

Subject: Culinary herbFAQ (v. 1. 14) Part 3/7

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Organization: ...ei meill' oo...

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2.10 Feverfew and Pyrethrum

Latin name:

Feverfew: *Tanacetum parthenium* (*Chrysanthemum cinerariifolium*)

Pyrethrum: *Tanacetum cinerariifolium*

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2.10.1 Growing feverfew - it does not seem to repel bees.

>I bought a feverfew plant today with high hopes of introducing it to my herb garden. Now I have read (of course I couldn't research before making my purchase) that bees can't stand the smell of feverfew and won't come near a garden with feverfew in it!

From: James Michael Kocher <jk1n+@andrew.cmu.edu>

I watched with delight last evening as the bees visited the heavy blossoms of my foxglove, which are growing right next to feverfew. I have never noticed a lack of bees, and feverfew grows all over my garden.

From Rene Burrough <100735.543@compuserve.com>:

Feverfew is one of my favorite garden herbs, and I let it self seed gloriously. I came about having it in my garden as a total mistake. I thought I was planting an insecticide. It's not, and I'd like to give you the benefit of my mistake because Feverfew does not contain pyrethrum -- the organic insecticide.

Certainly feverfew, *Tanacetum parthenium* (formerly *Chrysanthemum cinerariifolium*)) is a good companion plant in a vegetable garden. Because of the flat composite head, hover-flies are attracted to it. Hover-flies are invaluable for eating the larvae of aphids. Any kind of aphid. So feverfew does provide a way of eliminating insects.

But the actual insecticidal constituents, pyrethrum & cinerin, are found in *Tanacetum cinerariifolium*. Obviously, also a member of the Composite family. It has finely divided, pungent, grey-green leaves. White daisy flowers with yellow centers as does feverfew. I don't think *T. cinerariifolium* has single & double forms. Certainly there is not a golden leafed *T. cinerariifolium* as there is *T. parthenium* var. *Aureum*.

Pyrethrum, *Chrysanthemum cinerariifolium*, has a local name of Dalmatian Daisy. The leaf of the pyrethrum gives a feathery feeling to the whole plant while feverfew has a chunkier look to say nothing of seriously lobed, with scalloped edged leaves.

The leaves of *Tanacetum cinerariifolium* are concentrated closer to the ground -- giving a yarrowy kind of look to the base of the herb; while feverfew's leaves provide a bushier effect, and thus the flower heads themselves seem to be more part of the plant than above it as with the pyrethrum.

In the UK it is illegal to make homemade insecticides. In theory one could extract the juice from the plant to make an insecticidal spray. Legally, one can buy the powder which is mixed with water to form a spray; some folk believe it should first be mixed with alcohol and then diluted with water to activate the active principles of pyrethrum & cinerin. And some pyrethrum powders are sold in plastic puffer bottles so that a plant can be dusted with the dry powder.

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2.10.3 Using / preserving Feverfew

Have a look at the migraine / feverfew entries in the medicinal herbfaq.

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2.11 Tarragon

Latin name:

French tarragon: *Artemisia dracunculus* var. *sativa*

Russian tarragon: *Artemisia dracunculus* var. *inodora*

Mexican tarragon / Mexican Mint Marigold: *Tagetes lucida*. See 2.38.

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2.11.1 Growing tarragon

>... can't grow tarragon in East Texas...

From: southsky@maui.net (Rick Giese)

Texas in summer is probably too hot for French Tarragon. You might experiment with a fall planting. French Tarragon is the preferred type for cooking, and will not grow from seed.

From: Lawrence.H.Smith@williams.edu (Lawrence H Smith):

French Tarragon may not be frost hardy in Finland, but in milder climes, particularly with a bit of mulch, it should be. It can also be potted for the winter. It likes full sun (though again, I'm not in Texas, so I can't say for there). Give it any sort of reasonable soil (it's not overly picky). The major growing tip is to divide it frequently (every 2-3 years), or it becomes rootbound. So keep giving plants away to your friends once you have enough for your own use...

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2.11.2 Harvesting tarragon

From: Lawrence.H.Smith@williams.edu (Lawrence H Smith):

While it's growing, the best bet is to just harvest fresh whatever you need for today by picking off leaves or tips of branches with multiple leaves.

