed, and dies back. I've had angelica go to seed after two, three or four years or not at all. There is a legend that angelica blooms only if your house is blessed, so I must have had a few years there in which I was in disfavor. Some blessed gardeners find that their angelica blooms and self-seeds profusely, giving them new seedlings every year so they have plants in all stages of maturity. If you pick off the flower heads as they begin to develop, the plants will never be allowed to make seed and will live on indefinitely as perennials.

Angelica is native to northern Europe where it grows in cool, shady, damp places. In America, it will tolerate full sun if it is watered well; however it will most readily achieve its spectacular height if it is grown in a sheltered, shady location. It does well under trees or along the northern side of a house or wall. Angelica prefers a rich soil. An addition of peat moss or compost is beneficial.

Angelica plants are most easily propagated from seed. They may be sown directly in the garden or germinated indoors in seed flats. The seed needs light to germinate so seeds should not be covered, but merely scattered on top of the rooting medium. Keep the rooting medium moist and the seeds will sprout in two to three weeks. Plants started indoors should be transplanted outside just as soon as the frost danger has passed.

In the spring young shoots may be harvested, stripped of their leaves, and chopped into fine pieces. They have a sweet taste that mixes well with all kinds of fruit. You can cut down the quantity of sugar you use in any recipe if you add angelica. Add angelica pieces to rhubarb sauce or pie, cherry pie, cherry cobbler, raspberry tarts or apple cobbler. They also add an interesting flavor to fruit jellies and jams. In Europe candied angelica stems are a delicacy used to decorate cakes and cookies. The roots are also candied and sold as confections.

Young, tender leaves and stems taste somewhat like celery and may be eaten raw in salads or used to flavor soups and stews. Many popular liqueurs, such as Benedictine and Chartreuse, are flavored with angelica stems.

A tea made from the fresh or dried angelica leaves and stems helps stimulate the appetite. It is best served with honey.

Angelica may be dried by hanging the entire plant upside down in a warm room with good air circulation. For quicker drying remove the leaves from the stems, chop them into fine pieces and scatter them on screens in a warm, shaded room.

Angelica is also used in flower arrangements. The dried flower and seed heads are attractive in large fall arrangements, and angelica's divided green leaves make nice background foliage in fresh flower arrangements.

Anise

Anise (*Pimpinella anisum*) is delicate in appearance, but bold in flavor. It has feathery, light green foliage and umbels of lacy white blossoms that produce brown, ovate fruits in August and September. The fruits contain seeds that are both sweet and pungent with a distinct licorice fragrance and taste.

Anise seeds have been a valued commodity for centuries. The ancients ascribed many medicinal virtues to them. Pythagoras, who is best known for his mathematics and not for his medicine, placed such store in anise that he claimed you could ward off seizure by merely holding the plant. Many herbalists still recommend hot anise seed tea for coughs and colds in the same dosages that Hippocrates originally prescribed. Pliny the Elder suggested placing anise sprigs on your pillow if you were troubled by bad dreams. Gerard claimed that anise stirred up bodily lust and also cured the hiccoughs.

During Biblical times the Romans levied heavy taxes against their citizens. These taxes were often paid in precious spices and herbs, especially medicinal ones. Anise and mint were often mentioned as tax payments. Much later, Edward I needed money to repair London Bridge. He evoked some old tax laws and anise at this time became a taxable commodity instead of a token with which to pay taxes.

Romans made a cake called *mustacae* to eat at the end of a big feast. It contained several seeds, including anise, that were supposed to help digestion. These cakes were especially apparent after marriage feasts and were probably the forerunners of today's wedding cakes.

Anise is an annual herb native to Egypt, Greece and Asia Minor. It is propagated by seeds sown directly into the ground in the spring after all frost danger has passed. In northern climates where spring is late, it may be started inside for later transplanting. It has a delicate root system that is easily damaged by the shock of transplanting, so it's best to start more than you'll need indoors to compensate for the ones you are sure to lose during transplanting.

Outside I like to sow successive anise crops every two to three weeks. I start early in March. The first few plantings are usually taken by frost, but the seed is inexpensive and if the weather does stay nice I'm just that much further ahead.

Anise seedlings don't look much like anise plants, and I've often been tempted to pull them up as weeds. The lower leaves of the anise plant are rounded with deeply notched edges and the finer, feathery foliage that characterizes anise appears at the top of the plant. Leaves between these two are pinnate, not as coarse as the ones at the bottom of the plant, but not as fine as those at the top. All the leaves appear on round, grooved slender stems that grow approximately eighteen inches tall. Heavy blasts of water or strong gusts of wind will tend to knock the stems down. Supporting them with bamboo stakes or wire mesh cages will keep them neat and attractive.

Anise seems to do best in full sun in a porous, well-drained soil. It can be grown indoors in a pot but it's hard to give it enough sun and it tends to become weak and spindly. It also requires quite a bit of space. If your sunlight or space is limited you would probably gain more by planting other herbs indoors and sowing plenty of anise outside.

When the stems of the anise plant begin to yellow and the seed heads are grey-green, cut the stems and hang them upside down in a warm, airy room. Tie a brown paper bag, perforated with

small air holes, over the seed heads and as the seeds dry they will fall into the bag. Seeds may be stored in airtight containers.

Anise seeds can be sprinkled over a pork roast before it goes into the oven. Sprinkle the seeds on the tops of cakes or cookies or cupcakes before baking. A half teaspoon of crushed anise seeds give a unique flavor to baked or stewed apples. Add anise seed to applesauce, apple pie or apple coffee cake. Chew a few anise seeds as a breath freshener.

The fine feathery anise leaves may be used fresh in butter for basting fish. Anise seed butter is also a good fish baste. Leaves or seeds may be used to flavor cottage cheese. Mixed with cream cheese, leaves or seeds make a good spread for canapes.

Anise stimulates the appetite and may be sprinkled in cocktails before dinner. Its licorice flavor is found in anisette and chartreuse for after-dinner liqueurs.

Fresh leaves are good in green salads and leaves or seeds may be added to salad dressings. Leaves are good in fruit cups and fruit salads. Apple, banana, walnut and raisin salad with honey, mayonnaise, and anise seed dressing is delicious. Anise leaves can be added to white sauce for seasoning fish. Sprinkle it over boiled shrimp or add the leaves to the boiling water in which you cook the shrimp. Anise leaves can be sparingly added to vegetable soups and lamb stews.

Hot anise seed tea is made by gently simmering a tablespoon of crushed anise seed in a pint of boiling water. It may take five to ten minutes before the seed releases its flavor. Serve it hot with milk for a nightcap.

Anise seed may be used in potpourris. Don't confuse it with Chinese star anise, the beautiful, dark brown *Illicium anisatum*, which also tastes and smells like licorice. Its scent and star shape makes it a good herb for potpourris too.

Basil

It is almost impossible to describe the flavor and aroma of basil. A fresh leaf is filled with essential oils that give off a hint of licorice mixed with citrus and cloves. The leaves always feel cool to the touch but their flavor is warm and spicy. I've found it indispensable in cooking and a delight to be able to crush its leaves and have its scent fill my mind with pleasant memories of summer meals around the herb garden.

There are over fifty different species of basil, each differing somewhat in height, color and taste. My favorite basil for cooking is *Ocimum basilicum*, sweet basil. Sweet basil grows two to three feet high and has square stems. Its leaves are yellowish green on the top and greyish green dotted with dark oil cells beneath. Small white flowers are produced in whorls in the axils of leaves and the leaves fold slightly along the midrib. *Ocimum minimum*, dwarf or bush basil, has the same peppery, clovelike scent and flavor, but its leaves remain small and it usually does not exceed ten inches in height. Its dwarf, bushy stature makes it a very good indoor plant. *Ocimum crispum* has curly leaves and *Ocimum citriodora* is a basil with a distinctive lemon scent and flavor.

Hybridizers have altered most of our cultivated plants over the years to give us bigger fruit, better yields, more colorful flowers, or disease, pest and drought resistant varieties. Plant breeders however hadn't shown much interest in herbs until they found a purple-tinged basil in Turkey. After intensively breeding the

plant, in 1962 they developed *Ocimum bascilicum "Purpur-ascens."* This is a dark, opal basil with beautiful pink flowers that was the first and only herb to be awarded the All-American medal for plant excellence. The hybridizers retained the basil flavor and aroma in the purple variety making it a welcome addition to either the herb or the flower garden.

All the varieties of basil are tender annuals and must be replanted each spring. They require a richer soil than most herbs and seem to thrive when well-rotted manure, compost and peat moss are added to the existing garden soil. Basil grows easily from seed and germinates in fifteen to twenty days. It may be sown directly into the garden after the danger of frost passes, or started indoors in sterilized soil in early March and transplanted outside in late May. Basil may also be grown from cuttings rooted in moist sand, perlite or vermiculite.

Basil will thrive indoors as well as out, requiring at least four hours of direct sunlight a day in either place. For indoor gardening four to six rooted cuttings or seedlings will fill up a six inch pot. Flowers should not be allowed to develop or the plants will go to seed and die. Don't be afraid to use your indoor basil, for the more you pinch it back, the fuller and bushier it will become.

Basil is a native of India where it has always been held as a plant sacred to Vishnu and Krishna. The variety *Ocimum sanctum* is called holy basil and is grown for religious significance instead of culinary use. Its scent supposedly helps induce states of meditation. It was extensively cultivated in the past and entirely covered the ground around the holy city of Pandharpur. When a Hindu died, basil sprigs were placed on his breast to insure his safe passage into the other world. Pots of basil were grown in Hindu homes to insure household happiness.

The earliest written records of basil date back to 250 B.C. when Chrysippus wrote that basil existed only to drive men insane. Hippocrates used it as one of his medicinal herbs, and ancient Greeks pressed sprigs of basil into friends' hands as a warning that an enemy approached.

In Tudor England, and later in colonial America, small pots of basil were often given as housewarming presents since basil's presence was thought to repel flies. Some English herbalists refused to recognize basil's culinary merits, but advised mixing its seeds with shoemaker's black to take away warts. Dried basil leaves were also used as snuff to clear the head and drive away nervous headaches.

Italians still hold basil as a symbol of love. A pot of basil on the balcony was a sign that the lady inside was ready for her suitor, and if the suitor wore a sprig of basil his intentions were sincere. Keats also used basil as a love symbol when he immortalised Boccacio's story in "Isabella and the Pot of Basil." The young girl in the story plants the head of her murdered lover in a pot of basil and waters it daily with her tears.

Basil is a wonderful companion to tomatoes whether they are planted together in the vegetable garden or mixed together in the kitchen. Basil's special affinity for tomatoes seems to improve both their growth and flavor if it's planted near them. I've especially noticed how much better a container grown tomato does if the pot is large enough to accommodate a basil plant too. Garden tomatoes sliced and sprinkled with chopped basil, vinegar, and oil are delicious. Fresh tomato juice is improved by the addition of a basil sprig as is tomato paste or sauce. A cheesecloth bag filled with basil, parsley, onion and bay leaf added to tomato soup and removed just before serving gives the soup a special flavor. Cold gazpacho is also better if basil is used as one of its ingredients as well as its garnish.

The green basil sauce called pesto is excellent floated on top of minestrone, spread on broiled fish or steaks or used as a sauce for string beans. Pesto may also be used in place of butter on baked potatoes, as a sauce for spaghetti or as a fresh vegetable dip. To make pesto, combine two cups of fresh, chopped basil leaves, one teaspoon salt, one-half teaspoon pepper, two teaspoons fresh chopped garlic, two tablespoons pine nuts or walnuts and one cup olive oil in a blender container. After the mixture is smooth, stir in one-half cup grated Romano cheese and refrigerate until needed. Basil doesn't retain its flavor well when dried, but both its flavor and aroma can be easily preserved if it's frozen in sauces like pesto.

Basil mixes well in egg and cheese dishes. It's great in a mushroom and ham omelet and it gives a distinct flavor if a teaspoon is added to your favorite cheese souffle recipe. Mayonnaise becomes a lovely green sauce with the addition of basil, and cream cheese and cottage cheese also benefit from its addition.

Dark opal basil is a tasty and beautiful addition to a tossed salad. A few sprigs of opal basil in white wine vinegar will give it a pinkish-purple color and the flavor and aroma of cloves. Herbalists claim basil tea is good for colds and upset stomachs and the dried herb gives a warm, spicy scent to potpourris and sachets.

In September listen to the weather reports and if there is a slight chance of frost harvest all your remaining basil. Nothing is more depressing than to go out on a fall morning and find your basil black and spongy while the hyssop, germander, tarragon, rue and all the other hardier herbs still look beautiful after the first frost. I've tried to leave my basil late hoping that it would form viable seed that would drop and come up on its own the next spring, but the seeds never seem to germinate, so I'm busy making pesto to freeze, drying sprigs for kitchen potpourris and making those last few bottles of vinegar the night before that first chilling frost.

Cuttings of the healthiest stalks to root for indoor plants may also be taken at this time. These cuttings should be swished in Ivory soap and tepid water and then rinsed in clear water to remove any traces of insect infestations that they've picked up outside. Basil is prone to white fly. Outside natural predators seem to keep these pests under control but indoors they'll spread unchecked. Simply washing the basil and all your other indoor herbs weekly will help keep them insect free, clean and always ready to snip into the cooking pot.

Zucchini and Onion Casserole with Basil

4 medium zucchini sliced
1 medium onion finely sliced
5 tablespoons butter
2 eggs
1 cup cream
1 tablespoon fresh basil or 1 teaspoon dried basil
salt and pepper
2/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Saute the zucchini and the onion in the butter until the onion is transparent. In a medium size mixing bowl beat the eggs until they are light and fluffy and then mix in the cream, basil, salt and pepper. Put the zucchini and onions into a greased ovenproof casserole. Pour the custard mix over the zucchini and onions. Sprinkle the Parmesan on top and bake it uncovered for 15 minutes in a 425° oven.

Bay

In its native Mediterranean climate sweet bay, *Laurus nobilis,* is a magnificent evergreen tree that often reaches heights of sixty feet. It is covered with large, leathery leaves that are usually one to three inches long and one-half to one inch wide. The leaves are elliptical and taper to points at the base. In the spring tiny yellow blossoms appear at the intersection of the leaves and stems; later in the year they form purple-black berries.

Bays grown in cooler climates are best potted in large tubs that may be moved into filtered sun outside during the summer months and direct sun indoors during the winter. They rarely flower in tubs and their growth is somewhat restricted; however, given enough light and time they will eventually reach heights of ten feet. They make beautiful house plants and can be shaped to almost any form with selective pruning.

'Tis thought the King is dead. He will not stay
The Bay trees in our country are all withered.

Shakespeare
Richard III

Bay is very difficult to propagate. It may be grown from seed, but it is slow to germinate and caution must be exercised to keep the seeds from rotting. Cuttings of the newest, non-woody tip growth may be rooted in moist perlite or vermiculite, but it may take up to six months for the cuttings to establish good root systems.

Bay may be used fresh or dry and the leaves may be dried one at a time or in bunches. I usually hang a few bay branches in my kitchen letting them dry naturally in the filtered sun and good air circulation there. They add a decorative touch and it's a simple task to pull off a leaf and crumble it into the cooking pot when needed. Bays have a tendency to curl when dried. If you want nice flat leaves that retain their dark green color, dry the individual leaves between absorbent papers or cloth held down with weights. After drying, the leaves should be stored whole in air-tight, opaque containers.

To the ancient Greeks bay was the sacred herb of Apollo. They used its gilded branches in their wedding and funeral services, and held it as a symbol of joy, triumph and victory. After winning an impressive battle Greeks and Romans crowned their generals with wreaths of *Laurus nobilis*. Caesar always insisted that his victory wreaths be made of Alexandrian laurel, *Ruscus racemosus*, instead of sweet bay as its leaves were fuller and better concealed his baldness.

Sprigs and crowns of bay were awarded for literary and artistic greatness, hence the terms "poet laureate" and "baccalaureate" still used in circles of academic achievement today. Senators in Rome always knew whether their generals were victorious or not before they opened their dispatches because the generals wrapped any good news in bay leaves.

During the plague in Italy all the wealthy and important Italians were advised to go to San Lorenzo where the bay trees grew in such abundance that simply inhaling the air that was impregnated with their fragrance was considered a sure protection against any pestilence.

American colonists brought bay with them from Europe. They used it to mask the odor and taste of meat that often went bad in those days before the modern convenience of refrigeration. Colonists also kept bay leaves in their flour, wheat and corn barrels and cannisters to drive away fleas, lice and moths.

Bay's flavor is very strong and somewhat bitter and must be used with discretion. A single leaf in a slow simmering dish will usually flavor three to four portions. With parsley, thyme and marjoram, bay leaf tied in a cheesecloth bag becomes the classic *bouquet garni*. A *bouquet garni* is added to thick meat soups, stews, and sauces while they're cooking and is then removed right before the dish is served.

Vinegar and oil marinades for lamb or beef are improved with bay. Whole bay leaves threaded onto skewers next to meat cubes for shishkabobs add flavor to the meat and color to the dish. Most wild game, especially venison stew, is improved with the addition of one or two bay leaves. Bay leaves are a must in vegetable soups, lamb stews, thick bean soup and split pea soup. It's good with tomato juice and gives an entirely different flavor to artichokes, potatoes, carrots or beets if it's added to the cooking water before they are boiled or steamed.

In early fall right before I move my bay tree back inside, I shape it by pruning off much of the summer growth. At the same time my herb garden is usually full of yarrow, tansy, lavender and oregano flowers, as well as mint, rosemary and artemisia sprigs

ready to harvest. All of these ingredients combined together and fastened onto an inexpensive straw wreath frame make great kitchen wreaths for all the good cooks on my Christmas list. Fancy bows, stick cinnamon, whole nutmegs, dried red peppers or any other available herbs and spices can be added to make the wreaths unique. If you're lucky enough to have an unlimited supply of bay you can make one of the most beautiful Christmas wreaths using only the shiny, fragrant leaves of the bay and a large red velvet bow.

An Herbal Medley of Fresh Green Beans, Onions and Tomatoes

2 tablespoons oil
1 cup thinly sliced onions
1 *bouquet garni* (1 bay leaf, 3 sprigs of parsley, 2 sprigs of thyme tied together with string)
4 large tomatoes
2 cloves of garlic crushed
1/2 cup water
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon pepper
2 pounds of fresh green beans with ends removed and the beans snapped in two
1 teaspoon fresh tarragon
1 tablespoon fresh parsley
1 teaspoon fresh chervil
2 teaspoons soft butter

Saute the onions in the oil. Add the *bouquet garni*, water, salt and pepper with the tomatoes to the onion. Cover and simmer for 30 minutes. Add the beans and simmer for 15 more minutes. Uncover the pan for the last three minutes of cooking time to let the excess liquid escape. Remove the bouquet garni. Mix the tarragon, parsley and chervil with the butter. Spoon the butter mixture over the vegetables and serve.

Borage

Borage, *Borago officinalis*, is an attractive ornamental and edible herb. Its blue-green stems, leaves and buds are covered with tiny silvery-white hairs that give the entire plant a pleasant downy appearance. The lavender-pink buds droop in clusters that develop into brilliant blue star-shaped flowers with shiny black centers. Occasionally flowers will be pink or pink and blue, but whatever color, they are always a delight to the eye and the palate.

Borage is an annual that is easily grown from seed sown in the late fall or the early spring after the frost danger has passed. It should be grown in a fairly rich, porous and well-drained soil in a full sun location. It reseeds itself readily and you may find it coming up in the flower and vegetable beds, as well as the herb garden, for several years after you first sow it. While the plants are small seedlings, the leaves are tender and juicy with a mild cucumber flavor. I always try to weed the small seedlings from unwanted places right before dinner. I chop the leaves, add them to other fresh salad greens along with some dill, and dress them with tarragon vinegar and oil. This gives the greens a wonderful cucumber and dill flavor with none of the after-effects one sometimes gets from cucumbers themselves.

Old herbals claimed that borage would make men joyful and merry. They advised its use for driving away sorrow and

melancholy, for comforting the heart and restoring health and vitality after prolonged illness. Modern research has led us to believe that there might be some truth to those ancient writings. The herb contains large quantities of potassium and calcium and many other natural minerals and essential vitamins. The mucilaginous juice in borage leaves is cooling and refreshing. I find that drinks made with the juice soothe my stomach and calm my nerves and give me an overall sense of well-being.

The Greeks and Romans floated borage's blue flowers in their wine cups which were laced with borage juice. The flowers are edible and add a beautiful blue to salads, fruit cups, sherbets and ice cream. Dried flowers add color to potpourris. Candied borage flowers make excellent cake and cookie decorations. To candy the star-shaped flowers simply brush them with egg white and dredge them with fine granulated sugar.

Crushed borage leaves added to lemonade or fruit punch make it an even more refreshing drink on a hot summer day. Borage makes a stimulating tea that may be served either hot or cold. Served hot with a slice of lemon it's considered effective in soothing sore throats. Served iced with fresh blue flowers floating on the top it's a cooling summer treat.

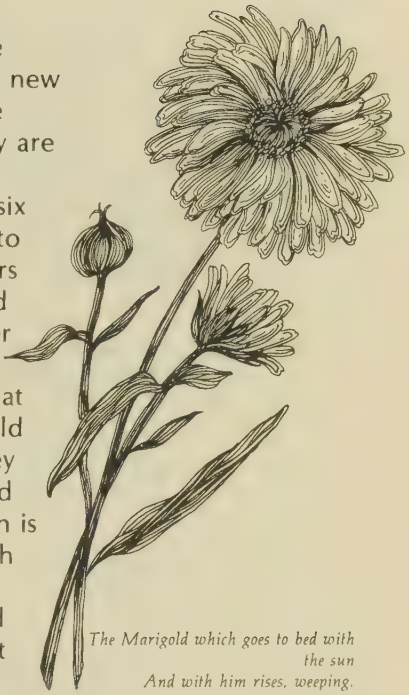
As borage gets older it may become bitter and tough; however, throughout the summer the newest tip growth may be used to flavor potato salad, soups and stews. It is delicious when chopped fine and sprinkled over sliced tomatoes or cooked green beans. It also mixes well with cream cheese for an unusual cracker spread.

Borage is often used in the vegetable garden as a neighbor to tomatoes, squash and strawberries. It seems to improve both their growth and their flavor. It is also an effective deterrent to the tomato hornworm, a voracious caterpillar that can destroy entire tomato, pepper and eggplant crops.

Organic gardeners often raise borage because it attracts bees for flower pollination. They grow it in quantities so they will have enough to add to the compost heap as it adds potassium and calcium and other essential nutrients to the compost.

Borage may be grown indoors on a sunny windowsill. It is one of the few herbs that will reward you with a profusion of blossoms in the house. Eventually it will become long and leggy and the leaves will begin to grow tough. Seeding new borage plants about every six weeks should keep you with a supply of fresh, tender leaves and controlled plants all winter. Tea from the leaves will make you happy and healthy, and the bright blue star-shaped flowers should drive away any melancholy on those cold snowy winter days.