For collecting a lot (drying, vinegar, etc.) you can cut back all the branches by about 2/3rds, whereupon you should leave them for 8 weeks before doing so again, supposedly. Personally, I only do a major cutback of this sort when clearing out before frost, so the time between cuttings is just what some book said, not experience.

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2.11.3 Using / preserving tarragon

From: mrooney@mrooney.pn.com (Michael Rooney)

Tarragon pesto with pecans is a pretty good way to save it.

From: HeK

Vinegar recipe, anyone? That IS the classic way to preserve tarragon. You can also dry it or freeze it or freeze it in oil.

From: Lawrence.H.Smith@williams.edu (Lawrence H Smith):

Vinegar recipe, if you like. Clean/sterilize a canning jar. Stuff with Tarragon. heat white vinegar (or wine vinegar) to/near boiling. Pour into jar, seal, put in dark place. Strain off into another jar at a date depending on your tarragon taste tolerance - 2-6 weeks, or leave it until used. Adjust amount stuffed & time to taste. A canning jar is used primarily to reduce the likelihood of the jar cracking when boiling vinegar is poured into it.

Tarragon dries well - ideally, hang the branches in a dark warm place (such as an attic, or in a paper bag), and then collect the leaves into a jar for storage when dry. It freezes alone with a lack of fuss that suggests that freezing in oil is probably not worth the bother. You can also make up a flavored oil in a similar fashion to the vinegar recipe, though boiling the oil would not be a good idea... (warming it a bit might help).

From: Donna Beach <phuyett@CCTR.UMKC.EDU>

Here's another tarragon recipe. I found it in *the Herb Book* by Boxer & Bick

Baked Eggs with Tarragon

3 sprigs tarragon
2/3 cup light cream
sea salt & fresh black pepper
4 large eggs

Strip one teas of the best tarragon leaves from the sprigs and chop them. Put the rest in a small pan with the cream and bring to a boil. Remove from heat, cover the pan, and leave for 20 minutes. Strain the cream and add salt and pepper to taste. Break each egg into a buttered individual baking dish and stand them in a roasting pan with enough hot water into to come halfway up the sides of the dishes.

Cook in a moderate oven 325 deg F until the whites are almost set. Pour a little cream over each one, just enough to cover the surface, then return to the oven for another 2 minutes. Sprinkle with the chopped tarragon and serve immediately.

This book--a nice coffee table book which offers tips on growing herbs and history of herbal lore--also includes a recipe for scrambled eggs with tarragon. Two tablespoons for eight eggs. You then serve the eggs on pumpnickel toast.

There's also a recipe for tarragon soup using a roux from chicken stock, cream, egg yolk, salt and pepper and fresh tarragon--about four cups of stock and six sprigs of tarragon. That one's easy enough to figure out on your own, and strict vegetarians would make adjustments for the egg and cream.

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2.11.4 Which tarragon do you have?

From: HeK

There are 2 kinds of true tarragon: *Artemisia dracunculus* var. *sativa* (French tarragon) and *Artemisia dracunculus* var. *inodora* (Russian tarragon). The French tarragon cannot be grown from seed, it's taste is finer but it isn't frosthardy. The Russian tarragon can be grown from seed, it's taste isn't so good but it will survive outdoors in Finland.

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2.12 Nasturtiums

Latin name: *Tropaeolum majus*.

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2.12.1 Growing Nasturtiums

From: Lawrence.H.Smith@williams.edu (Lawrence H Smith):
Not fussy for "growing at all", but do respond well to rich, loose, well-drained soil & compost, plus regular watering, for growing nice large plants. Differences with the same variety on different spots have been dramatic (plants & leaves 2-3 times larger on good spots). Hummingbirds like the flowers.

From: baker.325@magnus.acs.ohio-state.edu (gwen baker)
If they get aphids - usually after midsummer in zone 5 - simply spray with a dilute soap. Any kind will work. Then rinse the leaves well before use.

From: Lawrence.H.Smith@williams.edu (Lawrence H Smith) to above:
Never had much trouble from insects - have had some aphids, had some aphid damage, but it never amounted to anything worth bothering to control. Most bugs don't find nasturtiums that appealing.

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2.12.2 Harvesting nasturtiums

From: Lawrence.H.Smith@williams.edu (Lawrence H Smith):
I've had good results just picking leaves & flowers as needed for salad - once established, they produce right up until frost. You probably shouldn't harvest more than about 1/3 of the leaves from plants you intend to keep harvesting from.

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2.12.3 Using / preserving nasturtiums

From: baker.325@magnus.acs.ohio-state.edu (gwen baker)
Nasturtium leaf is wonderful in salad. Slightly bitter but refreshing. I don't think it preserves very well and should only be used fresh.

From: Lawrence.H.Smith@williams.edu (Lawrence H Smith):
Any sort of cress-ish or lettuce-ish use - they are a bit hot like cress. The flowers are edible as well, and make a nice garnish. Large leaves from plants in rich plots can be used for lettuce-like purposes in sandwiches (or hamburgers) - the smaller ones tend to slip out annoyingly. Flowers do well both in salads, and floating on cold soups. If you like nasturtiums, you can make them the bulk of a salad, with no need for other greens. Great for just eating in the garden. Have not tried preserving - I suppose you could blend up some nasturtium mush and freeze it for use in soup, but it's basically a fresh thing.

>...toss in a few nasturtium pods for false capers.
So are these before the bloom -- the buds? Or after the bloom -- seed pods?
Do you preserve them?

From: sniel sen@orednet.org (Susan L. Nielsen):

Pickled Nasturtium Pods or Seeds

After the blossoms fall, pick off the half-ripened Nasturtium seed pods. Continue as your crop develops to drop them into a boiled and strained mixture of:

1 quart white wine vinegar
2 teaspoons Pickling Salt
1 thinly sliced onion
1/2 teaspoon each allspice, mace and celery seed
3 peppercorns

Keep refrigerated and use as a variation for capers.

Taken from 'The Joy of Cooking', Irma S. Rombauer and Marion Rombauer Becker, Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., New York, 1975.

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2.12.4 What kinds of nasturtium are there?

From: Lawrence.H.Smith@williams.edu (Lawrence H Smith):

There's your basic nasturtium with green leaves & red & yellow & orange flowers, the same but with variegated leaves, and a variety with all red flowers and a "more compact" growth habit (cherry flowered, I think it's called). I think there is also a climbing variety, but I don't have any of those.

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2.13 Dill

Latin name: Anethum graveolens.

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2.13.1 Growing dill

From: kenneth@di.com.se (Kenneth Nilsson)

Here in Sweden dill is the most common herb and there are always discussions on why it is so difficult to grow. It always (?) dies when about 3" high and the 'story' here has it that dill is very susceptible to a root fungus. - By the way, you say "transplanted" dill into your garden. Does that mean you sow it indoors and plant it out? - The only solution for ME has been to sow/spread out the seeds from the mature dill flowers in fall. I take some mature stalks of dill and walk around the garden shaking them and I have beautiful dill BUT all over the garden. They just won't grow where I want them to - in nice rows - THERE! It seems as if the seeds that end up in non-infected soil thrive whereas the others simply don't make it. If you don't find that untidy, it's worth a try. I guess you can spread the seeds in early spring too.

From: mrooney@mrooney.pn.com (Michael Rooney)

First, there are many different dills. The best approach I have found is to find a dill that survives the winter wherever you are. Then, it is one tuned to the environment and will grow better. It will also self seed, both where you want it :-) and where you don't :-(or :-) depending. It is perfectly acceptable to seed them very close together. It is also a good idea to succession plant dill if you want a continuous supply of it all growing season long.

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2.13.2 Harvesting dill

From: Anahita@aol.com (Susan D. Hill):

Dill can be harvested for leaves any time during the growing season. If you're growing for seeds, wait until the flowers die off and the seeds are set, then tie little socks around the seed heads. You can use nylon net, cheesecloth or even old stockings. Any fabric that is porous. Be sure to tie them on loosely so as not to damage the stem. Once the seeds are dry, just cut off the stalk and take it inside.