Calendula



The Marigold which goes to bed with the sun
And with him rises, weeping.

Shakespeare
Winter's Tale

Calendulas are sun lovers of the Compositae family. Flowers of the new calendula hybrids range from pale yellow through deep orange. They are borne on light green, hairy stems ranging in height from the dwarf six inch varieties to the tall eighteen to twenty-four inch types. The flowers open with the morning sun to add their glorious color to herb, flower and vegetable gardens as well.

Calendulas are hardy annuals that often live through the first few mild frosts, blooming well into fall. They are easily started from seed in mild climates where the growing season is fairly long. In harsher climates with short summers the plants may be purchased as bedding annuals and transplanted outside when all frost danger has passed in the spring.

Calendulas were first grown in herb gardens for their reputed medicinal value. Merely looking upon the beautiful ray flowers was supposed to strengthen the eyes. English herb shops carried infusions of calendula. It was claimed that infusions taken internally would cure measles and varicose veins. Calendula was a popular ingredient in washes, ointments and salves that were used on skin infections. The bruised petals were also rubbed on wasp and bee stings to relieve the pain, and calendula tea was taken for fever and colds.

Calendula petals are still used as a substitute for saffron. They don't add the same flavor but they do color rice a beautiful golden yellow.

Calendula petals may be used fresh in salads and herb butters. Minced petals can be added to cream cheese or mixed with biscuit ingredients to make yellow-flecked calendula buns. Float flower petals on cold or hot soups or use them in stews; they readily add their yellow color and savory flavor to cakes, cookies and puddings. Calendula vinegar is golden yellow, and calendula wine is a pleasant tasting, golden yellow brew.

Flower petals may be dried for winter use. The petals are normally removed from the flower heads and dried on a flat surface in a warm room or in a slow 150° oven. They may also be dried by hanging the entire flower stalk and head upside down in an airy room. The center of the flower is thick and moist and by the time it has dried much of the essential oil may be lost from the petals. For this reason it is usually better to remove the petals from the flower heads before drying.

Calendulas may be added to the vegetable garden for their bright spots of color. They also repel the asparagus beetle and tomato hornworm so they are both decorative and useful herbs in the garden.

Herb Stuffed Baked Tomatoes

4 large, red, firm tomatoes
1 clove mashed garlic
½ cup bread crumbs that have been finely crushed with a rolling pin
1 tablespoon minced fresh basil
1½ tablespoons minced fresh parsley
¼ teaspoon minced fresh thyme
3 tablespoons minced green onions
2 tablespoons oil
salt and pepper

Cut off the tops of the tomatoes and core them. Remove the seeds and gently press out the juice with a knife. Mix together the herbs, garlic, oil, bread crumbs, onion and salt and pepper. Fill each of the tomatoes with this mixture and bake in a greased pan for 15 minutes in a preheated 400° oven. Serves 4. Garnish with fresh basil sprigs.

Camomile

Whenever Peter Rabbit was feeling ill after a close call with Mr. McGregor his mother would put him to bed and give him two or three teaspoons of camomile tea. It was a soothing brew and Peter was soon fast asleep. Throughout history in legend and lore camomile has been esteemed for real and imaginary medicinal virtues for people as well as rabbits.

There is a great deal of confusion between the different camomiles with several varieties referred to commonly as camomile or chamomile. Either spelling is correct, but the various species grow differently and contain different properties making them more or less suitable for culinary, cosmetic and health uses.

Anthemis nobilis, often called Roman camomile, is a low growing perennial. It branches freely rooting into the ground as it trails. The whole plant is downy in appearance and pleasantly aromatic, smelling of ripe apples. In late summer the plants produce white or yellow, single or double daisylike flowers.

Roman camomile has been cultivated for centuries in England where both the dried flower heads and the essential oil distilled from the flowers and leaves of the plant have been used medicinally as a tonic. Roman camomile was supposed to be a cure-all for people and plants alike. It was called the "plant's

physician" in the belief that its presence near other plants in the garden would keep them healthy and growing well.

Anthemis nobilis is still used in England and many other humid climates as a ground cover or grass substitute. Buckingham Palace has a clipped camomile lawn. It forms a dense mat that will withstand mowing and fairly heavy foot traffic. Shakespeare's Falstaff talks of how the more it is trodden upon the faster it grows. During the American Revolution Roman camomile was referred to as the "Whig Plant" because, like the Whigs, it would thrive and continue to grow when trampled. Along walks it released its scent when crushed, and it was used to help hold the soil along banks. It was also a common filler between the knots in formal herb gardens.

In Shakespeare's day Roman camomile was used for turf seats. Soil was mounded into the form of a bench, then camomile was planted and allowed to cover it. The camomile was carefully clipped to keep it from blooming so that all the plant's energies could be given to the root and branch growth. After the camomile was established, one could actually sit and relax on the bench and be engulfed with the sweet smell of ripe apples.

In northern, dry climates *Anthemis* will not spread as readily as it did in Shakespeare's garden. Our hot sun and unpredictable winter weather are hard on it and it will only survive if it is kept watered throughout the year and mulched well in the winter.

Matricaria chamomilla is not botanically related to *Anthemis nobilis* but they share the same applelike fragrance and daisy-like flowers used for tea. This camomile is referred to commonly as German camomile. It is an annual herb with beautiful little three-quarter inch white daisylike flowers with domed yellow centers that are hollow on the inside. It was probably the blossoms of *Matricaria chamomilla* that Mrs. Rabbit used for Peter's soothing tea.

Unlike the trailing *Anthemis nobilis, Matricaria chamomilla* is an erect herb growing two to three feet tall. As an annual it self seeds readily producing new plants year after year. In parts of the United States it has escaped cultivation and now grows wild. The word *Chamomilla* is derived from the Greek word *chamai* (on the ground) and *melon* (apple), alluding to the camomile's apple-like fragrance and ground growing manner.

The Spanish name for camomile is *manzanilla* or little apple. The Spanish use it to flavor one of their lightest sherries, also called *Manzanilla.*

An extract from the *Matricaria* flowers makes a dark, amber liquid that brings out the natural color of light red or blond hair

when it's used as a rinse. It not only lightens the hair but conditions it as well and is now found in many commercially prepared shampoos and hair rinses.

A hot infusion of two cups of camomile flowers to five cups of water makes an excellent steam bath for cleansing the face. Place the herbs and the hot water in a bowl. Hold your face over the bowl and cover your head with a towel to make a tent so the steam can't escape. Steaming should take four to eight minutes.

Camomile flowers tied in a cheesecloth bag can be added to hot bath water for a soothing and relaxing herbal bath. Camomile can be used alone in the bags or mixed with mints, lavender and rosemary.

Organic gardeners make up a weak tea of camomile to use as a fungicide. Whenever herb seedlings begin to dampen off they spray or water them with this tea. This same tea can be successfully added to the compost heap where it aids in the calcium formation during the breakdown of raw materials.

Organic gardeners also plant camomile as a companion plant to cabbages and onions. It improves both their vigor and flavor. Here and there throughout the garden camomile is thought to be beneficial to all garden plants.

Ancient herbalists thought of camomile as a cure-all. Dioscorides and Pliny thought it would cure headaches as well as liver, kidney and bladder diseases. Egyptians dedicated it to their sun gods and their priests used it as a medication in their "House of Life." Germanic tribes also put great faith in the healing properties of camomile and dedicated it to their sun god, Baldur. In Prussia, wreaths of camomile were hung up in houses on St. John's Day to protect the occupants throughout the year from lightning and thunder.

Both camomiles will thrive in partial shade to full sun when they are given good drainage and watered well. *Matricaria chamomilla* is easily started from seed, but *Anthemis nobilis* is easier to propagate from root division or ground layering. Of the two, *Matricaria* is a better choice for indoor gardening. Given plenty of sun and a 15-30-15 fertilizer monthly it will reward you with cheery flowers during the winter months.

Both *Matricaria* and *Anthemis* make an excellent tea. The flavor of *Matricaria* is not quite as strong as that of the *Anthemis* and you may need to use more blossoms to get the right amount of flavor for your taste. Tea is made from the dried or fresh flower heads only—never the leaves. Flower heads should be dried quickly in a warm airy room after they've fully opened. Camomile tea is made by infusing an ounce of the dried flower

heads in a pint of water that has been brought to the boiling point. Don't boil the herbs themselves, just let them steep in the hot water for three to five minutes. The tea will be a golden yellow color with a pleasant applelike fragrance. It makes a good night cap for the end of a hectic day . . . whether you've been running from Mr. McGregor's shotgun or fighting the traffic on your way home from work.

Catnip

Catnip (*Nepeta cataria*), best known for its exhilarating effect on cats, is a hardy perennial. It is a member of the Labiatae, or mint, family with its square stems, irregular two-lipped flowers and characteristic mintlike fragrance.

The entire plant is very robust and may reach heights of two to three feet. The heart-shaped leaves are two to three inches long and deeply indented on the sides. The hairs give the entire plant a beautiful grey-green downy appearance. Flowers are pale pink to lavender and bloom from July to frost.

Every feline, from the king of beasts to the gentlest housecat, seems to delight in the oils produced in the leaves of the catnip plant. Commercially sold catnip toys tend to lose their essential oils before they get to the consumer and a cat will merely sniff at them and turn up his nose. A catnip plant or a piece of fresh or newly dried catnip will receive a totally different reaction. With obvious pleasure and excitement cats will roll in it, rub against it, taste it, stalk it, throw it into the air, tear it into shreds . . . and then start all over again.

Catnip is easily grown from seed or root divisions. Tip cuttings may be rooted in moist sand, perlite or vermiculite.

Nepeta cataria isn't too particular about its growing conditions; however it seems to do best in a sunny location with a

porous, well-drained soil. I always try to plant my catnip in a sunny corner away from the other garden plants, where the cats can frolic without damaging anything else.

The leaves of the catnip plant can be used to make a refreshing tea. Alone, catnip's flavor is slightly bitter so I usually mix it with other mints, especially spearmint and orange mint, as well as some honey and lemon. The tea is rich in Vitamins A and C and was a favorite "freedom tea" in colonial America. When teas from England were expensive and the taxes on them outrageous the colonists gathered wild and domesticated herbs with strawberry and raspberry leaves to make many interesting herbal tea combinations.

Catnip tea was used for upset stomachs, acid and flatulency. It was a soothing brew to quiet nerves and to dispel nightmares and nervous headaches. Mixed with fennel it was given to babies for colic. With honey it was reputed to be an effective cough syrup. It was also used to induce perspiration without raising body heat in an effort to break fevers.

Since catnip oils are highly volatile the herb should never be boiled. To make catnip tea infuse one ounce of the dried or fresh catnip leaves in a pint of very hot water and let it steep for three to five minutes. After steeping, strain the tea and serve it with lemon and honey.

Old herbals claimed that catnip would repel rats and advised farmers to plant it in and around their grain crops. (I wonder whether it attracted cats that repelled the rats or if it actually repelled the rats itself.) Organic gardeners today plant catnip as a companion plant in borders to deter the flea beetle, an aggravating pest that feeds on vegetable seedlings and jumps like a flea when disturbed.

Catmint (*Nepeta mussinii*) is closely related to catnip and is one of my favorite borders for the perennial garden. Its silvery-grey foliage reaches heights of one to one and one-half feet and is covered with clusters of lavender-blue flowers in June and July. It will continue to flower intermittently throughout the summer if it is fed every three to four weeks with a 15-30-15 fertilizer. The clumps may be divided every three years in the spring, and freqent pruning will keep the foliage dense and attractive.

Catnip is easily dried by cutting large branches, tying them with string and hanging them in a shady spot with good air circulation. After drying, the leaves should be removed from the stems and stored in airtight containers. The dried leaves give a mintlike fragrance to potpourris, sachets and scented pillows.

Catnip toys can be made from the freshly dried catnip. They may be as simple as a small cloth bag filled with leaves to a more elaborate cloth mouse or cloth cat filled with catnip. A basket tied up with a big, red bow and filled with catnip toys and a container of soothing mint and catnip tea leaves is one of my favorite Christmas gifts for cat lovers.

Chervil

Our garden in Vermont was bordered by New England woods with wild maiden-hair ferns growing in thick, dense clumps. Their graceful foliage is something I've longed to duplicate in my Colorado gardens but, try as I may, I just can't seem to grow that type of fern outside in Colorado's dry air. To satisfy my aesthetic needs as well as add to my culinary pleasures I've planted large clumps of chervil. Its finely divided pale green leaves are delicately fernlike, and when it is planted in partial shade it gives the effect of a cool shady glen filled with ferns.

Chervil is often referred to as gourmet parsley. It resembles that herb in both appearance and taste; however chervil's flavor is milder and more delicate, with a hint of anise. Both chervil and parsley can be found in flat or curly leaved varieties, and chervil may be substituted for parsley in almost any recipe. In France chervil's use as a garnish rivals that of parsley, and it is indispensable as a seasoning in the *cuisine minceur* recipes. Chervil is used in soups and salads, cheese, fish and egg dishes, salad dressings and sauces, and as a vegetable seasoning.

With its flowers in flat-topped clusters, called umbels, chervil, *Anthrisus cerefolium*, is a characteristic member of the Umbelliferae family. Its round, finely grooved branching stalks normally grow eighteen to twenty-four inches tall with many opposite, bipinnate, light green leaves. It is easily grown from seed sown directly into the garden or started indoors in sterilized potting soil. Indoors it needs some direct sunlight or the young seedlings will become long and spindly. Outside chervil will thrive in partial shade. It germinates very quickly and may reach maturity in as little as six to eight weeks. At maturity chervil will produce dainty white flowers followed by long, pointed black fruits that are furrowed from end to end. Chervil foliage is most flavorful before the plants bloom. Removing new shoots before they blossom will help extend the life and flavor of your chervil plants, and sowing successive crops every four weeks outside during the summer and inside during the winter will give you new plants with tender foliage all through the year.

Chervil is another of those herbs that often finds a place in my flower beds as well as the herb garden. If it is sown successively, it will become a graceful fernlike filler to enhance spring, summer and fall perennials. It also lends itself as delicate greenery in bouquets of fresh, cut flowers. Chervil is a good fall indicator; when the nights become cool, its foliage takes on a beautiful crimson color. If chervil is dried in silica gel at this time, it retains the crimson tones and may be used in dry arrangements.

During the Middle Ages eating chervil was prescribed to protect people from the plague. Chervil was thought to have great powers of rejuvenation, and it was highly recommended as a spring tonic to sweeten and purify the blood after a long, cold winter. On Holy Thursday some Europeans still eat chervil soup as a symbol of resurrection and new life. Chervil was used internally and externally to ease the pains in joints caused by rheumatism, and compresses of its leaves were applied to bruises to take away the soreness. Chervil was also recommended as a cure for hiccoughs when taken in large quantities, but some herbalists warned that these same quantities would provoke lust.

Chervil has a delicate flavor that enhances other herbs. Parsley, chives, basil, thyme, tarragon and chervil or a combination of any of these six herbs are referred to as *fines herbes*. These herbs are usually chopped fine and added to foods just before serving. Tarragon is the strongest of these herbs and should be used in small quantities or it will overpower the others. Chervil, tarragon, chives, parsley and a small amount of garlic may be added to any soft cheese for a delicious herb and garlic cheese spread. This

mixture is good on warmed French bread, cooked summer vegetables, and as a spread for crackers or dip for raw vegetables.

As a garnish chervil is often floated on hot or cold soups. It is the main ingredient with a basic chicken stock and light cream in the beautiful pale green chervil soup. Chervil's addition to leek, potato or sorrel soup greatly enhances their flavors.

Chervil is a major flavoring ingredient in *sauce Bearnaise*. Its anise flavor enhances French dressing or vinegar and oil salad dressings. A teaspoon of chervil, chives and parsley mixed with one tablespoon French mustard, salt, pepper and a clove of crushed garlic may be added to three-fourths of a cup of olive oil and one-fourth cup of tarragon vinegar for a wonderful vinaigrette dressing.

Chervil butter may be made by simply adding chervil to butter by itself or in any combination with basil, thyme, parsley, chives or tarragon. Sauteed summer squash is special if chervil butter is added to it, and a chervil butter baste is delicious on broiled chicken or fish.

Omelettes, scrambled eggs or any egg or cheese dish are all enhanced by the addition of chervil. Chervil is good in tossed green salads and potato salads. Mixed with chives and cheese it gives scalloped potatoes a unique flavor.

Chervil is almost always used fresh. When dried it becomes grey-green in color and its flavor turns musty. It may be frozen but it's so much better fresh and so easy to grow indoors on a sunny windowsill that there's no need to go without fresh chervil even in the coldest months. With our sporadic Colorado weather of one day snow and freezing temperatures followed by a day of seventy-degree weather and sunshine, I find my chervil sprouting in all months of the year from the seed that falls to the ground during the summer. There have been times in January and February when we've gone out, shoveled snow aside and found enough newly sprouted chervil to make our tossed salad something special on a winter night.

Leeks with Chervil

6 leeks
2 tablespoons butter
1 tablespoon chopped parsley
1 teaspoon chopped chervil
1 teaspoon chopped tarragon
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Cut off the root end of each leek and split it in half lengthwise. Hold under running water to remove all soil. Bring four cups salted water to a boil. Add the leeks, cover the pan and simmer them until they are tender. Medium sized leeks will probably be tender in 12 minutes. In melted butter stir in the herbs and cheese mixing well. Remove the leeks from the water, drain well, and cover with the herb and cheese mixture. Serves 6.

Janet's Burgundy Stew

3 pounds beef cut into 1 inch cubes
1/2 cup flour
2 cloves garlic finely minced
5 tablespoons butter
1 can beef bouillon
1½ cups burgundy wine
15 small canned onions
15 whole baby carrots
1/2 pound button mushrooms
1 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper
2 tablespoons freshly minced parsley
2 tablespoons freshly minced chervil
1 *bouquet garni* of
  2 bay leaves
  2 sprigs of fresh thyme
  2 sprigs of fresh marjoram
  4 whole cloves
  all tied together between two pieces of celery
1 ounce brandy

Melt the butter in a skillet. Add the garlic. Roll the beef in flour coating all surfaces. Brown the beef in the butter. Add bouillon and burgundy stirring constantly until it is all heated. Put the meat mixture into a casserole. Add the onions, carrots, mushrooms, *bouquet garni*, parsley, chervil, salt and pepper. Sprinkle the brandy over everything. Put on a tight fitting lid and cook in a 300° oven for 3 hours. (If the lid doesn't fit tightly enough, put aluminum foil around it.) Remove the *bouquet garni* before serving.

Chives

Chives (*Allium schoenoprasum*), the smallest and most delicately flavored onion-related herb, is an easily grown, hardy perennial. Its flavor complements soups, salads, egg and cheese dishes, breads and a variety of sauces. It is both pretty and useful and a welcome addition to the vegetable, herb or flower garden.

Chives grow in clumps of slim, green, tubular leaves that may reach heights of 15 to 18 inches. In early spring and summer round heads of pinkish-blue to lavender flowers cover the plants. Since I enjoy the flowers as well as the flavor of chives I maintain several clumps, letting some go to flower and seed. The blossoms go beautifully both outdoors in the flower bed and indoors in vases with the other blue and lavender perennials that are in bloom then. A bouquet of Siberian iris, blue columbine, lavender lupine and chives is a standard arrangement at our house in May and early June.

Chives may be grown from seed, however they take a year from sowing to produce a cuttable crop. Root divisions are the quickest and easiest means of propagation. Chives purchased as young plants may be planted in spring just as soon as the danger of frost passes. They will spread rapidly, forming root bulbs that develop into clusters. To keep the plants healthy and attractive the clusters should be dug and divided every two to three years. New divisions should contain six or seven bulbs and should be planted eight to ten inches apart.

Outside, chives should be grown in a porous well-drained soil in the full sun. They may be grown indoors in a pot on a sunny

windowsill if they are allowed to have an occasional period of dormancy. When an indoor pot of chives starts to droop and yellow let it dry out, cut it back and put it in the refrigerator for four to six weeks. After this forced dormant period put the pot on a sunny windowsill and begin watering it normally. The chives should resprout within a few days and be ready to harvest shortly after that. For the best flavor chives should be snipped off close to the ground. Chives grow rapidly and quickly renew themselves, making a continuous supply of leaves from early spring until late fall.

When preserving chives they seem to lose their color and flavor if dried, but keep both if they are frozen. To freeze, simply chop the chive leaves into thin slices and place small quantities in plastic bags. label and put in the freezer. There's no need to thaw the chives before using them and they seem to retain more flavor and color if added just at the last moment of cooking time.

Chives are a delicious addition to cheese spreads, cream cheese, Boursault and cottage cheese. Make the herb cheeses early and let them stand in the refrigerator a few hours to develop their full flavor.

If you're trying to cut down on salt and find that everything tastes bland without it, put a bowl of chopped chives on the table instead of the salt shaker. Sprinkle the chives on eggs, vegetables, soups, meats and salads. Chives don't taste like salt but the dish certainly won't be bland with their addition.

Deviled eggs take on a new flavor if thinly chopped chives and a dash of Tabasco are added to the mashed yolks and mayonnaise. Parsley, chervil, chives and butter are delicious on new potatoes or any other spring vegetable. For delicious corn on the cob during the outdoor barbecue season, gently pull back the husks, remove the silks and brush a mixture of chopped chives and butter on the kernels. Fold the husks back and grill the corn, turning it frequently until the kernels look opaque.

Chive butter is delicious on grilled steaks and seafood. Chopped chives floating on ice cold vichysoise or gazpacho make a perfect meal on a hot summer night. For a change you might want to add a few of the edible lavender chive blossoms as a garnish for your cold summer soups and salads.

Chinese or garlic chives (*Allium tuberosum*) give a delicate garlic flavor to foods. Their long narrow leaves are flat instead of tubular and they produce white flowers instead of the lavender flowers of *Allium schoenoprasum*.

Chives are native to the Orient where they've been given culinary uses for almost two thousand years. In China they were

also used as an antidote for poison and a remedy for bleeding. Roumanian gypsies used chives in their fortune-telling rites and hung clumps of chives to drive away evil spirits.

Whether you grow chives for their garlic flavor, onion flavor, flowers or to drive away evil spirits, I think you'll find them an easy and rewarding addition to your garden.

Chive Muffins

2 cups flour
2 teaspoons double acting baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
4 tablespoons sugar
2 tablespoons chopped chives
2 tablespoons freshly minced parsley
2 eggs
3/4 cup milk
1/4 cup melted shortening

Sift dry ingredients together. Add the chives and the parsley mixing well. Mix eggs, milk and shortening together. Add the liquid ingredients to the dry and stir just enough to moisten the dry ingredients. Fill muffin cups 2/3 full. Bake in a 400° oven for 25 minutes. Makes 12. These are delicious split open and served with creamed chicken or turkey poured over them.

Comfrey

Comfrey (*Symphytum officinale*) is a hardy perennial characterized by very large, hairy leaves that often grow twenty inches long and five to six inches wide. The leaves are rich in vitamins A

and C as well as calcium, potassium, phosphorus and other minerals. Ancient herbals called comfrey "healing herb," "knit-bone" and "boneset." When anyone had a broken bone they were advised to drink comfrey tea and apply warm comfrey poultices to the swelling around the break. Culpeper went overboard and claimed comfrey was so effective that if it were added to a pot of broken bones it could knit them back together again. I don't know whether anyone would buy that now (or even then) but modern research has shown us that the body needs sufficient vitamins and minerals like those found in comfrey leaves in order for bones to heal quickly and properly. It has also been found that comfrey contains allantoin. Allantoin is now being manufactured synthetically for use in treating wounds, burns, and skin ulcers. Many old-fashioned herbal doctors had probably never heard of allantoin, or even calcium, but through simple trial and error they found that plants like comfrey reduced swelling when applied in compresses. They also knew that bones really did heal faster if the entire body was healthy from a good diet that included plants like comfrey.

Comfrey needs room to grow. The largest twenty-inch, tongue-shaped, basal leaves often lie on the ground, covering a great deal of space. The stalks are angular and hairy and may reach heights of three and one-half feet. Smaller, oblong, lanceolate leaves grow along the stem. From May to August yellow, pink, blue or white flowers appear and grow in arched sprays on slender stems. If the flowers are pollinated each one will produce four seeds that ripen into cup-shaped fruits, but comfrey plants rarely set seed. When they were hybridized the resulting stamens blocked the throat of the flower, making it difficult for a bee to enter. Instead of pushing aside the false bottom, bees will often bite a hole in the side of the flower to get to the nectar. When they go in through the side they don't pollinate the flower and therefore seed doesn't set.

Comfrey does well in partial shade or full sun. It grows best in moist, moderately rich garden soils. In dry climates sufficient moisture will have to be added. Lots of humus in the soil will usually help hold some moisture around the plants. Comfrey needs plenty of root room both horizontally and vertically; it won't grow well on steep rocky banks, or in shallow soil over a rock formation. Given plenty of space and good soil it will grow and spread and just a few plants should give you all the comfrey you'll need (unless you're prone to broken bones).

Symphytum can be easily propagated by crown cuttings that contain at least one eye, by root divisions or by root cuttings.

Even tiny slivers of the root will produce new plants. This makes eradicating undesired comfrey very difficult. Comfrey plants are very much like dandelions in that you have to dig the entire root to destroy the plant. If you are digging either your comfrey or your dandelions and you have a compost heap, don't forget to add them to the pile. They will add helpful nutrients to the decomposing organic matter.

Root cuttings are the easiest means of comfrey propagation. Place each cutting horizontally, three or four inches deep and two and one-half to three feet apart in the garden soil.

Comfrey is grown for its root as well as for its leaves. The roots are large and black outside and fleshy and white inside. They are full of a gelatinous juice and can be brewed into a tea. Roast comfrey root with chicory and dandelion roots. Grind them together and put them into a percolator to make herbal coffee without caffeine.

Comfrey leaves can be used either fresh or dried. To dry them, remove the midrib and dry the leaves on screens or hang them in an airy dark room. The midribs are so thick that they'll slow down the drying process and you'll lose too much of comfrey's essential oil if you keep the leaves intact. Young comfrey leaves can also be frozen for later use.

Comfrey greens are delicious when they are harvested early in the spring. We often dig down through a late spring snow to harvest those first new leaves. Only the tenderest new leaves of the plants in March and April are good to use in salads. Boiled, they can be eaten like spinach, and are delicious sprinkled with herb vinegar or chopped hard-boiled egg. After the plants begin to mature, the leaves become rough and hairy. Even the new growth on older plants is too tough to be suitable for salads or fresh greens.

Comfrey tea has a pleasant taste, and all its vitamins and minerals are very good for you. Add some mint if you think the comfrey flavor is too strong. Comfrey added to the bath water is supposed to rejuvenate the skin. A cosmetic paste made of comfrey leaves is reported to tighten wrinkles and give the look of youth to aging skin. Comfrey leaves have also been used as a tobacco substitute.

Put four large fresh comfrey leaves and one cup of cold water through a vegetable juicer. Strain the liquid into a glass and you'll have a beautiful green vitamin-filled beverage. You can add carrot or other vegetable juice to the comfrey or mix it with bananas or any other fruit juice. Comfrey juice is a good healthful addition to vegetable cocktails or bloody marys. Health enthusiasts recommend green comfrey drinks for coughs and

colds because of the allantoin and vitamin B12 that they contain. Green comfrey juice can also be added to stews and soups. It retains more of its vitamins and minerals if added to cold soups instead of hot ones.

Comfrey is now being grown commercially as a food crop for animals. Its high protein, mineral and vitamin constituents have made it good fodder for horses, cattle, pigs and rabbits.

You can grow comfrey to smoke, drink, smooth your wrinkles, boost your vitamin intake, feed your chickens or cure your broken bones. Maybe those ancient herbalists weren't too far off when they claimed that comfrey was for all men at all times.

Coriander

Most Americans have tasted coriander seed in cookies, cakes and Danish pastries but few have tried the nippy pungent leaves in soups, stews or fresh green salads. The Oriental community is familiar with coriander leaf and calls it Chinese parsley. Spanish use it frequently under the name *cilantro*, and in the cooking of India it is called *dhania*.

Coriander (*Coriandrum sativum*) is an annual herb that usually grows from one to two feet high on finely grooved stems. The leaves are pinnately compound, with the lower ones being lobed and the upper ones finely dissected. From June to August coriander plants exhibit delicate umbels of pinkish blossoms. The seeds are globular and have a disagreeable odor when fresh. Dried, the seeds have a pleasant aroma and a slight lemony, but warm, sagelike taste.

Throughout history coriander is mentioned far and wide. In 1552 B.C. coriander was mentioned in the medical papyrus of Thebes. In the Bible, in the Book of Exodus, the color of manna is likened to that of coriander seed. The ancient Chinese prized the coriander root as a vegetable and ate its seeds in pastries and its leaves in soups and salads.

Coriander seed has been found in ancient Egyptian tombs. Egyptians used it in funeral offerings and baked the seeds into the bread. They grew it in quantity and exported it to Rome where the Romans used the crushed seed mixed with vinegar and ground cumin as a meat preservative. The Greeks thought it was an aphrodisiac and used it in their love potions.

Ancient magicians burned coriander seed, saying that it would rout out evil spirits, and bring on hallucinations. Recent studies have found that coriander seed taken in extremely large quantities can be narcotic and this probably accounts for those magicians' hallucinations.

Coriander was also used to flavor wine and cordials and may have brought on the hallucinations when it was taken in that form. The seed of coriander is still used today in the manufacture of gin.

As a plant, coriander prefers a sunny location in a well-drained soil. In the seedling stage it will quickly rot and die if it sits in the water. It doesn't take well to transplanting and is best seeded directly into the garden. It may be grown indoors but generally does not produce seed there. Sown indoors every four to six weeks in successive stages it can be used as a green herb.

Coriander leaf does not dry well. It loses much of its flavor and turns a pale grey-green. It does freeze well, and may be preserved by placing the fresh leaves in plastic bags and storing them in the freezer. No blanching is necessary.

The seed heads should be dried just as the seeds start to ripen. Place paper bags with air holes punched in them around the seed heads, and hang them in a warm room to dry. Small one-eighth-inch globular fruits cover the seeds. After they have dried you can rub them between your hands and they'll part, exposing the seeds.

Try fresh coriander leaves in stews, soups and salads, but use them sparingly for they have a sharp, nippy taste. Mix them with cream cheese for a spread to enjoy on date nut bread. Using a wok, stir-fry coriander leaves with fresh vegetables like carrots, broccoli or snow peas. Those who develop a taste for coriander leaves use them almost like parsley. Coriander leaves do look like

parsley and can be used in place of it as a garnish, but eat the garnish too for it's full of vitamin C.

Coriander seed can be used whole, ground or crushed. It adds a pleasant spicy scent to sachets and potpourris. Coriander seed whole and sugar-coated is a confection that the English call "comfits." In America they were called "candy marbles." The trick was to let the candy coating melt in your mouth before you completely lost control and bit into the coriander seed to release its sweet pleasant taste.

Use six to ten whole coriander seeds in meat marinades, or use one to two teaspoons of crushed seed to season two pounds of ground beef for hamburgers or meat loaf. Crushed coriander seed and butter is a good baste for vegetables or fish. Season a bowl of vegetable beef, Scotch broth or lentil soup with one-eighth teaspoon crushed coriander seed or a sprig of fresh coriander.

Rub ham or pork lightly with ground coriander seed before roasting. Sprinkle ground coriander on rice or tapioca pudding, fruit salads and applesauce. When you add cinnamon and nutmeg to your next apple pie, add a teaspoon of crushed coriander seed too. Serve the apple pie with whipped cream and coffee in a demitasse. Crush one coriander seed in the bottom of the cup before you add the coffee and the coriander fragrance and flavor will mix with the coffee for the perfect end to any meal.

Costmary

Costmary was commonly called "Bible leaf" in colonial America. Churchgoers pressed costmary leaves between the pages of their Bibles, and when the sermons got long or dull they'd chew on the minty, bitter leaves to keep from falling asleep.

Costmary (*Chrysanthemum balsamita*) is a spreading perennial herb that grows from two to four feet tall. It prefers a sunny location but will grow well in partial shade provided the soil is fairly rich and well-drained.

The leaves of costmary are two to ten inches long, elliptical, and finely toothed along the margins. They have a strong, balsamic, minty taste when fresh. After drying, the taste and fragrance is milder and more lemonlike. In the spring, costmary produces clusters of small pale yellow button flowers on three to four foot stems. By midsummer the flower stalks can begin to look weedy and may be pruned back severely without damaging the plants. The plants spread rapidly by a shallow underground root system. Costmary rarely produces viable seed but propagates readily by root division.

Native to western Asia, costmary was used as a medicinal and culinary herb in the ancient societies of Greece and Rome. The Europeans used it to flavor beer and ale and called it by the common name, alecost. Because of its strong minty fragrance they also used it as a strewing herb to perfume their halls and banquet rooms. Bunches of costmary and lavender were put with linens to keep them smelling fresh, and costmary was often used in potpourris and sachets.

Tender new costmary leaves may be minced and added to green salads or mixed with white sauce to flavor fish dishes. The flavor is strong so use it quite sparingly. Place a leaf in the bottom of a cake pan to produce a lemony mintlike flavor in white cakes.

One leaf in a venison roast or stew is adequate. A small amount chopped and added to a butter baste for chicken or fish is delicious.

Costmary tea was once a popular tonic. Mixing dried costmary with mint and lemon balm makes a delicious hot tea. Don't let it steep for more than a few moments or the flavor will become bitter.

Dill

Feathery light green foliage and large compound umbels of yellow flowers make dill, *Anethum graveolens*, an attractive addition to any vegetable, flower or herb garden. I use so much of this versatile herb that I like to plant it in all three places. Both its seeds and foliage are a welcome addition to soups, salads, vegetables, fish, dips, vinegars, breads and pastries.

The tall yellow flower heads of dill make a nice background for the flower garden. The feathery foliage mixes well with summer flowers for indoor bouquets, and the dried flower heads may be added to fall arrangements. Dried dill foliage also adds a pungent fragrance to potpourris, sachets and scented pillows.

Dill is an annual often reaching heights of three feet. Its single stems are rather delicate and may need to be staked for protection against strong winds. Planting dill in clumps rather than rows enhances the plant's appearance and gives it greater stability.

Dill seed may be sown directly into the outdoor garden as soon as the danger of frost has passed in early spring. Seeds seem to do best in a moderately rich, porous soil in a full sun location. Germination takes place ten to fourteen days after the seed is sown and flowers usually appear sixty-five days after germination. I like to sow successive crops every two weeks from April til the middle of July. The foliage seems to taste best before the plants begin to flower. Successive plantings give continual greenery while allowing the first plants to go to seed. Plants sown in mid May should have seed heads ready to harvest about the same time the cucumbers are at the pickling stage.

Dill may be started earlier indoors but it has a delicate tap root and care must be taken not to damage that root in transplanting. If you wish to continue to grow dill indoors sow it densely in pots

that will fit on your sunniest windowsill. Without full sun the plants will soon become long and leggy. Fertilize indoor dill with a 15-30-15 fertilizer every four to six weeks. Use the feathery foliage often, keeping the plants closely trimmed. New pots should be started every three to four weeks to give you a continuous supply of dill weed and attractive and healthy plants.

Dill was an important ingredient in the magical potions stirred up by witches and wizards when casting their evil spells. Its power was quickly transferred to anyone who held it and thus it was also used as a protective charm against evil.

During the Middle Ages herbalists recommended adding dill to wine to rekindle spent passions. Greeks burned dill seeds as perfume and incense, and Romans wore herbal crowns filled with dill flowers at their festivals. German brides carried dill in their bridal bouquets and wore its flowers in their hair and its seeds in their shoes to give them luck on their wedding day.

American colonists called dill their "meeting house seed" and nibbled it during long sermons. They also made infusions of dill in water to calm upset stomachs and to aid digestion. Dill seed tea was one of their favorite cures for insomnia. It still makes a pleasant nightcap. With camomile flowers dill tea was a must for curing hiccoughs.

Both dill weed and dill seed have a slight anise flavor. The seed is pungent and sharp, whereas the weed has a much finer and more delicate flavor.

Dill butter made with one cup butter, two tablespoons fresh dill weed, and two tablespoons finely chopped parsley is wonderful served hot over sea food, boiled new potatoes, or green beans. It's also delicious added to the first crop of new baby carrots. Lemon and dill butter enhance sauteed trout.

Rice takes on a distinctive flavor with the addition of either dill weed or dill seed. Both dill blossoms and dill weed are pretty and tasty in a tossed green salad. Dill may also be added to boiled cabbage or cauliflower.

For a cool summer salad slice a mild, red onion and a green pepper into thin rings, a cucumber into thin slices and a tomato into wedges. Toss these ingredients with enough sour cream and dill to completely cover, and refrigerate for two hours before serving. Dill weed may also be added to cream cheese or cottage cheese for vegetable dips or dressings.

Breads made with cottage cheese or cheddar cheese take on a unique taste if dill weed or seed is added to them before baking. Dill is delicious in apple pie and apple crisp. Finely chopped dill is excellent on sliced tomatoes. Added with lemon to tomato juice,

dill makes a tangy tomato juice cocktail. Combined with plain yogurt, lemon juice, cucumbers and chives, dill makes a delicious cold soup. The soup is especially good when garnished with nutmeg and dill sprigs.

Herb vinegar is easy to make by pouring white vinegar over the dry sprigs and flower heads of fresh dill. It is excellent as a salad dressing or marinade. Vinegar made from dill seed has a spicy flavor in comparison to the more delicate flavor of dill weed vinegar. When using the seeds for vinegar, they should first be bruised with a mortar and pestle. Seeds are usually strained out of the vinegar mixture after two to three weeks whereas the dill weed may be left in the vinegar as a decorative touch.

Freezing chopped dill weed in plastic bags or ice cubes is an easy and effective way to preserve the herb while maintaining its color and flavor. Seeds will keep their flavor if they are dried and stored in air-tight containers. As soon as the seed heads begin to turn brown pull the plants and hang them upside-down to dry. Tie paper bags around the drying plants to catch the seeds as they begin to fall.

Whether you grow dill for warding off witches, flavoring salads or making dill pickles, I know you'll find its pungent flavor and pleasing appearance a rewarding addition to your garden.

Fennel

Fennel is a beautiful lacy green herb that may reach heights of four or five feet. In its second year of growth it is topped with umbels of yellow flowers that produce a warm, sweet, slightly anise flavored seed. The leaves possess the same warm flavor and,

along with the seeds, have been used in cooking for centuries.

Legend has it that Prometheus first brought fire to man in the hollow stalk of a fennel plant. An ancient marathon man, Pheidippides, ran 150 miles to Sparta to get help to fight the Persians. In sculpture he is always shown holding a sprig of fennel in his hand. The Greek word *marathon* actually means fennel.

Babylonian and Assyrian doctors used fennel seeds in their medications. In the Middle Ages it was used as a strewing herb to freshen the air and repel insects. Fennel was hung over the doorways on Midsummer Eve to keep the witches out.

Nursing mothers were advised to eat fennel seeds to increase their milk, and babies were fed fennel seed tea if they had colic. Even the gnomes in *The Gnome Book* kept fennel handy for mild cases of flatulence.

Most herbs stimulate the appetite; however fennel does the opposite and depresses it. Greeks chewed on fennel seeds during their fast days, and Pilgrims nibbled the seeds during long sermons to keep their stomachs under control. Fennel was commonly called "meeting seed." I wonder what kind of a reaction the seed would have if it were introduced at a Weight Watchers meeting today.

Of the many varieties of fennel three are commonly cultivated. *Foeniculum vulgare,* common fennel, has both seeds and feathery leaves that flavor soups, stews, salads and fish dishes. *Foeniculum dulce,* Finnochio or Florence fennel, is grown for its bulblike base. This base is made from the overlapping leaves of the Florence fennel plant and it is cooked like a vegetable. The large base tastes, and is used, much like celery. It can be cut into thin slices, boiled and served with butter or sliced and served raw on an antipasto tray with an herb dip. *Foeniculum piperitum,* known as Carosella, is a delicacy in Naples. Before Carosella blooms the young tender stems are cut and served with olive oil and vinegar.

Foeniculum vulgare, common fennel, is grown easily from seed. It does best in full sun in a rich well-drained soil. Companion planters find a place for it away from all their other vegetables and herbs. It's antisocial! Most other plants dislike it and won't do well if it's planted near them.

Fennel is actually a biennial, producing seeds the second year. If you allow the seeds to ripen and fall, you'll have fennel coming up all over your yard. If seed heads are kept cut back fennel will tend to become a perennial in all but the coldest climates.

Fennel foliage gives a beautiful accent to fresh-cut flowers in an arrangement. Bronze fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare rubrum*)

has a beautiful gold-brown foliage that gives an attractive accent to the garden, but it too should be planted in an out-of-the-way spot. Its leaves add beautiful bronze color to fall arrangements.

Both the seeds and foliage of common fennel can be used in the kitchen. They may be used either fresh or dried. Fennel foliage also freezes well, retaining its color and fragrance.

Seeds from *Foeniculum vulgare* may be used crushed or whole. Whole seeds give an unforgettable flavor to apple pie. Italian and Swedish cooks often sprinkle their breads with fennel seeds before baking. In Rome the bakeries smell wonderful because the bakers put sprigs of fennel under the loaves in the ovens. The fennel adds its flavor to the bread while filling the room with fragrance. Germans use fennel seed in their rye bread. A few whole seeds are also good mixed into a soft cheese for a spread.

The crushed seed has a sweet hot licorice-like flavor that is good with sauerkraut, beets, potatoes and cabbage. Sprinkle it on spiced peaches for an unusual dessert. Try it in spaghetti sauce or float a few crushed seeds on top of lentil soup.

Fennel seed or weed can be used in salad dressings. Fresh fennel leaves minced and used sparingly are great in tossed green salads.

Any fish dish is enhanced by the flavor of fresh fennel sprigs. When you're boiling shellfish, especially shrimp, drop a few fennel sprigs into the cooking water. Put a sprig of fennel into the body cavity of any whole fish before you grill it. For added flavor and a delicious smell throw a few sprigs of fennel directly onto the coals of the outdoor grill.

During the Middle Ages, it was commonly believed that stuffing the keyhole to your bedroom door with fennel would keep out any evil spirits. The only evil spirit around here is the one in my head that tempts me to stalk out of the bedroom at night into the kitchen for a midnight snack. Maybe if I stuff my keyhole with fennel I'll be tempted to chew on a few of its seeds, reducing my appetite to nothing before I get to that refrigerator door.

Fennel Sauce for Fish

1 teaspoon dried fennel seed
3 tablespoons chopped fresh fennel weed
2 tablespoons chopped parsley

2 tablespoons lemon juice
1/2 cup melted butter
1 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon black pepper
1 three pound fish (halibut)

Mix the fennel seed, fennel weed, parsley, lemon juice, butter, salt and pepper together. Place the fish in aluminum foil. Baste the fish with the herb and butter mixture. Baste both the inside and the outside of the fish. Secure the foil. Grill the fish for 15 minutes on one side, and turn it to grill 15 minutes or until tender on the other side.

Germander

Teucrium chamaedrys is the variety of germander most often used in the intricate geometric patterns that make up herbal knot gardens. It stays green late into the fall, even remaining evergreen in mild climates. By nature it is compact and bushy and can be successfully pruned into various shapes and patterns.

Germander is slow growing, but will still need to be shaped every three or four weeks during active summer growth if it is used in a knot form. It spreads by an underground root system; occasionally you will need to pull roots that have established themselves out of the knot pattern to keep the lines clean and sharp.

Germander grown outside of the clipped formal knot patterns will reach heights of eighteen inches. Stems will become branched and woody and covered with shiny, dark green oval

leaves. The leaves are normally one-half to one and one-half inches long with finely scalloped edges. In July and August small reddish-purple flowers will appear in terminal spikes. Germander is a member of the mint family and, like all mints, its flowers are irregular and tubular. Unlike the mints, germander's foliage is almost odorless.

Teucrium fruticans, or shrub germander, has wooly leaves that appear almost white. It may be used effectively in a grey garden but it does not readily form knots or geometric patterns. *Teucrium fruticans* bears blue flowers which attract bees.

Germander may be grown from seed, but germination is difficult and growth is extremely slow. Cuttings root easily, and plants also may be propagated from root divisions or ground layering.

Germander was mentioned often as a medicinal herb by Hippocrates, Dioscorides and Pliny. Galen used germander as an antidote against poisoning. He prescribed combining germander with other herbs, carrot and fennel seeds, and the ash of a viper. Macerated, mixed with honey and wine, and eaten with a spoon, this mixture was supposedly good for counteracting the bites of poisonous insects and reptiles.

Today germander has lost its medicinal appeal; however it still remains an effective border, low hedge or rock garden plant. Mixed in a geometric knot its shiny green leaves are a pleasant contrast to silver-grey *Santolina chamaecyparissus* or the lighter green *Santolina viridis*.

Horehound

Whenever I was plagued by a sore throat or cold as a small child, I could have all the homemade horehound cough syrup and cough drops I wanted. That, along with my mother's attention, made a cold almost worthwhile.

Horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*) is not a native North American plant, but the way it grows wild on dry rocky land throughout the United States you would think that it had always been here. Colonists brought horehound with them from Europe, spreading it far and wide. In rich soil where it had to compete with lush growth it didn't survive, but in poor rocky soils where there was little competition it spread like a weed. Look for it growing along roadsides and around old farmhouses if you'd rather collect it from the wild than grow your own.

Horehound is a bushy, grey-green perennial that usually grows about eighteen inches in height. It is a member of the mint family with square stems and small white two-lipped flowers that bloom in axillary whorls from June to September. The leaves are opposite, wrinkled, roundish-ovate, and covered with tiny white hairs that give the whole plant a grey wooly appearance.

It may be grown from seed sown indoors or out. Stem cuttings root easily and older plants may be divided. Its growth habit is somewhat untidy and it will look better in the garden if it is divided every three or four years. The older plants should be discarded.

Horehound was long used as a medicinal herb; Gerard advised using it for coughing, wheezing and consumption of the lungs. The Greeks used horehound as an antidote for mad dog bites, thus the common name "hoarhound."

In England the whole herb was used for beermaking. Dried and ground it was a common ingredient in snuff. It is recognized as one of the bitter herbs of the *Mishna*, which the Jews ate during Passover. The generic name *Marrubium* may be derived from the Hebrew *marrab* for "bitter juice".

Horehound is one of the few herbs that is not harmed by boiling. To make an infusion bring one cup of fresh horehound leaves, or one-fourth cup of dried horehound, to a boil in two cups of water. Simmer for twenty minutes and strain. This makes a strong infusion that should be diluted with more hot water and lots of honey if it is to be drunk as a tea. Sometimes I use almost as much honey as infusion, remembering back to my childhood sweet-tooth days. You can also add lemon juice or a teaspoon of crushed anise seed to this infusion to make it more palatable. Mix one part of the undiluted infusion with two parts honey to make a soothing cough syrup.

To make old-fashioned horehound candy, simmer one ounce of dried horehound, or one quart of fresh horehound leaves, supple stems and flowers in two and one-half quarts of boiling water for fifteen minutes. Strain this mixture into a saucepan,

discarding all the spent horehound. For every cup of liquid add two cups of white sugar, one-half teaspoon cream of tartar and one teaspoon butter. Bring to a boil and stir constantly until a drop in cold water becomes a hard glassy ball. Remove from heat and stir in one-quarter teaspoon lemon juice for every cup of liquid you had at the beginning. Pour this mixture into a well-buttered shallow pan. As it begins to harden, score it into small squares. When it cools break it apart along the score lines and roll it in powdered sugar. Wrap it in paper and store in a cool place in a tin with a tightly fitted lid.

The syrup, tea and candies are all harmless ways to treat colds and sore throats. They don't contain any narcotic drugs or harmful additives (unless you put white sugar in that category), and may be taken as often as you wish in any quantity that you like.

Hyssop

Hyssop is a bushy, semi-woody perennial of the mint family. It was once widely cultivated as a medicinal herb, but it is now grown more for its ornamental qualities. Hyssop grows to two feet tall and has leaves that are one inch long, slender and dark green. These leaves remain evergreen in mild climates. Beautiful dark blue flowers grow in whorls at the ends of *Hyssopus officinalis*'s square stems from late June til the first frost. There are two

other varieties of hyssop: *Hyssopus rubra* has pink flowers, and *Hyssopus alba* has white flowers. Neither of these varieties seems to be quite as hardy as the blue *Hyssopus officinalis*, but they are just as attractive.

Hyssop can be propagated from seed sown indoors in early spring. It usually germinates in ten to fourteen days. In milder climates with longer growing seasons, hyssop can be sown directly into the garden. It grows fairly slowly and needs time to establish itself before winter. Cuttings of the newest tip growth root easily in moist sand, perlite or vermiculite. Roots usually develop within six weeks and plants may be transplated in ten to twelve weeks.

Hyssop also makes a good hedge plant. It responds well to pruning and therefore may be used in knot patterns or as a border around an herb garden. Plants should be shaped every few weeks during active summer growth if they're to be used for set patterns. Hyssop plants become quite woody after three or four years and may need to be replaced. If they are pruned back quite severely they will develop bushy new growth, extending the period when they can be used effectively as a border or a hedge.

Hyssop was used for its cleansing and antiseptic properties in Elizabethan times. It was a strewing herb in churches and banquet halls; in fact the altar at Westminster Abbey was consecrated with hyssop water. A tea made by simmering the supple green stems and leaves (either fresh or dried) with water was used to clear up coughs, colds, chest ailments and sore throats. The woody parts of the herb can't be used for teas or flavorings because they don't contain the bitter oils that are present in quantity in the supple growth.

Used sparingly the bitter minty taste of hyssop can be used to flavor soups, stews, salads, fish, meat and game. Hyssop will cut the grease in fatty meats and fish and may be lightly sprinkled over them before cooking. Just a touch of minced hyssop is effective in a fruit pie or any cranberry dish. Honey made by bees that have access to blue hyssop flowers is a rare and delicious delicacy. Liqueurs, like chartreuse, are still flavored with hyssop, and in Sicily it is believed that a branch of hyssop hanging in the house will protect everyone inside from evil.

Here's your sweet lavender,
Sixteen sprigs a penny.
Which you'll find my ladies,
Will smell as sweet as any.
London Herb Peddlar

Lavender

There are over twenty-five species of lavender found throughout the Mediterranean. Flowers of the different varieties range from blue, lilac and deep purple to pale pink and white. Lavender's leaves may be deeply cut, wide, narrow, flat, green or grey, but all the lavenders have that characteristic fragrance that has made them prized plants since the days of the Roman Empire.

All the various lavenders are of the genus *Lavandula*. *Lavandula* comes from the Latin word *lavare* meaning "to wash" and alludes to the Greek and Roman custom of scenting bath water with lavender blossoms and leaves.

Of all the lavenders, English has always been my favorite. It may be found labeled as English lavender, *Lavandula officinalis*, *Lavandula angustifolia* or even *Lavandula Spica*. It has feltlike, grey leaves, beautiful purple flowers and a sweet lavender fragrance. English lavender is a hardy perennial. The flowers are borne on slender, eighteen inch stems. My English lavender has been in bloom now for almost five weeks and I find it almost impossible to walk by without picking a flower. The flowers are most fragrant before they open all the way. If they are cut and dried when partially open their fragrance will last for years.

Lavandula 'Munstead' is a dwarf variety of English lavender. It has a compact growth habit and is a good choice for indoor gardening. *Lavandula vera* is another closely related variety. Its leaves are narrower, greener in color and yield greater quantities

of oil than *Lavandula Spica*, making it a good choice for cosmetic uses. *Lavandula dentata*, sometimes called French or fringed lavender, has leaves that are opposite, narrow and finely toothed along the margins. It isn't quite as hardy as English lavender and needs to be mulched heavily and watered during dry winters. *Lavandula Stoechas*, Spanish lavender, also needs extra protection to keep it coming back year after year. *Stoechas* has long narrow leaves that are soft, grey-green and covered with velvety white hairs.

Since there are so many varieties of lavender the common names, as well as the Latin names, often become confused. Experts disagree on the nomenclature and growers often add their own common names to varieties they've produced. If you're buying plants use your nose as your best guide and select the lavender whose fragrance is most pleasing to you regardless of its name.

Lavender seed is slow and difficult to germinate, but the plants may be easily propagated by layering or rooting tip cuttings. As lavender ages it becomes woody, and woody stems are difficult to root. Make sure you take only the soft cuttings from the tips of established plants. Dip these cuttings in a commercial root stimulating hormone and place them in moist sand, vermiculite or perlite until they establish roots.

The Egyptians and Phoenicians imported lavender to use in their perfumes. Romans prized lavender for their baths. They loved its fragrance and also felt it would relieve fatigue and cure stiff joints; they were willing to pay large sums of money to have the luxury of soaking in a lavender bath.

Often the favorite of kings and queens, lavender was so loved by Queen Victoria that the entire royal residence was filled with its fragrance. Emperor Charles VI of France used satin cushions stuffed with lavender, and Napoleon was so fond of his *Eau de Cologne* made with citrus and lavender that he used sixty bottles a month, pouring it over his neck and shoulders whenever he washed.

In the days when small waists and tight corsets were popular women wore tiny bottles of lavender around their necks to sniff when they felt faint. Today lavender smelling salts is sold commercially.

The purple flowers of lavender symbolize constancy, loyalty and undying love. During the eighteenth century, lovers often exchanged bouquets, and each flower in the arrangement symbolically conveyed a message. In the past, the Chinese and Japanese even conducted affairs of state in floral messages.

Medicinally, lavender was said to have a soothing effect on nervous disorders, and it was often used as a headache remedy. Lavender water was prescribed for hoarseness and sore throats, and lavender oil was used to cure toothaches. Lavender oil was also used as an antiseptic for wounds, and was mixed with wormwood to repel flies, moths and mosquitoes.

Lavender flowers are commonly used alone in sachets and scented pillows. Dried lavender leaves and blossoms sewn into cheesecloth bags may be used to perfume your bath. Lavender vinegar is also a pleasant addition to the bath. It is mildly astringent, relaxing and refreshing, and is easily made by steeping lavender sprigs in white vinegar. Sprigs of lavender may be hung in closets or sachets of lavender may be tucked between sheets where their delicate lavender fragrance will permeate the linens.

Many aromatic tobacco mixtures include lavender. After Peter Rabbit's father was put in a pie by Mr. McGregor, Widow Rabbit earned her living by selling herbs. One of the favorite herbs she sold was rabbit-tobacco, better known as lavender.

Lavender has never been used extensively in cooking; however lavender conserve was a favorite of Queen Elizabeth I. Any fruit jelly, especially apple, will take on an exotic flavor if the hot jelly is poured over a few lavender blossoms and leaves placed in the bottom of the jar.

Lavender may be floated in wine cups and cooling summer drinks. Rosemary, mint and lavender infused together make an unusual tasting tea that may be served either hot or iced. Lavender flowers and leaves may also be used to garnish desserts. In England dessert cakes are sometimes served on a bed of lavender, and lavender is often floated in finger bowls.

Whether you choose Spanish, French or English lavender for scenting your bath water, flavoring your pipe mixtures or sending messages of undying love and constancy, I hope you'll try a lavender plant as a beautiful addition to your indoor or outdoor garden.

Lemon Balm

As sweet as Balm, as soft as air
as gently.

Shakespeare
Antony and Cleopatra

Melissa officinalis, better known as lemon balm, is a delightful herb to grow indoors or out because of the tangy lemon fragrance it emits when its leaves are crushed or bruised. Its lemon scent and minty flavor are a welcome addition to hot and cold drinks, fruit cups, soups, salads, fish dishes, custards, puddings and dessert ices.

The crinkly green leaves of balm are opposite, ovate and bluntly serrated. Bottom leaves may be three inches long with top leaves decreasing in size from one-half to one inch. The plants usually reach two to three feet in the outdoor garden and their green foliage makes a good backdrop for perennial or annual flowers. *Melissa* blooms from July through October with small, inconspicuous, pale yellow, pink or bluish-white flower clusters around the leaf axils. It is a member of the mint family and, like most mints, its flowers are asymmetrical, its stems are square . . . and its habit is spreading. *Melissa* dies down in the winter only to come up the next spring with increased vigor, and care must be taken to keep it from spreading to unwanted areas.

The dark brown oval seeds that appear on lemon balm in the late fall will germinate easily if they are allowed to fall to the ground. They may be collected and germinated in sterilized potting soil for indoor winter gardening. Cuttings of the new tip growth may be rooted easily in moist sand, vermiculite or perlite. Root divisions of established plants may be made in the spring or early fall.

Indoors lemon balm will usually reach heights of fourteen inches. It should be grown in a porous potting soil on a sunny windowsill. Pinching the new tip growth back frequently will keep the plant full and bushy. Outside lemon balm will thrive in any moderately rich, well-drained soil in partial shade or full sun.

Bees have always been attracted to lemon balm and the generic name, *Melissa*, is a Greek word for bee. Old herbals recommended planting lemon balm around bee hives for good honey production. Rubbing the inside of the hive with lemon balm was also suggested to prevent swarming and to attract new bees to the hive.

Officinalis indicates that the herb, *Melissa officinals*, was known as an official drug plant. Greeks and Romans thought lemon balm had fantastic healing properties and claimed it would cure everything from crooked necks to baldness. Dioscorides prescribed drinking infusions of balm leaves to cure the pain of gout. If someone had a fever his advice was to give them hot lemon balm tea to induce perspiration in an effort to break the fever. And for mad dog bites he advised patients to cover their wounds with lemon balm leaves.

Lemon balm was also a sacred herb in the temple of Diana. During religious festivals it was used as a strewing herb, spread on the floors of the temple to mask unpleasant odors.

In southern France, where lemon balm grows wild, herbalists believed *Melissa officinalis* possessed invigorating and life sustaining properties. It was a major ingredient in Eau des Carmes, the famous French "restorative cordial" of the seventeeth century. Llewelyn, Prince of Glamorgan, lived to be 108 and thought that the lemon balm tea and honey he drank for breakfast and supper helped sustain his long life. Charles V used lemon balm daily in his bath. He had lemon balm essence applied to his handkerchiefs and inhaled it several times during the day to "refresh and preserve his intellect." Balm became known as the "student's herb," and tea made from its leaves was the recommended drink for final examinations.

It was once fashionable for women to wear amulets (small linen bags filled with lemon balm roots, seeds and leaves) under their dresses. The amulets were tied with silken threads and supposedly held powers that made women happy, healthy and loved by all they met.

During the seventeenth century, when prisoners were kept in something less than sanitary conditions, judges carried small nosegays or "tussie mussies" into criminal court. These "tussie mussies" were hand held bouquets of fragrant flowers with

sweet smelling and medicinal herbs that were used to ward off disease and counteract bad odors.

In dishes enhanced by a lemony fragrance or flavor, *Melissa* may be used as an ingredient of a garnish. It's delicious sprinkled on fruit cups or snipped finely into tossed green salads. Dried or fresh it can be added to salad dressings. Any lemon butter sauce for fish or vegetables is enhanced by the addition of minced fresh lemon balm leaves.

Herbal tea made with lemon balm, mint, and orange and lemon peel is soothing and refreshing served hot or cold. Lemonade or limeade is also improved with the addition of lemon balm. When garnished with lemon balm, claret cups or wine punches are prettier and, if herbal lore is correct, they just might make you live longer. Icy cold Perrier water with lemon balm sprigs might become the new fad drink and a twentieth century answer to France's seventeenth century "restorative cordial."

Lemon balm goes well with roast lamb. It enhances pork or turkey dressing. Applesauce flavored with cinnamon, nutmeg and lemon juice takes on a distinct flavor when chopped lemon balm is added to the sauce after it has cooled. *Avgolemono*, Greek lemon soup, made with chicken broth, rice, lemon and eggs, can be served either hot or cold but should always be garnished with lemon balm. Lemon meringue pie looks even more refreshing if it's topped with lemon balm leaves and thinly sliced fresh lemon.

One of my favorite light desserts for hot summer evenings is lemon ice in frozen lemon shells. To make lemon ice remove the pulp and juice from twelve lemons. Reserve the lemon shells in the freezer. Strain the pulp and seeds from the lemon juice. Boil four cups water and three cups of honey, stirring constantly, for five minutes. After the honey water cools, stir in two and one-half tablespoons grated lemon peel and two tablespoons finely chopped lemon balm leaves with the lemon juice. Freeze in an ice cream freezer, and spoon the lemon ice into the reserved lemon shells and top with sprigs of lemon balm.

Outdoors, lemon balm can usually be harvested three times during the summer. Balm should be dried quickly or it will have a tendency to turn black. Dry it in a shady place with lots of good air circulation or on racks in an oven warmed to 150°. Dried balm gives its lemon scent to potpourris, sachets and scented pillows. Tied in cheesecloth bags it may be added to warm water for a soothing, lemon scented, herbal bath.

Lemon Verbena

Lemon verbena (*Lippia citriodora*) has a cool, clean citrus taste and fragrance that matches the freshest lemons. It's a delight to grow in an accessible sunny window where you can easily brush against the leaves, thus releasing their citrus fragrance. Admittedly it's not the easiest herb to grow, but with a little extra care it can reward you with delicious teas, fragrant potpourris, lemony desserts and refreshing fruit drinks.

Lemon verbena is a South American native found first in Chile, Peru and Argentina. In 1864 Emperor Maximilian and Empress Carlotta enlarged the fabulous gardens around Montezuma's palace in Mexico. It was considered beneath a king to grow plants for utilitarian purposes, so Maximilian planted only fragrant herbs to touch and smell. He loved lemon verbena and named it *Yerba Louisa* after Carlotta's mother. In Spain *Herba Louisa* tea, sweetened with honey, is still a very popular drink.

Five-foot-tall bushes of lemon verbena have been reported growing wild in Central America and South America. The largest cultivated lemon verbena that I have seen in the United States was bushy and full, but only three feet tall. The plant quickly becomes woody and you must begin to prune it during the early stages of growth to encourage it to branch. When you prune the plants try not to go into the woody tissue. At least one inch of the supple new green growth should be left at the end of each branch.

Lemon verbena plants have long narrow yellowish-green leaves that are pointed at the tips. The leaves are shiny on the top

side and dull and rough underneath. They grow in whorls of three or four along the woody branches. Bluish-white flowers are formed on spikes quite readily; however seed production is rare.

Lemon verbena is best grown in a porous clay pot with a good drain hole. The pot may be placed outside for the summer but must be brought in before the first frost. Winter your verbena plants on a sunny windowsill and continue to fertilize them once every six weeks during both their indoor and outdoor stay. Lemon verbena is a tender perennial, and will go on forever if it is protected from frost. It is deciduous and may drop most of its leaves when you bring it in in the fall. If this happens, cut down the amount of water you've been giving it and let it remain in a semi-dormant state for eight to ten weeks. You can't cut off the water entirely, but you can cut the frequency of watering almost in half. After the dormant period resume normal watering and the plant should respond with new leaf growth.

Indoors, especially in the winter when our furnaces dry the air, lemon verbena will benefit from a boost in humidity. Grouping it with other plants will increase the humidity around it slightly. Even better, place it on a gravel-filled saucer and keep water in the bottom half of the gravel. The water will constantly evaporate and effectively increase the moisture in the air. Make sure the plant itself is not sitting in water or you're sure to end up with root rot and possibly fungus diseases.

Lemon verbena seems to be very susceptible to infestations of red spider. If you are aware of this and stay on the lookout for trouble you probably won't have any lasting problems. Look for webs, pinpricks of yellow on the leaves and white egg cases on the underneath surfaces of leaves. You can easily wash the plants once a week in a mild soap solution (Ivory soap works well), followed by a rinse in plain water. Regular washing will keep the pests from ever getting a head start and will eliminate the need to spray.

Lemon verbena is best propagated from cuttings. Two-inch cuttings of the green, supple stem can be rooted in sand, perlite or vermiculite. Frequent misting of the cuttings seems to help them recover from any major water loss through their leaves. Dipping the cut ends into a rooting hormone will also help to hasten the rooting process.

Lemon verbena will retain its fragrance for approximately six months when dried. It is best to dry it quickly in an oven at 150° or hang it in a shaded, airy room. Use the newly dried leaves as quickly as possible for maximum fragrance and flavor.

Lemon verbena makes a delicious hot tea. I like to mix it with lemon balm and mint and sweeten it with honey. You can also garnish iced tea, gin and tonics, fruit punches and wine cups with fresh lemon verbena sprigs. Spray sprigs with water, dip them in sugar and freeze them. Use these frozen sprigs to garnish lemon ices and sherbets.

For an elegant touch at a dinner party, float lemon verbena leaves and a twist of lemon peel in finger bowls. Finely chopped lemon verbena can be added to green salads and fruit cups. A little lemon verbena is great in key lime or lemon meringue pies. Lemon verbena leaves add flavor to fruit jellies and jams.

Sprigs of lemon verbena add a clean fresh fragrance to linen closets. Dried crushed leaves may also be used in potpourris and sachets.

Lovage

Lovage (*Levisticum officinale*) was a new herb to me the first time I saw it listed in a seed catalog. The catalog briefly described it as an herb with a strong, celerylike flavor that did best in a moist location. I love celery and use it frequently in soups, salads and stews, so I figured it would be a perfect plant for me. When my seeds came I planted them by an old water spout that continually drips. They germinated and produced a nice little plant that did indeed taste like celery. The second year my lovage began to push up out of the snow before any of the other herbs were showing new growth. It sprouted with full force and by midsummer it was six feet tall and running into the low eaves of our house. It was almost four feet wide when it sent up flower stalks

with umbels of light yellow blossoms. Seed heads were produced in late August. The seeds ripened, turned brown and fell to the ground. The next year I had lots of small lovage plants from the self-seeding, as well as others that had sprouted from the roots of my original monster that was back again in full force. I transplanted most of the volunteer seedlings along a back fence where I had trouble growing things. It wasn't as moist as the catalog suggested, but the lovage grew merrily anyway and proved to be an attractive back border.

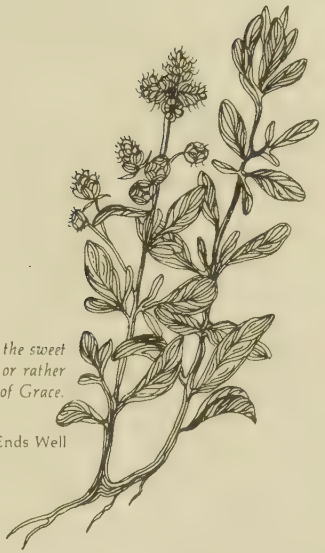
We loved the first, new lovage leaves when the plants were young in the spring. They were mild enough to chop into salads and used sparingly they added a nice flavor to soups and stews. A few weeks into the summer the leaves got large, tough and bitter. We learned that we could ruthlessly prune the plants back, cutting them almost to the ground and they'd send up tender new leaves almost immediately. Now we prune the lovage we want for salad use every two or three weeks and don't ever let them get big and tough. A few plants along the border are allowed to go to seed. If you get to the seed before the gold finches do, you can use it in any recipe that calls for celery seed. It's slightly sweeter than real celery seed but it gives the same effect when used in cooking.

Greeks and Romans chewed lovage seeds to aid digestion. Seeds were put into potions to conjure up love spells, giving the plant its common names, "lovage" and "love parsley."

Seeds may be sprinkled over the tops of cakes and cookies. Any game like rabbit or venison will be enhanced by sprinkling lovage seeds over it before roasting. Lovage leaves or seeds may be added to game stews. Just a touch is good in lamb or beef stews too. Sprinkle the seeds on lamb or pork roast before placing it into the oven. Mix seed with honey and mayonnaise for a dressing for fruit salads.