From: mrooney@mrooney.pn.com (Michael Rooney)

To harvest, assuming they are planted very close together, cut the plants off at their base that are the biggest. Then, let the remaining plants, which will be more properly spaced, grow larger until they are crowding themselves and pick them. Then repeat the process until they are all properly spaced and then pick the fronds as quickly as they reach their size because they are preparing to go to seed by then. I pick every frond while the plants are going to seed and it does not seem to affect the seed production at all and I get more dill fronds that way :-).

To harvest the seeds, take a pair of panty hose past the wearing stage and cut them off mid-thigh or mid-calf depending on your preference. Put the seed head, when it is still green, into the foot of the panty hose and the leg over the stem. Tie a twist tie around the panty hose on the stem and wait until the seeds are fully developed and quite dry. Then cut off the stem below the twist tie, bring it into the house or somewhere else out of the wind and put it over a big piece of paper. The seed will pretty much fall off the head as it is dry enough. Don't forget to shake the seed out of the panty hose leg too :-).

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2.13.3 Using / preserving dill

From: jrogow@ridgecrest.ca.us (Judith Rogow)

I always cut some heads with ~almost~ mature seeds to add to my garlic dill half-sour jars. Adds extra flavour, and looks so pretty against one side of the jar.

From: Silkia@aol.com

The dill is an aromatic European plant that belongs to the parsley family, and it bears yellow blossoms that turn into tiny fruits or seeds. The

pungent leaves and seeds of the plants are used as condiments and as pickling agents. Dill is derived from the Norse "dilla", meaning to lull, and was formerly given to infants as a soporific.

Dill seeds have a rather acrid taste, and they serve to stimulate the appetite. The odor of dill is stronger and less agreeable than that of fennel. The two are closely related but they are not identical. However dill that is found growing wild in the United States, is popularly called fennel.

Dill is used primarily to pickle cucumbers, but it should be used more extensively as a seasoning. Its finely chopped fresh leaves add their fragrance to potatoes, stews, fish, cucumbers, vegetable salads, and broiled meats. Dill seeds will render cabbage, cauliflower, meat gravies, spaghetti sauces, fish sauces, turnips, sauerkraut, and soups (especially bean and borscht) more appetizing. Add a dash of dill to tomato sauce, or try using dill and celery in stewed tomatoes. Dill seeds resemble caraway seeds in flavor, and the two may be used interchangeably.

Dill Pickles

Carefully select and wash good cucumbers, about 5-6 inches long. Pack them in earthenware jars. Between the layers of cucumbers, place thin layers of dill, using stalks, leaves, and seed balls. Cover with brine [using about 1 lb. of salt to 3 pints of water]. Place a layer of grape or horseradish leaves on top, weight down with a large earthen plate. Let stand several weeks before using.

Source : the American Dictionary of Cooking, 1938 Ed. I can't tell you the publisher as the pages were torn years ago. My Grandmother gave the book the day I married. .it has been like a Bible for me.

From: DonW1948@aol.com

Fri ss Kaporleves (Fresh Dill Soup)

2 tbs. Butter, unsalted,
1 tbs. Flour, all-purpose
2 tbs. Dill; minced
4 c Water; cold
Salt
1/2 c Sour cream
1 tbs. Lemon juice

Make a roux with the butter and flour. Cook it until golden brown. Add dill, stir well, immediately pour in 1/2 cup cold water and whip until smooth. Add 3-1/2 cups water and salt to taste. Cook soup for about 10 minutes.

Mix sour cream with lemon juice and put in the soup tureen. Eliminate lemon juice if the soup is too sour for your taste. Pour the soup over. Serve

with Potato Dumplings (recipe). Cook these dumplings in the fresh dill soup for 5 minutes.

Yield: 6 servings

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2.14 Rosemary

Latin name: *Rosmarinus officinalis*.

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2.14.1 Growing Rosemary

By jrogow@owens.ridgecrest.ca.us (Judith Rogow)

This is an herb you can literally kill with kindness! Rosemary will die if you fertilize her, or water her too much, or plant her in too-rich earth. Benign neglect will result in big healthy plants. There are two basic types of Rosemary, the trailing or prostrate type, and a bush type that will, in time, become large enough to be considered a shrub. These plants have been used in England in mazes, and in the USA as landscape plantings. Prostrate Rosemary is an excellent ground cover.

Rosemary comes in various shades of blue-lavender, and there is a pink version that is a magnet for bees (as is the blue). The leaves are like miniature pine needles, in a lovely blue-green colour.