Lovage stalks are large and hollow and make good drinking straws. A lovage stalk is an attractive and interesting straw for a bloody mary or tomato juice cocktail and can take the place of the traditional celery stalk.

Sweet Marjoram



Indeed, sir, she was the sweet Marjoram of the salad, or rather the Herb of Grace.

Shakespeare
All's Well That Ends Well

Sweet marjoram (*Majorana hortensis*) is a delicate little herb that complements all kinds of meat, poultry, seafoods, eggs, vegetables, salads and sauces. It is often confused with oregano and may be substituted for that herb in most recipes. Marjoram's flavor, however, is milder, more delicate and sweeter than that of oregano, so expect a change in flavor if you exchange marjoram for oregano.

In its native Mediterranean habitat, marjoram is a tender perennial, but in northern gardens, it will not survive the winter and is therefore replanted every year like an annual. Marjoram grows one to two feet tall with branched, square stems. The stems are covered with downy, grey hairs and have a tendency to become woody as the plants age. The soft, oval-shaped leaves are light green on the top and grey-green underneath. The leaves are opposite, elliptical and also covered with the grey down. Cream-colored flowers appear from July to September, growing out of the leaf clusters at the ends of the branches. These four-sided leaf clusters look like knots and explain why the plant is often referred to as "knotted marjoram." Dried branches with "knots" are attractive in herb wreaths, swags, and fall flower arrangements. The dried knots also give texture and a sweet scent to potpourris.

Marjoram grows readily from seed, germinating in ten to fourteen days. It may be started outside after frost danger has passed, but it must be kept weed free and watered regularly to survive

the first few weeks. It transplants well and may be started indoors in March and planted outside six to eight weeks later. Plants should be placed six to eight inches apart, preferably in clumps of three.

Older plants are easily propagated by layering, and cuttings of the non-woody tip growth may be rooted in moist sand, perlite or vermiculite.

Marjoram likes a sunny location indoors and out. Outside, its shallow root system utilizes only the first few inches of the soil, so an extra helping of compost tilled into the first soil layer before planting will help marjoram reach its full potential. Indoors, marjoram tends to sprawl and may be placed in a hanging basket where it will cascade over the side of the pot. The hanging basket should have a good drainage hole and the plant should be watered only when the soil feels dry to the touch.

In ancient Greece marjoram was a symbol of happiness and well-being. Bridal couples were crowned with marjoram on their wedding day and its fragrant leaves were used in the marriage feasts. If sweet marjoram grew on a grave the soul of the dead was thought to be surely happy and at peace.

In Greek mythology a handsome young man named Amarakos dropped a jar of perfume while in the service of King Cinyrus of Cyprus. He was so terrified that the king would be displeased that he fainted. The gods took pity on him and transformed him into a marjoram plant. Greeks sometimes still refer to sweet marjoram as *amarakos.*

Shakespeare knew his herbs well. He spoke of a "virtuous gentlewoman" as being the "sweet marjoram of the salad." Sweet marjoram is one of the sacred herbs of India, dedicated to the Hindu gods Siva and Vishnu.

As a strewing herb, marjoram was scattered on the floors of public buildings and private homes to perfume and purify the air. For a time it was regarded as an effective disinfectant and during times of plague the sale of sweet marjoram and other strewing herbs skyrocketed.

The kings and queens of England often had herbs and flowers strewn before them wherever they walked. An herb strewer to the court was a favored position.

Colonists developed a taste for marjoram tea after the Boston Tea Party and usually drank it with mint. Steeped with water alone it was used to relieve headaches, asthma, colds and congestion. They used a weak solution of the tea to help cure colic in babies.

Marjoram was used by the colonists in place of hops for beer and ale making. They dressed their meat stews with it to cover any rancid odors or flavors that may have developed from lack of refrigeration.

Marjoram oil was used externally for varicose veins, rheumatism and stiff joints. Leaves were also dried and stuffed into herb pillows; just sleeping on the pillows was supposed to relieve pains from rheumatism. Marjoram oil was also used as a furniture polish.

Brides-to-be tucked sprigs of marjoram between the linens in their hope chests and polished the outside of those same chests with oil of sweet marjoram.

Marjoram is one of the few herbs whose flavor seems to improve when it is dried. When fresh it may sometimes be bitter, especially if it cooks too long. If you use it fresh in soups or stews it's best to add it only for the last ten to fifteen minutes of cooking time, then remove it right before you serve the dish. When dried it has the warm, sweet aroma and flavor that we usually associate with marjoram.

For the best flavor marjoram should be harvested just as the blossoms begin to appear. It should be dried quickly by hanging it in a warm, dry, dark place or in a slow 150° oven. Dried leaves should be stripped from the stem before they are added to dishes, but the stem and leaves may be stored whole until they are used. Leaves may also be removed from the stems and pulverized with a mortar and pestle or grated through a fine screen before storing.

Instead of the traditional sage for poultry seasoning, try a combination of lemon balm, tarragon and marjoram for a pleasant change. Put one-half cup sea salt in a blender with one tablespoon dried lemon balm, one tablespoon dried tarragon and one and one-half tablespoons dried marjoram. Blend until all the herbs are pulverized into a fine herb salt. These salts can be made using any combination of herbs. Try developing your own for beef, spaghetti sauce, lamb, pork or chicken.

Marjoram goes well with all meats. Sprinkle it lightly over beef, pork, lamb or veal before roasting. When barbecuing, tie sprigs of marjoram together and use them for your basting brush, or add one-half teaspoon of dried marjoram to the sauce itself.

A small amount of marjoram (one-eighth teaspoon) may be added to omelets, souffles or scrambled eggs. Marjoram is delicious in poultry stuffing. When you fix chicken, turkey, duck or goose you can rub the inside cavity of the bird with marjoram

before roasting. If you do this don't add marjoram to the stuffing too or its flavor will be overpowering.

Fresh or dried marjoram may be sparingly added to green salads or their dressings. It's especially good with spinach salad or sprinkled over mushrooms. Zucchini, carrots and peas are improved with the addition of one-fourth to one-half teaspoon dried marjoram or a few leaves of fresh marjoram to their cooking water. These vegetables may also be garnished with marjoram butter. Marjoram is good in clam chowder or homemade vegetable soup, especially if it contains those same carrots, peas and zucchini.

Dried marjarom can be added to tuna fish or chicken salad. Blend it into sour cream for dressing baked potatoes, or into cream or cottage cheese for spreads. Marjoram makes a good jelly that goes with pork chops, pork roast or venison. A few marjoram leaves added to orange marmalade gives it a sweet, spicy flavor.

Mushrooms with Marjoram and Parsley

1 pound mushrooms
1 tablespoon freshly minced parsley
1 teaspoon crushed dried marjoram
1 small shallot minced
1/2 cup butter
1/2 cup chicken bouillon
1/4 cup dry white wine
salt and pepper

Melt butter in a saucepan. Saute the shallot just until tender in the butter. Add the parsley, marjoram, bouillon, wine, salt and pepper to the butter and shallot. Place the mushrooms in a casserole. Pour the butter mixture over the mushrooms and bake them in a 350° oven for 20 minutes.

Marjoram and Pork Chop Casserole

1 large onion sliced
4 medium potatoes sliced
5 pork chops
1 can cream of mushroom soup
1 cup milk
1/4 teaspoon marjoram
salt and pepper

Put the onions and the potatoes in a heavy casserole. Mix the mushroom soup and the milk together and pour over the potatoes and onions. Arrange the pork chops over the potato mixture. Bake for half an hour at 350° uncovered. Turn the pork chops over and season them with the marjoram and the salt and pepper. Return to the oven and cook for another half hour.

Mints

Mints, characterized by their square stems, opposite leaves and irregular, two-lipped flowers, are easily grown and hardy perennials. There are many wild and domesticated varieties of mints, from the pungent peppermints and spearmints to the fruity apple, orange and pineapple mints; all can be easily cultivated indoors or out.

Mints grow best in filtered sunlight and well-drained soil; however, they can tolerate full sun, clay soils or rocky terrain. This ability to survive and spread under almost any conditions has led to mint's reputation as a weedy intruder, but with care mint can be contained, and is certainly well worth the effort.

I am that flower,
That mint, that columbine!

Shakespeare
Love's Labour's Lost

Mints spread by runners, which are located both above the ground and under the ground. When planted in sunken, bottomless five gallon containers, mint's underground runners can be confined. Frequent harvests will keep the above ground runners from spreading. Mints won't invade flowers and vegetables if they're given separate quarters in raised beds made of railroad ties, redwood beams or moss rock. All the different varieties of mint may also be grown in pots, tubs or decorative containers that may be brought indoors during the winter.

Mentha, the generic name for the mints, has its roots in Greek mythology. Pluto, the god of the underworld, fell in love with a

beautiful nymph named Mintho. Persephone, Pluto's underworld companion, became jealous and changed Mintho into a lowly, but fragrant plant doomed forever to wait at the shady edges of the underworld.

In the poor sanitary conditions of the Middle Ages mint was used as a strewing herb spread over floors at weddings and festivals to give the air a clean, fresh scent. Tables were rubbed with mint before Greek and Roman banquets in order to perfume the air and increase appetites. In biblical times mint was one of the precious herbs used to pay taxes. (Wouldn't it be wonderful dried, packaged and sent to the IRS on April 15?)

Mints often cross-pollinate producing different varieties from the parent plants. If you find a mint that you really like, ask for a cutting of the new tip growth; it will root easily in moist sand and will always remain true to its parent plant. Root divisions or layering of the above the ground runners are also excellent means of propagating the mints.

Corsican mint, *Mentha requienni*, is a very low growing plant. Its strongly scented, small, round leaves are an essential ingredient in Creme-de-Menthe. It is often used between stepping stones as a fragrant ground cover. Egyptian mint, *Mentha niliaca*, reaches heights of three to four feet and its large velvety leaves are mentioned in legends and lore for their use as "fairy blankets." Pineapple mint, *Mentha suaveolens*, has beautiful light green and white, variegated leaves and a delicate fruity scent. *Mentha citrata* has a distinctive citrus-like flavor and fragrance. Its round, dark purple and green leaves are a pleasant addition to herb tea. English pennyroyal, *Mentha pulegium*, is a low creeping ground cover whose strongly scented leaves are small and carpet the ground. Its flower stalks rise four inches to one foot above the ground with whorls of lavender colored blossoms. Pennyroyal was used as an insect repellent. Even the royalty used it to combat body lice (giving rise to its common name). Ancient Greeks and Romans used it to repel fleas, and early American settlers rubbed it on their skin to protect them from insect bites. At one time pennyroyal was used to purify the casks of drinking water that were carried aboard ships. It has also been used as a lawn substitute in shady areas.

Spearmint, *Mentha X spicata* or *Mentha viridis*, is an erect plant that grows up to three feet tall. It has crinkled leaves that are one and one-half to three and one-half inches long with the characteristic taste and fragrance that we've come to accept in toothpaste, candy and chewing gum. Peppermint, *Mentha X piperita*,

grows three feet tall on erect branched stems. The stems are purplish and the leaves are between one and four inches long. Peppermint tea is widely used as an aid to digestion and as a pleasant nightcap.

All the mints may be used in sachets and potpourris. Cheesecloth bags of mint added to very warm water make a relaxing herbal bath. Mint water may be made by soaking a cup of mint leaves in a quart of water. Strain out the leaves and store the water in the refrigerator for a refreshing and stimulating face wash.

Chopped mint leaves and cream cheese make an excellent spread. Tossed green salad can be different every night of the week with the addition of one or two varieties of mint leaves. Fresh garden peas are delicious when cooked with mint. Add chopped mint leaves to your favorite chocolate or white cake recipe. Mint is super in lamb stew or added to a vinegar and oil marinade for lamb shish kabobs.

Cold cucumber and yogurt soup made with mint as one of its main ingredients (as well as a garnish of course) is a delicious summer meal. Peel, seed and finely grate two small cucumbers and dry them between paper towels. Stir one tablespoon fresh lemon juice and one teaspoon olive oil into two cups of plain yogurt. Add one tablespoon chopped mint leaves and one teaspoon chopped dill weed to the yogurt mixture. Gently fold the grated cucumber into the yogurt mixture and season with salt and pepper. Chill this cucumber soup for several hours then garnish with mint and serve in chilled soup bowls.

Mint tea may be made with a single mint, combination of mints or mint added to any mild green tea. One teaspoon of dried mint combined with a cup of boiling water, steeped for three minutes and strained makes a refreshing and relaxing drink.

Mint is easy to dry and seems to retain most of its flavor in that form. It should be harvested several times during the summer preferably just before it starts to flower when its essential oils are at their peak. Pick it early in the morning just before the dew has dried from the leaves and hang it upside down in bunches to dry, or dry it in an oven at 150°. Store the leaves whole in opaque jars with air-tight lids. Crush the leaves to release their flavor when you use them.

Mint also retains its flavor when frozen. Simply place clean dry sprigs in plastic bags in the freezer or freeze leaves in water in ice cube trays. The ice cubes make a decorative addition to punches and ice tea or may be added to the water when cooking frozen vegetables.

Mint Sauce

1/2 cup lemon juice (may substitute 1/2 cup mint vinegar)
1/2 cup honey
1/4 cup water
1/8 teaspoon salt
1/4 cup fresh mint that has been finely minced.

Mix lemon juice, honey, water and salt in the top of a double boiler and cook for five minutes. Add the mint leaves, cover with a lid and simmer for 10 to 15 minutes more. Serve warm with lamb or veal and garnish with fresh sprigs of mint.

Minted Peas with Onions and Ham

3 cups fresh shelled peas
1/2 cup water
2 teaspoons chicken seasoned stock base
1 3½-ounce bottle cocktail onions, drained
4 tablespoons butter
1 cup julienne strips of cooked ham
1 tablespoon sugar
1½ teaspoons chopped fresh mint leaves
salt and pepper

Combine the peas, water and stock base in a saucepan. Cover and bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to low and simmer for 7 minutes or until peas are just tender. Saute the onions, ham and sugar in the butter, stirring frequently. Drain the peas and add them to the onions and ham. Stir in the mint leaves. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serves 6.

Monarda

When the American colonists were boycotting British tea the Oswego Indians of upstate New York introduced the colonists to a new, native American brew. For years the Indians had been making tea from the leaves of *Monarda didyma,* an herbaceous perennial that grew up to three feet tall and produced beautiful scarlet-red blossoms in July and August. The colonists called the brew Oswego tea, and imbibed it in protest.

Monarda didyma is often called beebalm. Its bright scarlet flowers attract bees as well as butterflies and hummingbirds in great profusion. *Monarda* has also been nicknamed bergamot, but should not be confused with the citrus of the same name whose oil is used in perfumes.

Monardas are a beautiful addition to any perennial garden. There are many hybrid varieties of *Monarda didyma* available now. They range in color from white, shades of pink, red, crimson and scarlet to an almost purple-red and purple-blue; and all of the varieties of *Monarda didyma* are hardy, robust and free-flowering. They reproduce rapidly with runners from their shallow underground root system. Clumps of *Monarda* should be divided every three or four years. Older plants have a tendency to die off, and should be dug up and discarded so the new offshoots have room to grow. Propagation by seed is slow and difficult. Monardas often cross pollinate, producing plants that will not remain true in color or form to the parent plant.

The Oswego Indians made their tea from the dried leaves of the native *Monarda didyma*. Leaves for tea are best if harvested before the plants bloom and should be dried quickly to capture their essential oils. The leaves are usually quite large, three to six inches long, and are dried easily if first removed from their thick stems. Spread them on racks in a warm 150° oven for quick and even drying.

The fresh young tips of *Monarda* may be used to garnish fruit cups and fruit salads. Young tender leaves will add extra flavor to

lemonade or apple jelly, and the flowers may be floated in fruit punches or used to garnish salads and desserts.

Monarda fistulosa, known as wild bergamot or horse mint, grows wild from southern Canada through the Midwest and western United States. It is characterized by the same showy flowers, usually in shades of lavender. Native American Indians chewed the leaves of this *Monarda* and added them to the stew pot to season their meats. They made the dried leaves into a tea that they took for mild fevers, colds and sore throats.

Monarda citriodora is an annual that is native to the United States, growing wild from Illinois through Nebraska to Texas. This annual *Monarda* reaches a height of only twelve inches. Its narrow, oblong, dentate leaves emit a delightful lemon fragrance when crushed. Hopi Indians boiled the leaves of this *Monarda* with wild game.

Monarda austromontana is a native to northern Mexico, where it is commonly called oregano and is used much like *Origanum vulgare*. In addition to its use as a seasoning it is also valued as a tea.

The monardas are beautiful plants that deserve a place in the garden whether they are grown for their culinary or ornamental attributes. Their bright flowers attract bees, butterflies and hummingbirds that help pollinate the garden.

Nasturtium

There are many different species of the genus *Tropaeolum* but the one we find most often in our gardens is *Tropaeolum majus*, or the common nasturtium. These are not to be confused with the members of the genus *Nasturtium*, which includes *Nasturtium officinalis* or watercress. Both have the same peppery flavor but are botanically unrelated.

Tropaeolum are tender perennials native to an area extending from Peru to Colombia. There they were an important food source known as Indian Cress. In North America they won't withstand even the mildest frost and are therefore normally grown as annuals.

Nasturtiums grow readily from seed but don't transplant well. It is best to sow the seed directly into the garden in spring after the frost danger has passed. Nasturtiums can also be propagated from stem cuttings, but seeds are readily available and are generally the quickest and easiest means of propagation.

Over the years, hybridizers have developed new colors, dwarf varieties and double flowers from the original *Tropaeolum*.

These nasturtiums now come in shades of white, yellow, bright orange and crimson. Climbing varieties often reach fifteen feet, whereas dwarf varieties are compact, bushy and around ten to fifteen inches tall. In our garden we like to plant the climbing

varieties along the fence with vining cucumbers and gourds. Along the border in front and on the sides of the garden we often alternate curled parsley with nasturtiums. The contrast of the dark curled parsley leaves with bright nasturtium flowers is not only beautiful but also beneficial. Aphids are attracted to nasturtiums and they will congregate around the border of our garden instead of inside on the vegetables.

Aphids tend to be attracted to the new nasturtium growth and it's an easy job to go through the garden with a basket picking the infested leaves and flowers and discarding them, aphids and all. Nasturtiums also repel white fly and a spray made from garlic and nasturtium leaves can be an effective organic pest control. (See page **30**.)

Nasturtium leaves are round and radially veined. They have a pungent flavor reminiscent of pepper. It was this peppery quality that gave them their common name, nasturtium, which literally means "to turn or twist the nose." The leaves are filled with vitamin C, and can be chopped and added to green salads, or minced and mixed with cream cheese for a sandwich spread. Nasturtium leaf butter is a spicy addition to breads and hot vegetables.

The brightly colored flowers are also edible. Add them whole to green salads for color, or chop them and mix them with cream cheese or butter for spreads. No one can ever figure out what those brightly colored specks are. Fill flowers with cheese spreads for canapes or use them to garnish fruit and cheese plates. The petals or whole flowers can be floated on cold soups or in iced drinks and punches.

Seed clusters will form on the plants after the flowers have faded. These seeds and pods may be pickled and used like capers in salads and dressings. Pack seeds or pods in glass bottles, add two peppercorns and a sprig of tarragon. Heat vinegar just to the boiling point and pour it into the bottles. Seal bottles and store them in a cool place for a month to let the seeds pickle. A single nasturtium seed, pickled or not, added to a cup of hot tea gives it a unique and different flavor.

Nasturtium vinegar is spicy and pungent. Make it by placing nasturtium leaves and blossoms along with a few fresh black peppercorns, a garlic clove and some chopped shallots in a bottle of red or white wine vinegar. This vinegar is delicious over wilted lettuce or green salads. It can also be used in meat and fish sauces and marinades.

Many gardening books claim that nasturtiums will grow best in poor soil. Maybe it's the arid climate where I live, but I find my nasturtiums need a fairly rich soil and a lot of moisture to achieve their best growth. They do well in the vegetable garden mix of topsoil, peat moss, compost and well-rotted manure. I fertilize them every three to four weeks with a high phosphorus fertilizer like 15-30-15 for big, beautiful blossoms.

Nasturtiums will grow in pots quite successfully if they are seeded directly. We usually put twelve seeds in a ten-inch pot and thin that down to the five healthiest plants after the seedlings are established. Both the bedding and potted nasturtiums need good sun to produce blooms. We've had plants with healthy foliage in the shade, but if you are after those bright oranges, yellows and reds, you'll have to grow the plants in the sun.

Vegetable Dip with Nasturtiums

2 cups mayonnaise
3 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
3 tablespoons chopped fresh chives
1 tablespoon chopped fresh chervil
1 tablespoon finely minced fresh burnet
1 teaspoon finely grated lemon peel
5 anchovy filets finely chopped
1 teaspoon pickled nasturtium seeds

carrot sticks
radish roses
cucumber slices
zucchini rounds
summer squash rounds
cherry tomatoes
red and green pepper slices
mushrooms
snow peas
cauliflower florets

Mix the first eight ingredients together and chill for four hours. Place this dip in a bowl in the center of a large platter. Surround the dip bowl with the prepared vegetables and garnish with yellow, bright orange, and crimson nasturtium blossoms.

Oregano

Oregano was virtually unknown in America until 1945. Servicemen coming home from Europe had acquired a taste for it in Italy and brought it home in the Americanized version of the pizza. The popularity of oregano went hand in hand with that of pizza and sales of the herb have increased over two thousand percent in the last twenty years.

Trying to establish which herb is truly oregano can present many problems. There are more than twenty different species of *Origanum* that smell, taste and look very much alike, and just as many experts claiming that each one of the twenty is the true oregano. To make matters worse sweet marjoram, *Origanum majorana*, also closely resembles oregano and is often mistaken for it. Oregano may be referred to as wild marjoram, and some

cookbooks use the two herbs interchangeably. The Italians have answered the oregano identity problem by combining several of the *Origanum* species together, drying them, labeling them as oregano and selling them to the American grocers.

I think the best way to settle the controversy is to sample all the different oregano plants at nurseries and in friends' gardens until you find the one that best suits your taste. Label that plant as your true oregano and grow it to flavor your pizzas and spaghetti sauces.

The oregano that I found and liked best is simply labeled *Origanum vulgare*, common oregano. It, like all its look alike relatives except sweet marjoram, is a hardy perennial. It spreads readily and may need to be kept in check by pulling or hoeing if it starts to invade its neighbor's territory. Oregano grows from eighteen to thirty inches tall. In late July it develops masses of flowers that range from pink to purple to brown. After a few years its squared stems become rather woody and take on the purplish cast of the flowers. The leaves are dark green, one inch long, opposite and oval with a blunt tip. The root system is very shallow and therefore the plant must be watered in the winter when we're having one of our dry, windy spells that leave the first few inches of top soil completely without moisture.

Oregano may be grown indoors as well as out, and will do well in both places if it's given plenty of sun and a good, porous, well-drained soil. It should be watered well when the soil is dry to the touch, fertilized monthly and pinched back often to keep it full and bushy.

Oregano may be grown from seed, but it is slow to germinate and care must be taken to keep it weed free while it is trying to establish itself. The seeds are extremely small and are best sown

thickly. After germination they should be thinned to one plant every ten inches. Seeds may be sown indoors at any time or outside just after the danger of frost has passed. Plants may also be propagated from cuttings of tip growth or by dividing the root systems of older plants.

To keep oregano plants producing more and more edible leaves the new growth should be pinched back before the flower heads start to form. Hang the cuttings in an airy place to dry. When all the moisture is gone crumble the leaves and store them in an air-tight container. After you've dried enough oregano for next winter's pizzas, stop cutting and let the plants reward you with an array of flowers. Oregano flowers exhibit a rich variety of colors, shapes and textures at different stages of their development, and I like to pick them at different stages of their growth cycle to add to my dried winter bouquet.

Origanum is the Greek word for "delight of the mountains," and the ancient Greeks held oregano as a symbol of happiness. They believed that their dead were happy if oregano flourished on their graves. Greeks and Romans also valued oregano as a medicinal herb, using it internally and externally as an antidote for poisoning and convulsions.

If you hold an oregano leaf to the light you can see that it is filled with essential oils. In the seventeenth century herbalists extracted these oils, warmed them and dripped them into people's ears to relieve pain caused by infection. They also thought this procedure would cure deafness. Oregano oil was also used as a remedy for toothaches, and warmed poultices of the leaves were applied to swollen areas to relieve pains. Herbalists also prescribed oregano tea to soothe nerves and clear up headaches.

Oregano is one of the few herbs I prefer to use dry in cooking rather than fresh. The fresh oregano has a very strong, almost bitter taste that becomes milder and sweeter when dried. But either fresh or dried it should be used with discretion so that its flavor doesn't overpower the entire dish.

Almost all of my favorite Italian and Mexican food recipes call for oregano. It is great for perking up homemade tomato sauce or paste, and goes well with any tomato dish. Fresh tomatoes from the garden are delicious sliced and sprinkled with oregano and vinegar and oil. A little oregano is also good in a tomato or vegetable juice cocktail.

A basic white bread recipe becomes almost a meal in itself if a teaspoon of marjoram, a teaspoon of oregano and a teaspoon of

thyme, plus one and one-half cups of cheddar cheese are all added to the batter before it rises. Plain meat loaf becomes fancy when you layer sliced mozzarella cheese and oregano in the middle and on the top. Oregano adds a distinctive flavor to zucchini and eggplant. It is also good in egg and tuna salad. A few leaves of fresh oregano finely minced mixes well with a lettuce salad.

Lamb, pork or veal may be rubbed with oregano before broiling or roasting. Chicken or fish is also enhanced if you rub oregano inside and out before baking or roasting.

Oregano butter may be made by adding one tablespoon finely crushed oregano, one tablespoon crushed basil and one tablespoon finely minced chives to one cup butter. This herb butter is excellent served on broiled stuffed tomatoes or broiled steak or chops.

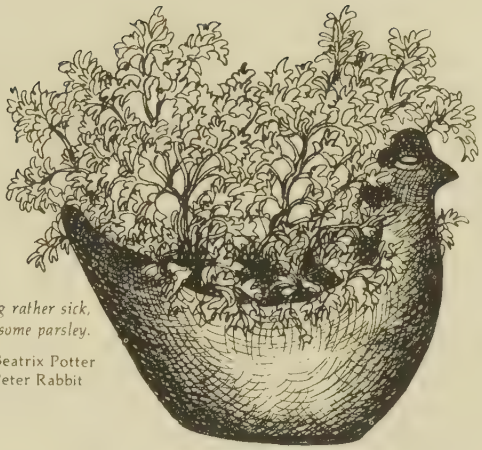
Herb oil made by adding minced oregano leaves or whole stems of oregano to olive oil makes a wonderful base for salad dressings. Oregano oil gives beef or lamb a special flavor if it's used when basting and browning the meat. Marinades may be made with oregano oil, and rice is delicious when fried in oregano oil. Oregano vinegar is one of the most useful herb vinegars. Decorative bottles filled with oregano vinegar and oregano oil make excellent gifts, and are especially nice if they include one of your favorite oregano recipes.

Meat Loaf with Oregano

1/2 pound lean ground beef
1/2 pound lean ground pork
1/2 pound lean ground veal
1 minced onion
1/3 cup minced green pepper
1/2 cup crushed white crackers
1 teaspoon fresh minced basil
1/4 teaspoon dried oregano
1/2 teaspoon fresh minced summer savory
1/4 cup milk
1/4 cup red wine
1 egg
salt and pepper

Mix all the ingredients together and shape into a loaf. Bake in a preheated 325° oven for 1 hour.

Parsley



And then, feeling rather sick, he went to look for some parsley.

Beatrix Potter
Peter Rabbit

I hate to go into a restaurant and see all those plates returning to the kitchen with the parsley garnish heading for the garbage disposal. Parsley stems, as well as the leaves, are gold mines of vitamins and minerals. Parsley has more vitamin C than an orange. It contains great quantities of vitamin A, niacin and riboflavin and abundant amounts of calcium, iron, phosphorus and potassium with traces of copper, manganese and iodine.

Parsley is a member of the Umbelliferae family, exhibiting the characteristic hollow stems and flattopped clusters of flowers, called umbels. It is a biennial, developing green leaves the first year and a flower stalk the second. The flower stalks may be two to three feet high, producing clusters of yellow flowers that form greyish-brown seeds. Even though it is a biennial, parsley is generally seeded every year and grown as an annual since it seems to produce better greenery before it flowers. Under our hot dry Colorado sun parsley sometimes bolts and goes to seed the first season. Picking back the seed heads encourages the plant to send out new growth that can be cut all season.

When harvesting parsley, pick the outside stems and leaves first, taking the stems all the way down to the ground. The plant will continue to grow from the center and may be harvested until frost.

Parsley germinates sporadically and very slowly, sometimes taking eight to nine weeks to sprout. This slow germination accounts for much of the folklore associated with parsley. Old herbals claim parsley goes back to the Devil nine times before

breaking into leaf. Some suggest that it will germinate only if planted by a witch or a pregnant woman, and then only if planted on Good Friday.

Greeks crowned the winners of their athletic games with parsley and fed it to their chariot horses, thinking it would make them run faster. At the height of Roman civilization wreaths and garlands of parsley and other herbs and flowers become so fashionable that a quarter of the Athens' market place was referred to as the "Wreath Market." At banquets Greeks wore garlands of parsley with the belief that it would absorb the fumes from their wine and keep them from getting intoxicated, and they ate it in large quantities as a breath purifier.

The dark green foliage of parsley alternated with bright yellow violas is one of our favorite vegetable garden borders. If you would like to use parsley in this way, start by loosening your garden soil just as soon as it is workable in the spring. Turn it over to a depth of six inches to uproot the weeds and aerate the soil. If you need to enrich your soil try adding a good two to three inches of peat moss, compost or well-rotted manure. Make a furrow with the edge of a rake and tamp down the inside of the furrow by walking along it heel to toe. Sow the seed thickly along the row leaving spaces for the violas. Heat water to a rolling boil and walk along the furrows pouring the hot water over the exposed seed. Cover the furrows with one-half inch of soil and stamp it down. This hot water treatment seems to make the parsley come up more quickly and eliminates uneven germination. After the parsley gets about one-half inch tall you can add the yellow violas.

There are many varieties of parsley used in cooking. Curled parsley (*Petroselinum crispum*) and Italian parsley (*Petroselinum crispum neapolitanum*), with its flat leaves and stronger flavor, are the two most popular varieties. Both are excellent when minced and added to melted butter for seasoning asparagus, carrots and new potatoes. Garlic butter with parsley enhances French bread or broiled shrimp. Tuck sprigs of parsley inside a chicken before roasting. Add parsley to stews, cold and hot soups, and all your salad greens. Parsley is also good in scrambled eggs or omelets.

Every French cookbook is filled with recipes using parsley as an essential ingredient. *Fines herbes* is a subtle blend of finely chopped parsley, chervil, tarragon and chives. Marjoram, savory, basil or thyme may also be included, depending upon the dish being seasoned. A combination of bay, thyme and parsley tied

together with string or secured in a cheesecloth bag is referred to as a *bouquet garni*. A *bouquet garni* is immersed in a soup or stew while it is cooking and is removed just as soon as the desired flavor is obtained.

Parsley may be grown indoors in a pot on a sunny windowsill. It should be planted in a mixture of one-third peat moss, one-third top soil and one-third perlite in a container with a good drain hole. It seems to be more prone to attack by red spiders, aphids and white flies indoors than outside. To discourage these pests I wash my indoor parsley plants in a mild solution of Ivory soap and water and then rinse them in clear water once a week. This seems to keep the pests under control and eliminates the need for spraying.

Outside, parsley attracts fewer pests; however, last summer my parsley patch was attacked by beautiful caterpillars with black crossbands on each segment. When the caterpillars were disturbed they would extend two soft, forked, orange horns from openings just behind their heads which gave off a sickeningly sweet odor. It was easy to keep them under control by hand-picking until I found out that I was destroying the caterpillar stage of the beautiful black swallowtail butterfly. This year I've planted more parsley than usual, hoping there will be enough for me and that striking caterpillar, *Papilio polyxenes asterius*, sometimes referred to as the Parsleyworm.

Twice Baked Herb Potatoes

5 large baking potatoes
1 tablespoon freshly minced parsley
1 tablespoon freshly minced chives
1 tablespoon freshly minced chervil
1/3 cup butter
1 cup sour cream
1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
salt and pepper

Bake potatoes in a 400° oven for one hour or until they are done. Make a lengthwise incision in each potato and remove the flesh reserving the skin. Mix the potato flesh with the butter, sour cream and the herbs, beating with an electric mixer until smooth. Season with salt and pepper and return the potato mixture into the potato skins. Top with Parmesan cheese and return to the oven for 10 minutes. Serves 5.

Roses

There is nothing more beautiful than a perfectly formed single red rose. Throughout history the rose has been the perfect symbol of undying love and affection. In ancient Egypt large jars of dried rose petals were placed in tombs with the pharaohs to perfume their journey into the afterlife. In Homer's *Iliad*, the shield of Achilles was decorated with roses. Roses were the prominent symbols minted on Rhodes coins in 325 B.C. When Confucius died in 479 B.C., he had 600 books about rose care in his library. Cleopatra even replaced the ancient Egyptian lotus symbol with a rose.

Garlands of roses were worn by Roman brides and their grooms at marriage feasts, and rose petals were strewn along the bridal path. Nero loved roses, and during his great feasts rose petals would rain down from the ceiling of the banquet hall. Historians noted that the roses fell in such profusion that a few intoxicated guests actually suffocated under the mounds of petals.

Today there are thousands of rose hybrids. Some smell sweet and others, though beautiful in form, have no scent at all. The roses that most interest the herbalist are usually the more old-fashioned varieties with their rambling habit and lovely fragrance that can be preserved in potpourris and sachets.

The economic importance of roses in the perfume and floral industry is clear, but their importance as a food source is often overlooked. Rose hips of many rose varieties are one of nature's richest sources of vitamin C. Rose hip tea is a popular drink with

honey and lemon and contains more vitamin C than orange juice. Strained rose hip puree can be added to soups and sauces and fruit drinks. If it is carefully prepared and stored properly, its vitamin content will not be lost.

Fresh rose petals may be used to flavor and garnish fruit cups, white cakes, jellies and jams. A vinegar made by steeping red or pink rose petals in white wine vinegar has a delicate pink color with an unforgettable taste. Use this vinegar in dressing for fruit cups and fruit salads. A sugar and water syrup made with rose petals is good in fruit drinks and puddings. (Rose pudding was another one of Nero's favorites.) Rose petals and whole roses may be candied by dipping them in egg white and sprinkling them with fine granulated sugar. Use these candied roses as cake or ice cream decorations.

Rose water is generally used in the bath, but it can also be used to flavor an angel food or pound cake. Add rose water to cream cheese, milk and powdered sugar for a delightful rose frosting.

Roses can also be used to make candles, scented soaps, colognes, perfumes, sachets, potpourris and scented pillows. Rose beads for rosaries are still made at a few convents. This ancient art allows a bride to keep the roses of her wedding bouquet forever preserved in the form of the rose beads.

Today's modern gardener often uses a chemical rose fertilizer. This is fine for getting healthy vigorous rose bushes and lots of lush growth and beautiful blossoms, but rose fertilizers frequently contain a systemic insecticide as well as a fertilizer. If you are going to use any part of your rose bush in cooking you should definitely avoid these insecticides as they are taken up by the root system and then they spread throughout the plant. Try fertilizing your roses with a commercial fertilizer that doesn't contain a systemic insecticide or use a combination of blood meal, bone meal and wood ashes as an organic fertilizer. Some of the most nutritive rose hips can be found on the roses that grow wild throughout the United States. They grow profusely in all kinds of soils without special care or fertilization.

Roses may be grown from seed, but it is a long and difficult process. Hybrid roses do not reproduce true from seed and most of our roses today are hybrids. Roses can, however, be propagated from stem cuttings. Cuttings should be of the supple new green growth, not the older hard wood. Dip cut ends in a rooting hormone and insert in moist sand, or a mixture of peat moss, sand and mica peat that is kept evenly moist. Roots generally form within ten to twelve weeks.

Roses do best in a sunny location with adequate drainage. The soil should be acidic, preferably in the five to six pH range. For planting roses in the garden, soil should be prepared to a depth twice the diameter of the root ball, or at least twenty-four inches. It is advisable to incorporate peat moss, well-rotted manure or compost with the existing topsoil in the planting hole. If the existing topsoil contains large amounts of clay the addition of sand will help improve the drainage.

Roses will benefit from a mulch of grass clippings, hay or straw during the winter. In dry climates they should be watered whenever the moisture from snow and rain is depleted. Prune back any winter kill in the spring, then shape the roses, thinning out weak branches and shoots.

No flower has been more sought after, cultivated, hybridized, appreciated or praised than the rose. Whether its beauty is preserved, or enjoyed only for the moment, nothing can equal its form and grace. No one said it better than Gertrude Stein when she wrote, "A rose is a rose is a rose is a rose."

Rosemary

Rosemary, symbol of fidelity, friendship and remembrance, is a must in the herb garden of every good cook. The needlelike leaves, glossy green on top and greyish-green underneath, give the flavor of sage, lavender, ginger and camphor all rolled into one. Its presence enhances pork, lamb, veal and chicken dishes as well as vegetables, herb butters and bread.

There's Rosemary, that's for remembrance: pray you love, remember.

Shakespeare
Hamlet

Rosemary comes in many forms. Some plants have blue flowers, some white and some pink. *Rosmarinus officinalis* has an upright habit, while *Rosmarinus officinalis* "prostrata" is a trailing form. None of the varieties is winter hardy; however they all do well in a sunny location in the summer garden and may be brought indoors before the first frost to spend winter in a pot on a sunny windowsill. Grown indoors or out, rosemary needs a

porous well-drained potting soil which should be allowed to dry to the touch between waterings. Rosemary cannot stand total dehydration and must be watered before it starts to wilt.

Rosemary can be grown from seed; however the percentage of germination is low and it may take up to three years to produce a cuttable bush. Propagation is more easily accomplished by rooting cuttings or layering more mature plants. Cuttings of the newer tip growth may be rooted in moist sand, perlite or vermiculite. Roots are usually formed in eight to twelve weeks. Layering may be done by weighing down one of the lower branches of an older plant beneath the soil and separating it from the mother plant once it has rooted into that soil.

European herbalists gave rosemary its reputation as an herb with the ability to strengthen the memory. Shakespeare's Ophelia, mourning Hamlet's madness, referred to rosemary for remembrance. Rosemary sprigs were woven into funeral bouquets to insure that the dead would not be soon forgotten. Wedding cakes were flavored with rosemary. Newlyweds exchanged sprigs of rosemary as tokens of their troth and wedding guests were presented bunches of rosemary tied with brightly colored silk to symbolize fidelity.

In the spring we did an old-fashioned bouquet for a wedding with sprigs of rosemary woven throughout lily of the valley, forget-me-nots and roses. I hope someone saved a sprig of the rosemary in the confusion of the wedding party and will root it as a cutting for a new plant for the bride and groom.

Rosemary mixed with equal parts lavender and grated lemon peel makes a refreshing sachet. The fragrance of a sprig of rosemary tucked into a letter to a friend gives it the special meaning of remembrance.

The cooking uses for rosemary multiply in the outdoor barbecue season. Use sprigs of rosemary for your basting brush when smoothing barbecue sauce on chicken. During the last minutes of cooking throw the rosemary brush into the fire to fill the air with the fragrance of rosemary.

Rub three-quarters teaspoon rosemary into a four-pound veal, lamb, beef or pork roast before cooking. When cooking zucchini, cauliflower, green beans, peas or potatoes, add half a teaspoon crushed rosemary leaves to the cooking liquid to give those vegetables a distinct flavor.

New potatoes boiled in their skins, sliced and fried in rosemary and butter make a tasty crunchy dish. Rosemary adds an unusual flavor to fruit cups and punches as well as marinade and barbecue sauces.

Late in the summer we end up with more zucchini than we can harvest and a few always get away and get too big for slicing and steaming. When one gets over fourteen inches long, we boil it whole for eight minutes, drain it and cut it in half lengthwise and remove the pulp. Meanwhile in a skillet we've browned a pound of sausage with one chopped onion and a clove of garlic. To the sausage mixture we add one and one-half teaspoons rosemary leaves, salt, pepper, one-eighth pound butter and one cup seasoned bread crumbs with the diced zucchini pulp. Then we place all the ingredients back in the zucchini shell, top with grated cheddar cheese and bake in a 325° oven for thirty-five minutes. Served with salad, stuffed zucchini has become one of our favorite summer meals.

Rosemary surpasses parsley as a beautiful garnish. Zigzag cut lemon halves and rosemary sprigs surrounding a leg of lamb or roast chicken turn on ordinary meal into an occasion.

When experimenting with rosemary in your meals remember to start out gradually. It's better to have just a touch of the herb's flavor than to overpower the whole dish. If you aren't already using rosemary in your cooking, I hope you'll try it soon and come to love its flavor as I have.

Ratatouille with Rosemary

1 medium zucchini sliced
1 medium summer squash sliced
1 medium eggplant cubed
3 tomatoes chopped
1 red pepper chopped
1 green pepper chopped
1 clove garlic finely minced
1 onion finely chopped
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper
1 tablespoon finely minced, fresh basil
1 teaspoon finely chopped, fresh rosemary
1 teaspoon finely chopped, fresh parsley

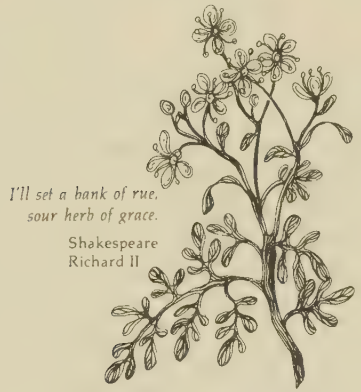
In a skillet heat the oil and saute the onion and garlic until tender. Put the vegetables, herbs and salt and pepper into a casserole dish. Pour the onion and garlic over the vegetables and toss well. Cover the casserole and bake in a preheated 350° oven for 45 minutes.

Leg of Lamb

1 six-pound leg of lamb
1 teaspoon minced thyme
1 teaspoon minced rosemary
1 teaspoon minced chervil
1 teaspoon minced marjoram
3 tablespoons olive oil
1 crushed garlic clove
2 cups dry white wine

Put the lamb in a roasting pan. Mix the olive oil with the crushed garlic and spread it evenly over the lamb. Mix the herbs together. Sprinkle this herb mixture over the lamb. Pour the wine in the roasting pan and bake the lamb at 325° for 2½ hours. Baste the lamb frequently with the wine and the drippings in the roasting pan.

Rue



Rue has a place in my garden simply because of its beautiful, lacy, blue-green leaves. Many people consider it a good cooking herb (it is a common salad herb in Italian cooking) but I find its flavor too bitter to use, even sparingly. I still like to grow rue, however, for its ornamental qualities and its old-world herbal associations.

Romans believed rue strengthened the eyes. They used its yellow flowers in eye lotions. Painters, wood carvers and other craftsmen who used their eyes for close work drank rue tisanes to preserve their sight. Just chewing on a leaf was reported to cure headaches from eye strain.

Rue was one the principal ingredients in the "Vinegar of the Four Thieves," a legendary brew that was concocted by a group of renowned robbers. They drank it in quantity to protect them from the plague, believing that it enabled them to enter and rob all the plague-infested households in the realm.

Judges included rue in the herbal nosegays they carried into court. The rank unpleasant odor of rue was added to the sweet-smelling herbs to ward off disease and pestilence. Jail fever was common among inmates of those poorly sanitized prisons, and rue strewn between courtroom benches and carried in "tussie mussies" supposedly kept the judges safe.

Rue is often referred to as the "herb of grace" or the "herb of repentance." Sprigs of rue were once used to sprinkle holy water over a repentant sinner's head. It became known as a symbol of repentance, and Shakespeare and many other writers often referred to rue in this context.

Medicinally, rue was used as an antidote for poisoning. If you had enough rue in you herbalists believed that your body would not be affected by bee, wasp or scorpion stings, and you might even be able to live through an attempted murder by poisoning.

Ancients believed that rue had the power to guard against witches and evil spirits. Legend has it that Mercury gave it to Ulysses when he had been charmed by Circe. The rue was able to overcome her magic spell and set Ulysses free.

Rue is a hardy perennial that grows best in full sun in moderately rich and well-drained soil. It may be propagated from seed, cuttings or root divisions. Take care when you handle it for the first time. Some people find that they are allergic to it and, after contact, develop a rash much like that caused by poison ivy.

As rue ages it becomes shrubby, about two feet tall with woody lower stems. Its branching leaves are made up of multiple rounded leaflets that are broad at the far ends and narrow down toward the stem. Rue has star-shaped flowers with four petals that are a deep golden yellow. The contrast between the yellow flowers and the blue-green leaves makes rue one of the most attractive ornamentals in the herb garden.

With care rue can be used to flavor salads, stews, and vegetable drinks. It is very bitter, and can be toxic if taken in excessive quantities, so use it sparingly at best.

Thin cream cheese with a little milk, add a bit of rue and use this mix for a sandwich spread on dark bread. Sprinkle finely minced rue on cottage cheese. Add a leaf to a glass of cranberry juice or a vegetable cocktail.

Rue can be used with potatoes whether they are baked, creamed or boiled. A single leaf will give a unique taste to lamb, chicken or kidney stew. Or you can chop it fine and add it to vegetable or green salads or use a little to flavor their dressings.