Rosmarinus, the herb's Latin name, means "sea spray", and the plant grows especially well near the ocean.

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2.14.2 Harvesting Rosemary

By jrogow@ridgecrest.ca.us (Judith Rogow):

I cut my rosemary back all summer and dry it hung in a closet. This perfumes my hanging clothing, and keeps it from sunburn.

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2.14.3 Using / Preserving Rosemary

By jrogow@ridgecrest.ca.us (Judith Rogow):

I use it for poultry stuffing, and as a tea to soothe stress. Also, the tea is a wonderful hair rinse for red heads and brunettes. I also use the tea in a bath when I ache all over from too much gardening.

Rosemary may be dried by hanging sprigs in a warm place, then stripping the leaves and keeping them in a jar or plastic bag. Uses of this versatile herb include teas (infusions of the leaves) that make soothing tisanes, enhancing hair rinses, and lovely fragrant soaking baths.

Leaves are used in cooking and for scented oils, the flowers are often added to a bride's headdress to insure fidelity.

Rosemary is considered an excellent tonic for headaches, and stomachs. It is also a traditional memory sharpener. Shakespeare said in Hamlet . . . "There's Rosemary, that's for remembrance." Mourners in many countries drop sprays of Rosemary in the coffin of a loved one as a pledge not to forget the person.

RECIPES

From: jrogow@owens.ridgecrest.ca.us (Judith Rogow)

A decoction for the bath

Steep several handful of Rosemary (fresh or dried) in water for an hour at simmer. Cool and bottle. Add to bath for soothing and scent.

2) Rosemary Water

4 tbs. Rosemary Flowers
1 Nutmeg, grated
2 tbs. Cinnamon, grated
1 QT alcohol spirit (Vodka works well)
Pour liquid over herbs in a clean jar - stand in warm dark place for two weeks. Strain through cheesecloth or paper coffee strainer. Use as you would witch hazel, to soothe aches.

3) Rosemary Wine

1 bottle of white wine
1 handful fresh rosemary (or 2 tbs. dried)
2 tbs. dried Borage leaves
Steep herbs in wine a week or more, strain as in #2. This is an excellent nerve tonic.

4) Insect repellent candle

Crumble dried Sage and Rosemary leaves, mix with melted wax, form into candle (an easy way to do this if you don't have candle molds is to put a votive candle in a bowl, pour warm herb-wax in the bowl a bit at a time, and let harden) and use to keep bugs away.

From: Ron Lunde <ronl@teleport.com>
Here's my recipe for Rosemary bread that never fails. (I use fresh rosemary, from the planter on the side of my house, next to the grape vine. Both the rosemary and the grape vine are trying to take over the universe. I'm waiting to see which wins.)

Rosemary Bread

(Popular for centuries, as legend goes, particularly in southern Europe)

Ingredients:

1 package dry yeast, not too far past the expiration date
1 cup warm water (I stick my finger in it, and it feels "slightly warm")
2 tablespoons chopped fresh rosemary leaves (or dried, I guess)
1 teaspoon sugar
1 teaspoon salt
1 & 1/4 cups whole wheat flour
1 & 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
Olive oil to grease bowl and baking sheet
1 beaten egg

Destructions:

Fling yeast in water, add sugar. Let stand until foamy. If it isn't foamy, try again. Should take 5-10 minutes.

Add rosemary, salt, whole wheat flour, and about a cup of the regular flour. Stir with a wooden spoon until it's all a big lump, with kinda stretchy qualities around the edges. Add remaining flour, and turn it into an even bigger lump. Turn it out onto a floured surface (not a cat -- cat's tend to resent that), and knead it far longer than you actually want to, or about 8 minutes.

Cover with plastic wrap, and let rise for an hour or so in an oiled bowl, until it's doubled in volume.

Punch down, knead briefly (get rid of air pockets). Shape into a ball, and scrunch it around so that the top surface is reasonably smooth.

Put it on a lightly oiled baking sheet. Brush loaf with oil. Let rise for 45 minutes or so, until it's doubled.

Brush it with the egg. If you're feeling traditional, cut an 'X' in the top with a very sharp knife.