Sage

Sage was the miracle drug of the Middle Ages, reputed to cure everything from senility to broken bones. Through the years it has lost its popularity with the medical profession, and it has been relegated to a cooking herb used once a year in the dressing for our Thanksgiving turkey. Most of its medicinal value was rightfully disproved; however, its warm pungent aroma and flavor add so much to pork, lamb, venison, cheese, soups and sauces that it seems a shame so many good cooks push it to the back of their spice cabinets.

Salvia officinalis, garden sage, is a very hardy perennial. Mine is so tough that it often continues to grow during the winters; in fact I can think of a few times when I actually dug under a blanket of snow to get to it. It usually reaches heights of three feet and may be kept neat and attractive through selective pruning. The oblong leaves are greyish-green, the color we've come to call sage green. The leaves are one to two inches long and rounded at the ends with a finely wrinkled network of veins covering their surface. If allowed to bloom, sage produces beautiful purplish-blue flowers in mid summer.

Other culinary varieties of sage are *Salvia officinalis 'icterina'* with golden leaves, and *Salvia officinalis purpurescens* with lovely purple leaves. Variegated sage, *Salvia officinalis 'Tricolor'*

has leaves that are pink, white and green. These different colored varieties do not always breed true from seed, and must be propagated from root divisions or cuttings to maintain their coloration.

Salvia rutilans reaches heights of three feet and becomes covered with brilliant red flowers in the fall. It has a definite pineapple fragrance and may be used in jams, jellies, fruit salads and teas. It is normally referred to as pineapple sage and makes an excellent house plant if properly trimmed.

There are also many ornamental sages that are grown for their beauty instead of culinary merits. One should be careful not to confuse these varieties with the different forms of American sagebrush that are artemisias and not salvias. Mexican bush sage, *Salvia leucantha*, has large tufts of purple flowers that attract hummingbirds. *Salvia sclarea*, clary sage, is grown for its pink and blue bracts and is a biennial. There are also many bright red, annual salvias that can be purchased as bedding plants in the spring to give continual color for the summer.

All the sages prefer a sunny location. They are not too particular about soil content as long as it is porous and well-drained. Most varieties become woody within four or five years and should then be dug and replaced with new plants for maximum leaf growth.

Sage plants are easily propagated from seeds, stem cuttings or root divisions. The branches of older plants may be pulled down and covered with soil; they will readily root into that soil and may then be separated from the parent plant.

Garden sage is in the genus *Salvia* which comes from the Latin word *salvere* meaning "to be saved." Its specific name *officinalis* indicates that sage was officially listed in the medical pharmacopoeia in America and England. Medicinally it was regarded so highly that an old proverb asks, "Why should a man die whilst sage grows in his garden?"

A seventeenth century herbalist theorized that sage would not only prolong a life, but it would also make that life exceedingly better. He wrote that sage would retard the process of decay, preserve one's faculties and memory, strengthen the body, prevent depression and keep one's hands from trembling and eyes from dimming. Today we still call a wise old man who is in control of his faculties a "sage."

Chaucer, who was regarded as a medical authority in his day, thought that sage would cure broken bones. After a period of great pestilence in ancient Egypt, women were ordered to drink sage tea to increase their fertility and help replenish the popula-

tion. Hippocrates recommended sage tea for coughs and colds, and it was also used as a gargle for sore throats. Even today, some herbalists claim sage tea will cure simple headaches.

Sage tea, made extra strong, was used as a hair rinse to darken greying hair. Conversely the leaves were rubbed on teeth to make them whiter. I can just imagine a contemporary television commercial for sage: "It whitens and brightens teeth, washes away the grey, doesn't give you medicine breath, and cures neuritis, neuralgia and headache without even fizzing."

In cooking, sage may be used either fresh or dried. It dries easily if suspended in a light airy room out of direct sunlight. The dried leaves should be stored whole in air-tight containers and crushed to release their fragrance and flavor when used. Dried sage may be grated through a fine screen or crushed with a mortar and pestle for recipes calling for ground sage. Whether fresh or dried, sage's flavor is very strong and must be used with discretion.

Two teaspoons of dried, ground sage may be added to waffle or biscuit mix. Sage biscuits and waffles are delicious served with creamed chicken or lamb stew spooned over them. Another variation of sage biscuits can be made by rolling out the biscuit dough, buttering it and sprinkling it with sage, garlic, parsley and cheddar cheese. The dough should then be rolled and sliced in sections like one does when making cinnamon rolls. The biscuits should be baked in a moderate oven until they are lightly browned.

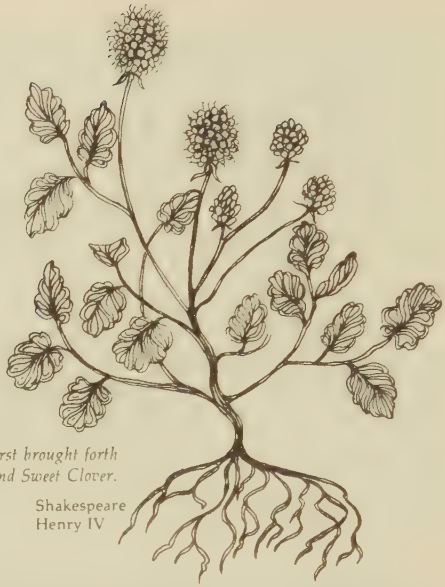
In Vermont we sometimes found a sage cheddar cheese that was delicious by itself or served as an appetizer spread. Simply adding your own sage to shredded cheddar cheese comes close to the Vermont variety.

Sometimes I begin to think that the flavor of sage is actually too strong for chicken and turkey stuffing and prefer to use it with stronger meats like pork and venison. Sage does help you digest fatty meats and that's one of the reasons it's good to rub it on a pork roast or tenderloin.

After dinner mints for the aid of digestion may also be made with sage leaves. Simply coat the leaves with beaten egg white and dredge with powdered sugar. After they have dried they're ready to serve.

Sage tea is a great after dinner drink. It is especially good served with honey and lemon. Vermonters sweeten their sage tea with maple syrup and it's almost a dessert in itself.

Salad Burnet



The even mead that erst brought forth
The freckled Cowslip, Burnet, and Sweet Clover.

Shakespeare
Henry IV

Salad burnet is an old-fashioned herb that has been neglected for many years, but one that is regaining popularity in herb, flower and vegetable gardens. It's an attractive plant with reddish-brown flowers and whorls of lacy green foliage that taste like cucumbers.

Salad burnet (*Sanguisorba minor*) is a very hardy perennial. It's one of the first herbs to come up in the spring, often cropping up under late spring snows. It is also one of the last herbs to die back in the winter. It's a sun lover that self-seeds readily. It will move into areas of hard rocky soil where other more tender plants would have a hard time surviving.

Burnet is easily propagated from seeds sown directly into the ground. To get a jump on the growing season it may be started earlier indoors and transplanted outside after the frost danger has passed in the spring. Salad burnet may also be propagated by taking root divisions from older, more established plants. In early fall I either divide some of my old outdoor plants or pot up a few of the new seedlings that have self sown around the old plants. These newly potted herbs seem to do best if I leave them outside in their new pots for three to four weeks before bringing them inside to winter.

Burnet is one of the herbs that I like to grow all year because it's so good fresh. It's a delicate herb that loses much of its cucumber-like flavor and dark green color when dried. Burnet retains its flavor when frozen, but I like to use it in green salads

and nothing is more unappetizing than a floppy, wilted piece of thawed burnet mixed with crisp greens. Fortunately if given plenty of light, burnet will thrive indoors. Because of its round, swirling growth habit it's especially attractive indoors in hanging baskets.

Outside, salad burnet grows close to the ground in rosettes that are eight to twelve inches high and one and one-half to two feet across. Rounded, toothed leaflets appear in opposite pairs along the leaf stalks. The flower stems grow upright from the middle of the rosette. They will often reach heights of two feet, bearing clusters of brownish-red, thimble-shaped flowers. These hot and spicy flowers are sometimes added to salads. In most culinary instances only the leaves are used, and then only the newest, most tender ones. If the flower heads are removed and the plants kept trimmed to six inches they will continually give a supply of the best tasting young shoots for all your culinary needs.

Another burnet, *Sanguisorba officinalis*, is better known as "great burnet." It reaches heights of three feet and bears dark purple flowers. It has a much stronger flavor than salad burnet and is too much for my taste buds.

There is also a third burnet known as *Pimpinella saxifraga*. Unlike the other two, *Pimpinella* is of the Umbelliferae Family. *Pimpinella* is sometimes used as a salad plant and when infused with water makes a good gargle for sore throats. In the past, its seeds have been sugar coated and used in desserts and confections.

Salad burnet (*Sanguisorba minor*) grows naturally all over Europe and was originally cultivated as a medicinal plant. Pliny thought that it would protect people from the plague and other contagious diseases if they drank it in an infusion flavored with honey. Other herbalists felt that simply holding burnet in your hand would afford you some protection. The Tudors used it to cure gout and rheumatism. And Sir Francis Bacon wrote that it should be planted along walkways with water mint and thyme to perfume the air with its cool, cucumber-like fragrance whenever anyone stepped on it.

Salad burnet is sometimes referred to as *Poterium sanguisorba*. *Poterium* is from the Greek word for goblet, alluding to the herb's use in tankards of wine and beer. Gerard wrote that salad burnet made the heart and head glad and merry. I wonder if he was right in his assumption that it was the burnet and not the beer.

Sanguisorba comes from the Latin words *sanguis* ("blood") and *sobere* ("stopping"). Herbal doctors claimed that it would slow the flow of blood in the small veins. There is a famous story in which King Chaba of Hungary used burnet to help heal the wounds of 15,000 soldiers after a great battle. In Europe it grew so profusely that it was often found naturalized on the battlefields. Soldiers of the American Revolutionary War drank teas made from salad burnet or the native *Ceanothus americanus* the night before going into battle. They believed the properties in these plants would help clot their blood if they were wounded the next day.

In China herbal medicine is still widely practiced. Today the Chinese use burnet as a styptic and a plaster for wounds.

Salad burnet can be used in any dish that would be enhanced by a mild cucumber flavor. Cucumbers don't agree with some people, and salad burnet can give the same flavor without any after-effects.

I like to add handfuls of burnet to salad, using it as another green. It is especially good in salad dressings with a cream base. A good buttermilk dressing can be made with salad burnet. Beat one cup mayonnaise into one cup buttermilk with a wire whip. To the mayonnaise and buttermilk mixture add two tablespoons freshly minced burnet, two tablespoons freshly chopped parsley, one tablespoon minced onion, one minced garlic clove, one-half teaspoon each of freshly minced basil, rosemary, and savory, and one-fourth teaspoon dried oregano. Stir in one-half cup of crumbled Roquefort cheese and chill thoroughly before serving. This dressing is delicious on tomatoes or any fresh salad greens.

Burnet vinegar can be made by adding salad burnet to any white vinegar and letting it age for a few weeks. Another interesting herb vinegar can be made by combining dill and basil with the burnet before you add the vinegar. Add a little of this herb vinegar to vegetable juice cocktails, bloody marys or tomato juice. These drinks can also be enhanced by adding a few sprigs of burnet for a garnish, or you can mash the burnet leaves and add their juice to the beverages.

Herb butter made with three tablespoons freshly minced burnet, one tablespoon freshly minced chives and one-fourth pound of soft butter is a delicious spread for vegetables. Egg salad and tuna salad are better if you add a little burnet. Its cucumber-like flavor is good with cream cheese or cottage cheese. Mixed with sour cream, it's even good served over cucumbers themselves.

The *fines herbes* combination known as *ravigote* is a classic herb mixture of chives, chervil, tarragon and burnet. It is used on meat, poultry, fish and vegetables. Another herb combination including parsley, burnet and chives can be used in omelets.

Burnet can be added at the last moment to any hot cream soup. It is especially good in cream of mushroom and cream of chicken soups. Try it as a garnish on cold cucumber mint soup. Gazpacho, a chilled spicy tomato soup, usually has diced cucumbers added to it. If cucumbers bother you try adding minced burnet instead.

Gazpacho

4 cups diced tomato
1½ cups chopped green pepper
3/4 cup finely chopped green onion
2 garlic cloves minced
2 cups beef bouillon
1/2 cup basil vinegar
1/4 cup olive oil
1 tablespoon salt
freshly ground black pepper
1 tablespoon freshly minced salad burnet

Combine all ingredients except the salad burnet. Chill for at least 2 hours. Stir frequently. Garnish with salad burnet just before serving. Serves 6.

Santolina

Santolina comes in two distinct varieties: *Santolina chamaecyparissus* is silver-grey, and *Santolina viridis* is bright green. Both of these plants are excellent in formal herb gardens as they can be pruned or shaped to almost any dimensions. They are favorites for knot gardens where they look like intertwining ribbons of grey and green.

Plants grown for the knot garden should be pruned early to keep them full and bushy. If you let Santolina get to flowering size and then shear it off, you're often left with bare stems. For compact lines in a knot garden plants must be clipped every three to four weeks in the summer. This will keep the lines sharp and clear while maintaining leafy plants.

Santolina chamaecyparissus is also a favorite plant for grey gardens. These gardens are formed with different varieties of grey plants like the various artemisias, lamb's ear and the grey

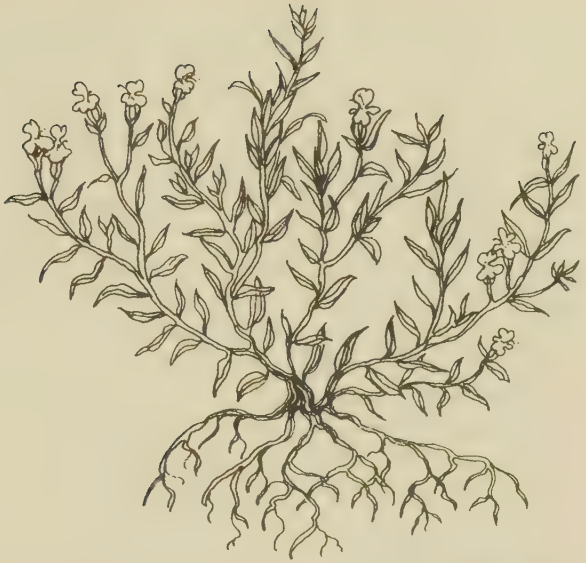
lavenders. Grey gardens are beautiful in the daytime, but are especially effective at night when the full moon is shining on them.

If left unpruned both Santolinas will bloom. They produce attractive yellow button flowers that dry well for fall arrangements.

Santolina is often referred to as "lavender cotton" or "poor man's lavender." It can be used in place of lavender in sachets and potpourris, but the fragrance is much stronger and some people find it objectionable. Santolina is often used in linen closets, but more as a moth repellent than as a scenting ingredient.

Santolinas are listed as tender perennials but I've never had them winter kill even in dry, unprotected areas. They do best in full sun and grow most quickly in a porous well-drained soil.

In a knot garden, plants of Santolina should be spaced four to six inches apart. For a knot garden of any size this type of spacing would require several plants. Luckily Santolina roots easily and quickly. Stem cuttings should be placed in moist sand, perlite or vermiculite. Dusting the cut end with a rooting hormone will speed the development of new roots. As soon as the roots are well established these plants can be put outside to form the intertwining ribbons of your chosen knot pattern.



Savory

Whenever anyone mentions savory, my mind immediately plays an association game and says, "the bean herb." I don't cook beans every night (much to my husband's dismay), and my savory plants were getting larger and larger just waiting to be used. Finally I began to experiment with savory, and found that I could use it in almost anything. Whenever I'm cooking and a dish needs "just a little something else," I've found that a pinch or two of savory is often the right touch.

There are several different species of savory that all belong to the genus *Satureja*. The most commonly found savory is *Satureja hortensis*, better known as summer savory. Of all the savories, summer has the most delicate flavor. It is an annual that grows up to eighteen inches in height on hairy and somewhat scraggly stems. The leaves are soft and almost succulent, one-half to one and one-half inches long. Plants usually bloom in July with flowers ranging from white to pink through lavender. The flowers grow in clusters between the leaf axels of the plants, sometimes with as many as five blossoms to a cluster. Savory's flavor is best before the plants flower, and the young tips of the plants have the most tender leaves. If you use your savory often and keep pinching off the tender, young shoots its blossoming period will be delayed and you can enjoy it for a longer period of time. Summer savory may be propagated from cuttings, but it seeds so easily that it is generally grown that way. Seeds germinate in two to three weeks.

Winter savory, *Satureja montana*, is a perennial with stiff and shiny dark green leaves that grow on woody, six to twelve inch stems. Its flavor is stronger and sharper than that of summer savory. You'll need less winter savory than summer to flavor the same dish. Use it sparingly at first until you determine how much savory is right for your taste. Winter savory may be propagated from seeds, cuttings, root divisions or by ground layering. Winter savory is very hardy and will even stay evergreen in milder climates. *Satureja montana 'procumbens'* is a six inch tall, trailing variety of winter savory. It's a pungent ground cover that will cascade over rocks in a perennial garden or grow in spaces between cracks in a concrete, brick or rock wall.

All the savories thrive on full sun whether they are grown indoors or outside. Their roots generally spread laterally taking their nourishment from the first few inches of the soil. Peat moss, compost and well-rotted manure will condition the top soil layer, and extra sand will give it the drainage all the savories seem to need. Both winter and summer savory will grow indoors. Summer savory tends to go to seed quickly, but successive sowing of seeds every three to four weeks will keep you in fresh summer savory all season. When grown inside, the leaves of winter savory become more succulent and supple and their flavor is often milder. Savories will trail nicely out of hanging baskets when grown in sunny windows. Fertilize your indoor savories once every four to six weeks and water them just as the soil dries. They'll benefit from increased humidity indoors, so group them with other plants or put them on pebble trays filled with water. Savories hate to have wet feet so take care to keep the water below the surface of the pebbles, not up around the bottom of the pots.

Savories may be started indoors in early spring, then transplanted into the outdoor garden when the danger of frost has passed. They may also be sown directly into the outdoor garden in late spring. When the seedlings are two inches high thin them six to eight inches apart. The seedlings that you thin out are excellent in fresh green salads. Savories are good bean companions both in the garden and in the cooking pot. In Switzerland savory is known as *Bohnenkraut*, literally "the herb of the string bean." Savory does enhance the flavor of all beans when they're cooked together, and it improves both growth and flavor when they are grown together. When interplanted with beans it will also discourage the Mexican bean beetle. Companion planters find that onions grow better if they have savory for a neighbor,

and beans, onions and savory combine well in the soup pot too. (See page **44**.)

Virgil extolled the virtues of savory. He was a beekeeper as well as a poet, and he thought the best honey came from bees that had easy access to savory plants. In Virgil's day, putting savory compresses on wasp or bee stings to relieve the pain was common practice. The cure and the cause were conveniently close together. Ancient Egyptians used savory in their love potions. In Europe savory was used to aid digestions, cheer the spirit and stop any ringing in the ears. Culpepper valued savory as a medicine that would cure almost any ailment. He wrote of savory, "Keep it dry by you all the year, if you love yourself and your ease."

Savory may be used in cooking either fresh or dried. Because of the nature of their leaves summer savory dries more quickly and easily than winter savory. For the best dried savory, harvest the plants before they flower. Tie sprigs in bunches and suspend them in an airy room or dry them in a 150° oven. Strip the leaves from the stems and store them in air-tight containers. Savory may also be preserved by freezing. Simply place individual servings in small plastic bags, label and freeze. No blanching is necessary. When using fresh savory, pick only the tender tips for best flavor. Remove the leaves from the stems if you plan to leave the herb in the dish that you are cooking. Whole sprigs may be added to a dish but they should be removed just before the dish is served.

During the Middle Ages, savory was added to cakes, pies and puddings to give them a spicy flavor. Today it is mainly noted for the flavor boost it gives to beans of all kinds. Lima beans, string beans, soybeans, lentils, fava and navy beans are just a few of the beans savory enhances. A fresh sprig of savory should always be added to the water when cooking those first new green beans of summer. Three bean salad is good with savory no matter which three beans you combine.

I worked in a wonderful restaurant in Middlebury, Vermont, where they served condiments in buckets attached to old yarn winders. The winders had to be pushed between aisles with bus boys, waiters and waitresses going every which way. (I have recurrent nightmares of every bucket on the winder ending up in a customer's lap.) In the buckets, between the mustard pickles and the watermelon rind, were buckets of savory beans that everyone loved. We made them by the gallon, and though I've changed the recipe a little over the years they're still a tasty relish. After soaking navy beans overnight, we'd cook them till they

were not quite done. Then we'd put them in a crock layered with onions and a few minced garlic cloves and a sprinkling of savory. Over this we'd pour three parts oil to one part vinegar, a sprinkle of sugar, salt and freshly ground black peppercorns. We'd refrigerate the beans, stirring them occasionally. The longer they marinated in the vinegar and oil the better they tasted.

Garnish pea soup or fish chowder with a few fresh savory leaves. Stir in one-quarter teaspoon dried savory to every pound of ground beef before you make it into hamburger patties. Use it in meat loaf and meat balls. Instead of sage add summer savory to basil, parsley and thyme for poultry seasoning. Fresh savory is good in tossed green salad or mixed into a fresh vegetable salad. It is especially good with avocado, green peppers, asparagus, tomatoes, cauliflower and cabbage.

Deviled eggs may be made by combining the hard boiled yolks with mayonnaise, mustard, lemon juice, savory, salt and pepper. Minced fresh summer savory may be added to omelets or scrambled eggs.

Savory butter is made by blending one-half cup butter with one teaspoon savory. A teaspoon of parsley may also be added to give the butter a smoother flavor, or a teaspoon of mustard to make it spicier. Serve savory butter over bread or use it as a baste for hot vegetables or fish. Poached eggs are enhanced by savory and parsley butter.

Add savory to your favorite biscuits and then serve them with creamed chicken spooned over. Put savory in poultry stuffing or add it to bread crumbs for coating trout before frying.

Add sprigs of savory to tomato juice or a vegetable cocktail. Savory vinegar may be added to soups, stews and marinades. A few savory sprigs added to the water when you cook cabbage or turnips will improve their flavor and lessen their odor while they cook.

After you become familiar with savory I think you'll find that you can use it almost as freely as you would salt. In fact if you are on a salt free diet savory might just be the thing to enhance your favorite dishes (whether they include beans or not).