Bake at 375 degrees (Fahrenheit -- we're not doing plasma physics, we're baking bread) until the top is brownish, and you can get a nice hollow sound when you tap the bottom. That should be 45 minutes, or so. Cool on a rack. Eat.

It's low fat, high fiber/protein/taste. I like it.

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2.15 Lavender

Latin name: *Lavandula angustifolia* and other *Lavandula* species.
Also see 3.6 below, 'Growing herbs from cuttings'.

These lavender entries have been compiled by Susan L. Nielsen
(snielsen@orednet.org). Nice piece of work; thanks!

(copyright, Susan L. Nielsen, 1995)

"Lavender's blue, dilly dilly, lavender's green;
When I am king, dilly dilly, you shall be queen."
'Lavender's Blue', from Mother Goose's Melody (Anon.), 1781.

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2.15.1 Growing Lavender

by Susan L. Nielsen

Among native plants of the Mediterranean, Lavender must surely be one of the most adaptable of these sun and warmth-loving plants. It thrives from its indigenous lands as far north and south as hardy perennials will grow. It is grown commercially in Australia, as well as in the more familiar lavender fields of England and France. It will grow even as far north as Norway, though perhaps not very far north once there.

Lavender is happiest in light, well-drained soils, in a somewhat lean loam. By lean, I mean a soil not too rich in nitrogen; lavender, like many plants, will gladly imbibe the nitrogen, and then send this nourishment into healthy leaf growth. In general, we prefer to cultivate lavender for its blooms (the leaves are useful, but the blooming plant will, after all, have leaves enough for most purposes I can imagine). Drainage is at least as important as soil content. I don't recommend planting lavender in gravel, but gravel would be preferable to a clay bed. A sandy loam is ideal. "Just dirt" is probably fine as long as it will crumble in the hand. Clean wood ash is a helpful addition to the soil.

Lavender likes the sun. Unlike human beings, it is made to flourish under UV rays (after all, ultraviolet and ultralavender aren't that far apart).

So, give it sun, give it drainage, water it sometimes, and enjoy its heady, sweet abundance.

Lavender may be propagated by seed, though I would suspect the ability of some of the cultivars to produce, from seed, plants true to the characteristics of the parent.

It may also be easily propagated from cuttings. This is the way most commercial stock is reproduced. In the spring or fall, take cuttings from new growth. You want small stems, pulled with a "heel" from the larger branch (pull quickly downward from the angle of the stem, and the "cutting" will detach with the desired tissue forming the heel). Dust with rooting hormone if available. Set the cuttings into sand or soil.

Don't, by the way, believe the words on a package of "sterile" soil mix; treat it to half an hour in a low heat oven (about 65 C degrees or 150 F, if you can set it that low). Use a shallow pan so that the soil can heat uniformly; it is very insulating and, if piled up, the inside can still be

quite cool when the outside is hot to touch. Make certain it is cooled again before you use it. When you are using packaged soil for rooting or seeding, you will save yourself complications with damping off and other fungal diseases by ritually observing this practice.

Tend the plants gently, and keep them moist, and when they have rooted, (new top growth is a good sign) pot them into larger containers and fertilize them.

In addition, lavenders will layer well in the garden; buried stems will root along their length and can then be dug up, separated from the parent, and replanted on their own.

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2. 15. 2 Harvesting Lavender

by Susan L. Nielsen

Lavender flowers should be harvested just before the blooms open. The flowers will look like fat, purple seeds on a stem. If you miss and must cut them later, be prepared for the flowers to fall off the stems. For culinary purposes, it may not be so important that you have perfectly preserved stems of lavender, but they probably lose some of their intensity of aroma as they mature on the plant.

All the herbals say that the aromatic powers of herbs are strongest when the plant has not yet opened to full bloom (true of most all the blooming herbs), and to cut herbs "in the morning when the plants are perfectly dry." I have never been able to achieve the match between morning hours and dryness at this pre-bloom season, though I suppose it depends on the dews and the rains where the garden grows. The dryness is probably more important than the morning hour.

Cut the lavender stems as long as you are able. Doubtless some of your harvest will be used for gifts or crafts. The long stems are most lovely. They also increase the possibilities available to you (you cannot make lavender bottles with short stems).

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2. 15. 3 Using/Preserving Lavender

by Susan L. Nielsen

Do not dry your herbs in the sun. "Dry them quickly," say the books, but direct sun will cause them to fade, both in color and in intensity. You can spread them out flat to dry if you have unlimited table space. Or tie them in bundles and hang them upside down. "In a closet," say the wise authors. Ha-ha. Show me a closet with room for bundles of herbs to hang undamaged. I hang mine from curtain rods, but I have a window onto a vestibule where no sun strikes. Hang them from hooks or nails or thumb tacks. I know it is terribly quaint, but don't leave them there all summer,

fall and winter. They will gather dust, and they will lose potency in time. Once they are thoroughly dry, store them someplace more sheltered, though less scenic.

Rosetta Clarkson (in *Herbs and Savory Seeds*, Dover Publications, 1972) reminds us that, "To retain the full flavor and fragrance [of lavender and of other herbs to be used for cooking] you must store the herbs in containers, preferably glass or pottery with tightly fitting covers." Otherwise, "the oils will in time escape." Good advice for all herbs saved, though not too good for long stems. Try wrapping them in tissue paper and keeping them in a carton, drawer or chest. When storing freshly dried herbs in closed containers, you will do well to check them during the first weeks for signs of mildew. Turn them out now and then, spread the herbs loosely, sniff them, touch them, look closely. If all is well, re-pack them.

For culinary use, all experts agree (!) that lavender is strong. Use a light hand.

THE RECIPES

By Susan L. Nielsen

Beginning with the most simple:

Lavender Tea

About 3 tablespoons fresh flowers (half this amount for dried ones) steeped 3-5 minutes in a pint of water just off the boil. This has a pale straw color but is plenty aromatic. You might try combining the lavender with mint leaves, too.

Lavender Vinegar

Use distilled white vinegar. Flavored vinegars and stronger ones will compete with the herb for your senses. Place "some" (say, a small handful) in a modicum (say, a pint) of vinegar. Let stand 4-6 weeks. Use it as a dressing for fruit salads.

Even simpler: a few lavender leaves, washed, scattered into a garden salad add what the authors of *Joy of Cooking* (Irma S. Rombauer and Marion Rombauer Becker) call a "bitter pungency." In the US recently, "bitter pungency" in the form of radicchio commands a handsome price in the market, so let not this opportunity pass!

Lavender Martini

(I have not myself tried this, but I promise to, soon)

"Make your martini with your favorite proportions. Use a small sprig of lavender as the garnish. The oil of lavender is quickly but subtly released by the alcohol..."

(from *The Forgotten Art of Flower Cookery*, Leona Woodring Smith, Harper & Row, 1973).

Lavender Fruit Salad

Choose your favorite seasonal fresh fruits (no canned fruit cocktail here). Peel them as appropriate, reduce to bite-sized pieces. Combine them in a bowl with 10 or so sprigs of fresh lavender (remember: much less for dried). Let it all chill for a couple of hours. Serve it with a good splash of champagne over the top and lavender pretties in the bowl. Another version of this steeps the salad in a quarter cup of Grand Marnier, then follows with the champagne at serving.

Lavender Jelly

(Also from *The Forgotten Art of Flower Cookery*)

2 1/4 cups bottled apple juice [I would assume that this requires a clear juice for a clear jelly]

1 cup lavender flowers

3 1/2 cups sugar

1/2 bottle (4 oz.) liquid pectin

Place apple juice and lavender in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Cover and remove from the heat. Let stand for 15 minutes and strain. Return 2 cups of this juice to the heat, add the sugar, and stirring constantly, bring to a full boil. Stir in the liquid pectin and bring to a rolling boil for 1 minute, stirring constantly.

Remove from the heat, skim off the foam, and pour into jelly glasses with a sprig of jelly in each glass [and seal]. (Makes about 5 medium glasses.)