Sausage and Bean Soup

1 pound bulk pork sausage
1 8¼ ounce can Cannellini beans drained
1 8¼ ounce can garbanzo beans drained
1 8¼ ounce can kidney beans drained
1 1 pound 13 ounce can tomatoes

1 large onion sliced
1 teaspoon seasoning salt
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon pepper
1 teaspoon freshly minced parsley
1 minced garlic clove
1 quart water
1 *Bouquet Garni* of
  1 bay leaf
  2 sprigs of fresh thyme
  2 sprigs of fresh summer savory
2 potatoes diced
1 green pepper diced

In skillet cook pork sausage until brown. Drain off fat. In kettle combine beans, tomatoes, onion, seasoning salt, garlic salt, salt and pepper, parsley and water. Add the *bouquet garni* and the sausage and simmer for 1 and 1/2 hours covered. Add the potatoes and the green pepper and simmer for another half hour. Remove *bouquet garni* before serving. Great served with garlic bread.

Scented Geraniums

Brushing by a leaf of a rose-scented geranium always fills my mind with pleasant childhood memories. A scent can sometimes bring me total recall of a moment, complete with all the physical and emotional feelings of the time. As a child I always started slowly in the morning, and I would linger, drowsily, in our warm and sunny kitchen. There was one large eastern window with a wide sill that was perfect for plants. The scented geraniums grew on that sill in unruly profusion. They loved the light and responded with wild bursts of growth. Since then I've learned to pinch and prune them to keep them neat and bushy; but I'll never forget the pleasure they gave me as a child with their enthusiastic growth, fragrant foliage and small, delicate, pastel flowers.

Scented geraniums and the bedding annuals that we commonly call geraniums are all really of the genus *Pelargonium* and not the genus *Geranium* at all. True geraniums are vigorous and hardy herbaceous perennials with a long flowering period.

Pelargoniums are semi-woody and not hardy. *Pelargonium* comes from the Greek *pelargos* for stork, and alludes to the similarity between the plant's long seed vessel and a stork's bill. Here the common name has become quite acceptable. However, if you are trying to locate any of the 300 different varieties of scented geraniums you will probably have to know and use the true genus and species names.

The scented geraniums grew wild in South Africa and were first brought to Europe in the early 1600's. By 1652 The Dutch East India Company had established a trading post at Table Bay, and was busily sending pelargonium species to Holland where they were extensively hybridized.

They were grown during the 1700's for the perfume industry. Essential oils were removed from the green parts of the plant through distillation. It takes one ton of green material to produce about two and one-half pounds of essence.

Pelargoniums reached their heyday during the Victorian era. At that time everyone had a Boston fern on a stand flanked by several scented geraniums. Jars of potpourri made from various scented geranium leaves always had their place on a gilt edged glass table. The potpourris filled the air with a sweet rose smell whenever they were opened. Folk remedies abounded at this time; one common practice was to bathe the head in scented geranium vinegar to cure headaches.

During World War I the cultivation of ornamental plants in greenhouses was banned because of the fuel shortage and many

of the pelargonium hybrids were lost. After World War II the interest in these plants was rekindled and a few growers began again to grow and hybridize them.

Scented geraniums may be grown outside in the ground, but will only winter over in very mild climates. They make excellent house plants and are therefore usually grown in pots. They will thrive when placed outside in the summer, but they must be brought inside for the winter.

Pelargoniums do well in a potting soil with a pH between six and seven. Peat moss, sand and vermiculite or perlite should be added to top soil to give them a good balanced and well-drained soil. They should be grown in at least four hours of direct sun a day and watered thoroughly when the soil dries to the touch. Scented geraniums grown in sunny windows will emit their fragrance without being touched just when the sun warms them. Fertilizing with a 15-30-15 house plant fertilizer once a month enhances their growth and stimulates them to bloom.

Scented geraniums can be propagated by seed. However the plants tend to hybridize and therefore may not breed true. Stem cuttings will assure you of identical plant specimens. Cuttings should be three to four inches long, and they should be taken from the newest growth with a sharp knife. They must be of the main stem, not simply a leaf or leaf stem. Leaves should be removed from the bottom quarter of the cutting and it should then be treated with a root stimulating hormone. Place the cuttings in moist sand or vermiculite. If your house is dry you may have to tent your cuttings with clear plastic to increase the humidity around them. Make sure you leave the tent open at the ends for good air circulation.

Geraniums are usually categorized by growers into rose, lemon, fruit, spice, mint, pine or pungent scents. The rose scented varieties are the easiest to obtain, and the most popular ones for cooking. Pelargonium graveolens, known as "Attar of Roses," is an old fashioned, true rose with delicate lavender blossoms. The plant becomes quite tall with handsome lobed ruffled leaves. The "Snowflake" variety of *Pelargonium graveolens* has white flecks on round, light green leaves. Its lavender flowers are streaked with purple and it has a pungent, minty rose odor. "Lady Plymouth" has small, variegated, finely cut leaves that may even be tinged with pink. It has small orchid flowers and a definite rose scent. The "Dr. Livingstone," commonly called "Skeleton Rose Geranium," has deeply cut, fernlike leaves with a lemon rose scent.

My favorite scented geranium is a variegated "Prince Rupert." We started one out as several small cuttings planted together and transplanted it yearly into a larger pot. When it finally reached a twelve inch size we decided to leave it alone and it has been growing happily for years. We've pruned it on several occasions to keep it dense and bushy and we always use the pruned pieces for cuttings. Its small white-edged leaves have a strong, clean, lemon scent. You may find it listed under the name "French Lace." We use it as a garnish for its lemon scent and decorative foliage.

There are numerous varieties of fruit and spice scented geraniums. They include mimics of apple, apricot, coconut, ginger, lime, nutmeg, orange and strawberry.

Pelargonium tomentosum has small delicate white flowers and large, velvety, heart shaped leaves that smell like peppermint. *Pelargonium denticulatum* has narrow, fern-like leaves that have an intense pine fragrance.

"Clorinda" is the most attractive of the pungent scented geraniums. Some say the fragrance is like eucalpytus. It has very showy flowers for a scented geranium: large rosy pink blooms with dark carmine markings.

All the scented geraniums may be used in potpourris. Their leaves seem to retain their fragrance for years with or without a fixative. Distilled essence from scented geranium leaves is still used by the perfume industry. It's a common ingredient in herbal soaps and bath oils. A few leaves tied in a cheesecloth bag add a refreshing fragrance to a hot bath.

Scented geranium leaves can be mixed with other herbs, like the mints, to make a refreshing tea. Orange or apple geranium leaves mixed with a few cloves, a little grated orange rind and regular tea is delicious served hot. A simple syrup that is good for sweetening tea or fruit punches can be made by boiling one cup of sugar and one cup of geranium leaves in a cup of water. Strain the leaves from the syrup before using it.

Lemon and lime scented geranium leaves are excellent in fruit punches. They may be floated on top of the punch or frozen in ice cubes and added later.

Geranium sugar is an interesting addition to any pantry. You can make it by layering rose geranium leaves with granulated sugar and letting it "steep" for two to three weeks. Use the leaves in fruit cups, custards or puddings. Use the sugar in a recipe that calls for regular sugar; it's especially good sprinkled over strawberries or cookies, or used to make vanilla icing.

When you're making a white cake, place several whole geranium leaves on the bottom of the pan. Pour the cake mix over the leaves and bake. After cooling, invert the cake pan so the cake comes out with the geranium leaves on top. Sprinkle the cake surface with powdered sugar then remove the geranium leaves. The pattern formed by the leaf shapes adds a decorative touch, and the slight geranium flavor and scent makes a plain white cake something special.

Rose geranium jelly can be made by pouring hot apple jelly over a rose scented geranium leaf. Keep the leaves in the jelly jar so you can quickly identify the contents without breaking the seal. Rose geranium jelly is good when spread over baked ham, pork roast, roast leg of lamb or broiled chicken during the last few minutes of cooking. Geranium leaves can also be chopped fine and added to cream cheese for a sandwich spread.

If you decide to grow any of the hundreds of scented geranium varieties take my advice and put them in a well travelled area. They'll delight everyone passing by with their pleasantly scented foliage and delicate blossoms.

Sweet Woodruff

Sweet woodruff (*Asperula odorata*) is one of the few herbs that thrives in the shade. It is commonly found growing wild in the woodlands of Europe where it enjoys filtered light and a moist, cool soil under the trees. It is a perennial ground cover plant that grows six to twelves inches tall and spreads by above-ground stolons.

Woodruff's narrow pointed leaves are shiny and dark green and grow in successive whorls of six to eight leaves along tiny square stems. Multiple stems of each plant will form a fairly dense mat if the plants are kept sufficiently moist. Small, white, four-petaled flowers bloom in loose branching cymes from May to June. These blossoms may be used to accent spring bridal bouquets. These flowers are followed by fruits that are covered with hairy bristles. These bristles attach themselves to the coats of any animals feeding close by for effective seed dispersal.

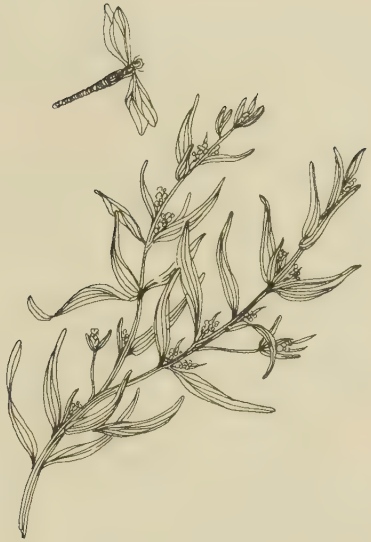
Woodruff seeds are slow to germinate, but the plant is readily propagated by tip cuttings rooted in moist sand, perlite or vermiculite. The roots of established plants may also be divided to produce healthy new plants.

Woodruff flowers are fragrant, but the green leaves have no smell unless they are crushed. When dried however, the leaves emit the aroma of new-mown hay. This lovely fragrance led to woodruff's use for stuffing mattresses and scented pillows in early America. Dried woodruff gives a woodland fragrance to potpourris and sachets. Sprigs hung in closets or placed in trunks will keep the contents from smelling musty. A few dried sprigs are often used to keep old books in enclosed cases smelling fresh and clean.

In Germany the wines from the grapes grown along the Rhine River are often flavored with fresh sprigs of sweet woodruff. This wine is usually referred to as May Wine and is traditionally imbibed on May first. In our cold climate, if the woodruff has grown enough to harvest by the end of April, we cut several handfuls and put them in a bottle of any good, dry white wine. We let the herb and wine steep overnight and then strain out all the spent woodruff. After the wine has been sufficiently chilled we garnish it with fresh woodruff sprigs and blossoms and a few fresh strawberries before serving. Because of our late springs our woodruff usually isn't up until May, so our tradition is to have our May wine on June first.

Woodruff may also be used to flavor champagne and cognac. It adds a unique flavor to lemonade, herbal teas or any fruit punch. Crush a fresh leaf in the bottom of a fruit cup and garnish that same cup with woodruff blossoms or pour a few drops of May Wine over the fruit. Woodruff is especially good in fruit cups that contain fresh strawberries or raspberries.

Tarragon



Tarragon (*Artemisia dracunculus*) is a hardy perennial whose leaves have a subtle anise flavor that compliments sauces, salads, beef, poultry, game, eggs and vegetables. It is one of the essential herbs in French cooking, indispensable in *sauce Bearnaise*.

My first introduction to growing tarragon was a total disaster. I had used and enjoyed dried tarragon but had never tasted fresh tarragon until one summer when a friend picked some out of her garden and added it to our dinner salad. The flavor of the fresh tarragon was totally different from that of the dried. It tasted so much better to me that I immediately purchased a plant of my own and planted it outside in a sunny spot. It sprawled out, went to seed and started coming up everywhere, in my flower pots, garden plots . . . even my children's sandbox. The leaves were rounder, thicker and longer than the slender, dark green leaves I remembered in the salad. Even more discouraging than the appearance and rank growth habits of this new tarragon was its aroma. My tarragon smelled of little more than dead grass with only a hint of the strong, yet sweet, combination of camphor and licorice that I remembered in that summer salad. I had learned the hard way that there are two forms of tarragon.

The inferior Russian tarragon that I had purchased is a native of Siberia and is often readily available as it goes to seed and quickly

reproduces itself. The other tarragon, known commonly as German or French tarragon, rarely produces viable seed. Both forms develop small, whitish-green to yellow, globular flowers that bloom in July and August, but the flowers of French tarragon are usually sterile.

Neither the Russian nor the French tarragon has a separate specific name to distinguish it so you must be careful when purchasing a plant. As young seedlings the two tarragons look very much alike, but the French has its characteristic pungent odor from the beginning.

French tarragon grows into a handsome shrub-like perennial. The main stalks become woody and the whole plant may reach heights of two and one-half to three feet. It produces a graceful bush of slender stalks that may need to be staked if not protected from strong winds. Care must be taken when weeding or hoeing around the plant as it forms a shallow, lateral root system that may be easily damaged. Tarragon has been given the common name, "The Little Dragon" as its roots form small brown coils that resemble tiny serpents or dragons.

Mulching during the winter with hay, straw, leaves or grass clippings will help guard the shallow roots from excessive moisture loss. Winter watering, especially during long periods of unseasonably warm dry weather will improve the chances of tarragon's survival.

Tarragon is best grown outdoors in a well-drained, porous soil in a sunny location. It may be propagated by rooting new tip cuttings in moist sand or vermiculite, or by root divisions in the spring. Mature plants should be divided every three or four years to keep the plants healthy and attractive.

An ancient herbalist, who wasn't a botanist, claimed that:

> . . . the seed of flax put into a radish root or a sea onion,
> and being thus set, doth bring forth this herb tarragon.

Hippocrates used tarragon as one of his "simples" or one-remedy herbs. Pilgrims during the Middle Ages tucked sprigs of tarragon into their shoes thinking it would increase their physical stamina. Herbalists claimed tarragon would alleviate toothaches if held between the teeth, and would remove the venom of mad dog bites if held on the wound.

Today tarragon is of little value in the medicinal world but it is indispensable to the good cook. It has a distinctive flavor and must therefore be used with discretion so that it enhances other flavors instead of masking them.

Tarragon is excellent with poultry. It may be placed inside turkey or duck before roasting. Chicken will take on a distinctive flavor if minced tarragon is sprinkled on it before baking or broiling. Include tarragon in the flour mixture for coating chicken before frying. Float tarragon sprigs in bowls of chicken soup.

Small amounts of tarragon will add a new flavor to your favorite coleslaw or potato salad recipes. It will liven up an omelet or scrambled eggs. It's great in white sauce served over poached eggs or in any kind of cream sauce for meats and vegetables.

Tarragon herb butter may be made with one-half cup butter, one-half teaspoon freshly minced tarragon leaves and one-half teaspoon chopped parsley leaves. It is excellent for seasoning vegetables like artichokes and asparagus, and goes well with grilled fish, especially salmon.

Tarragon gives a subtle flavor to cream cheese dips. Dissolve one chicken bouillon cube in one tablespoon of hot water. Stir the dissolved bouillon plus five tablespoons of milk into eight ounces of softened cream cheese. Blend one teaspoon of dried marjoram, one-half teaspoon freshly minced tarragon, one-half teaspoon freshly minced chervil, one teaspoon minced chives and one-half cup crab meat into the cheese mixture. After the mixture is chilled it is excellent with spring vegetables and crackers or as a filling for marinated mushrooms.

Tarragon is difficult to grow indoors during the winter and, unfortunately, much of its distinctive flavor is lost if it is dried for winter use. I solve this problem by making lots of tarragon vinegar during the summer, leaving the tarragon sprigs in the vinegar bottles. When a recipe calls for fresh tarragon, I simply remove the sprigs from the vinegar bottle, rinse them well and use them just as though I'd picked them fresh from my garden.

I know a bank where the wild
Thyme grows.
Shakespeare
Midsummer Night's Dream

Thyme

There are over one hundred species in the genus *Thymus*. They range in heights from the one-half inch creeping ground covers to the twelve inch upright varieties. Their flowers range from white to light pink to deep purple, and their leaves may be silver, green, gold or grey. Thymes all have that characteristic warm and pungent fragrance that make them a must in *bouquet garni*, clam chowders, lamb stews, turkey stuffing and tomato dishes.

Thymus vulgaris, known as English or common thyme, is normally regarded as the most useful culinary variety. It is a hardy perennial reaching heights of eight inches during the growing season. Common thyme has small greenish-grey leaves that are one-eighth inch long and one-sixteenth inch wide. Its flowers are light purple and bloom in showy, terminal clusters from May through August. French thyme is another culinary favorite. It grows just like English thyme but its leaves are narrower, greyer and more pointed. Lemon thyme, *Thymus citriodorus*, has a distinctive lemon fragrance that makes it a must of herb teas and lemon flavored cookies and desserts. Golden thyme, *Thymus vulgaris 'Aureus'*, and silver thyme, *Thymus vulgaris 'Argenteus'*, are often grown as ornamentals for their beautiful variegated foliage as well as their fragrance. Wooly thyme, *Thymus pseudolanuginosis*, is a grey, furry-like ground cover thyme that rarely reaches more than an inch in height. *Thymus serphyllum* and *Thymus pseudolanuginosis*, wild thyme, are excellent ground covers that may be grown between stepping stones. They with-

stand a fair amount of traffic and release a pleasant fragrance whenever anyone steps on them. There are several thymes that mimic other fragrances and tastes. Included in these are caraway thyme, orange thyme, coconut thyme and oregano thyme.

None of the thymes are too particular about their growing conditions and will thrive outside in any porous, well-drained soil and sunny location. English or French thyme seem to be the best varieties to grow indoors on a sunny windowsill. Use a porous potting soil and make sure the pot has a good drain hole as all the thymes hate to have their roots in standing water.

At the Bodleian Library in Oxford, England, there is a seventeenth century recipe for casting spells that enable one to see fairies. To make the magic potion for the spell, one must gather the tops of wild thyme from the side of a hill where fairies have often been seen. In "A Midsummer Night's Dream" Shakespeare's fairy queen, Titania, had a sweet-scented carpet of wild thyme where she could sleep and dream.

Ancient Greek historians wrote that one could hear Mount Hymettus from miles away. Actually what they were hearing was the hum of the bees that were collecting nectar from the millions of thyme blossoms that covered the mountain. The honey from that area was unique and delicious and became a highly prized delicacy.

Some authorities feel that the Greek word for thyme is derived from a word that meant to fumigate. Thyme was used as an incense, and Pliny wrote that burning it would put all venomous creatures to flight. As a fumigant thyme was also used as a strewing herb on the floors of churches and public buildings to mask the odors caused by the poor sanitary conditions of the time.

Other authorities claim that thyme comes from the Greek word *thumus*, meaning courage. Through the ages thyme has symbolized bravery, and during the days of chivalry ladies embroidered scarves for their knights with the motif of a bee hovering over a blooming sprig of thyme. Girls wore corsages of thyme if they were available and boys, if they drank enough thyme tea, had the courage to pursue them.

Hippocrates taught the Romans to use thyme oil and thyme honey for coughs and colds, and suggested rubbing thyme oil on the forehead to cure fainting spells, sleeplessness and headaches. Seventeenth century physicians used thyme tea for nervous disorders and for dispelling nightmares. Even today cymene, thymene and thymol are extracted from thyme plants and used in many pharmaceutical preparations.

Euell Gibbons recommended wild thyme tea, made with a teaspoonful of the herb to a cupful of boiling water, as a hangover remedy. He claimed that it helps ease the headache, nervousness and queasy stomach that often comes from overindulging, punning that one should have wild thyme tea after a wild time.

Thyme may be used either fresh or dried. It dries easily when hung in a warm, shady place. After drying, rub the stems between your hands and the leaves will easily fall away. Store the dried leaves in air-tight containers. If you use fresh thyme remember to use only the leaves, never the stems. Thyme has a fairly strong flavor, fresh or dried, and should be used sparingly until you get a feel for what's right for your taste buds.

Thyme is a traditional addition to clam chowder and is an excellent addition to any cream soup. It's great when rubbed on pork roast or leg of lamb. The marinade for lamb shish kabobs might include thyme. Grape jelly made with thyme is a wonderful addition to any lamb or pork dish. Thyme butter may be used on beans, beets, carrots, onions or potatoes. Thyme butter may itself be enhanced by the addition of tarragon and parsley.

In August, when squash is in abundance, thyme is also happily at its peak. I use thyme butter on sauteed summer squash on Monday, rosemary butter on zucchini on Tuesday, sage and bacon butter on acorn squash on Wednesday and on through the week til my family cries, "Please, no more squash!"

This year we tried the new vegetable spaghetti squash. It's a large cream colored variety that may be found in the local grocery stores in August and September. It should be steamed for one hour or until it is easily pierced with a fork. After steaming, cut the squash in half, remove the seeds and pull out the pulp. It will come out in long spaghetti-like strands. When topped with sour cream that has been mixed with thyme, basil, chives and parsley, it's a real treat. We simply call it vegetable spaghetti at our house because I haven't the nerve to tell my family that it's just another type of squash.

Violets

No one can resist the beautiful purple, blue, yellow or white blossoms, and green, heart-shaped leaves of violets gone wild in a sheltered, shady spot. Ours bloom right through those late, heavy spring snows. They reproduce readily by seed and by runners. If they get into your rich garden soil they'll try to take

over everything in sight. Violets will grow even on fairly steep, shaded northern slopes. Naturalize them under trees if you're having trouble getting something to grow there, but don't be surprised if they start creeping into your lawn too. Violets are, however, easy to control. With care, they won't become nuisance plants, and you can maintain them as beautiful and rewarding harbingers of spring.

Viola odorata, commonly known as sweet violet, transplants easily at almost any time of the year. It may also be propagated

To throw a perfume on the violet
Is wasteful and ridiculous excess.
Shakespeare
King John

from seed sown directly into the garden in a moist, shady location.

Jelly made with blue violets doesn't taste like much more than a sugar and water syrup, but the color is beautiful. Use it to garnish cakes and cookies.

Blossoms of violets may be candied by dipping them into beaten egg white, sprinkling them with fine granulated sugar and allowing them to dry till crisp. Use these candied violets to decorate birthday cakes and ice cream desserts.

Both the leaves and the blossoms of violets are high in vitamins A and C. Add the new green leaves to lettuce salads. They are slightly peppery so use them sparingly. Boiled leaves taste like cooked spinach and are good when garnished with vinegar, bacon bits and chopped hard-boiled egg. A few violet blossoms turn an ordinary salad into something exotic. Float the blossoms in punches and fruit drinks and dry them for color in your potpourris.

Speak not—whisper not;
Here bloweth thyme and bergamot
Softly on the evening hour,
Secret herbs their spices shower
Dark-spiked rosemary and myrrh,
Lean stalked, purple lavender;
Hides within the bosom too,
All her sorrows, bitter rue.

Walter De La Mare
from *The Sunken Garden*

Carol Riggs is an avid gardener and cook. She and her husband own a florist and greenhouse in Boulder, Colorado where they grow and sell over 100 different varieties of herbs as well as a wide selection of other indoor and outdoor plants. With their three children they maintain several herb, flower and vegetable gardens.

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ISBN 0-87364-153-1