Lavender Apple Crisp

Add about a tablespoon of fresh (half that if dried) lavender to your favorite apple crisp or deep dish pie recipe.

and, by no means least:

Lavender Ice Cream (from *At Home with Herbs*, Jane Newdick, Storey Communications, 1994, changed a bit)

4 egg yolks

3/4 cups sugar

2/3 cup half-and-half [half cream, half milk]

6 fresh lavender flower heads

2/3 cup whipping cream or heavy cream

2 cups of milk

Whisk the egg yolks and sugar together until light and foaming. Gently heat the half-and-half in a pan with the lavender flowers. Bring to the boil, then strain into the egg yolk mixture. Return the mixture to the stove and cook over very low heat, stirring constantly until it is slightly thickened

and will coat the back of a spoon. Do not let it boil. Pour the custard into a bowl, and refrigerate until it is completely cold. Whip the cream just until it forms peaks and fold it into the cold custard. Add remaining 2 cups of milk. Process in an ice cream maker, or freeze in the container in the freezer compartment of the refrigerator. Serve with thin, crisp cookies.

[0', I do say...]

Now, I know this last is not a culinary item, but I've been very good about leaving out the 4,012 craft uses of lavender I could have mentioned, and I did bring these up earlier, so indulge me:

Lavender bottles

Lavender bottles are a very old little whimsy. You must use freshly cut lavender. Once it has dried, the stems will break as you try to bend them, and your bottles will fall apart before they are made.

Use a goodly bunch of lavender, 15 to 20 stems with flower heads. Also have on hand some strong thread.

Neatly bunch the lavender and tie the stems together just below the flower heads. Wrap the thread several times around the stems to make a strong band. Trim the thread ends.

One stem at a time, bend the stems over the flower heads. Work around the bundle, carefully. The stems will form a kind of cage over the flowers. As the lavender dries, the stems will shrink some, and the "bottle" will be more open.

When all the stems are bent over the flowers, tie them again at the point just below the flower heads. Your earlier tie will be obscured. Tie the bottoms of the stems together, too. Tie tightly, because the stems will shrink. You can tie narrow ribbons over the strings to make things prettier.

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2.15.4 Which Lavender do you have?

By Susan L. Nielsen

"Oh, call it by some better name..." -- Thomas Moore

The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology (C.T. Onions) considers that the English word "lavender" derives, through a painful series of transcriptions, from the Latin **lavare** (to lave, to wash), though Professor Onions comments that, if this is so, "the sense-development is obscure." Perhaps he was unfamiliar with lavender-scented baths.

Lavandula varieties are many, and the manifold literature does not come

to any tidy agreement on the number of lavender species. At last I went to _Hortus Third_ to settle the matter. While this is specifically a North American reference, I do not believe there can be too many examples of this herb not now grown somewhere in N. America.

The following is a fairly tedious list but, because of the large number of names under which lavender is sold, I have listed the subspecies and cultivar names (forgive me, but I have omitted the convention of italic markers for genus, species and variety names; cultivars are in single quotes). The list is somewhat abbreviated. All names not listed are judged, "without botanical standing.":

- * *L. angustifolia*: ENGLISH *L.* (synonyms = *L. delphinensis*, *L. officinalis*, *L. Spica*, *L. angustifolia*, *L. pyrenaica*, *L. vera*).
Cultivars = 'Alba', 'Atropurpurea', 'Compacta', 'Dutch', 'Fragrance', 'Hidcote', 'Munstead', 'Nana', 'Rosea', 'Twickel Purple', 'Waltham'.
- * *L. dentata*: FRENCH *L.* (also, previously, sometimes referred to as *L. delphinensis*). Var. *candicans*.
- * *L. lanata*: (plants offered under this name may sometimes be *angustifolia*).
- * *L. latifolia*
- * *L. multifida*: (synonym = *canariensis*)
- * *L. pinnata*: Var. *Buchii*.
- * *L. Stoechas*: SPANISH *L.*, FRENCH *L.* (synonym = *pedunculata*).

Some folklore: Three of the above names are interesting in history.

- * **L. Spica** (spike Lavender [who says Latin is tough?]), shows in its name the earlier use of the term "Spike" to refer to lavender (as, Culpeper's Oil of Spike). The Greeks called this plant, 'Nardus.' Bible readers will here recognize the name Spikenard: "While the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof." said the dark, passionate lover in "The Song of Solomon" (1:12), and "Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard, spikenard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon..." (4:13,14).
- * **L. vera** (English Lavender), is also called "true" Lavender, and **L. stoechas**, French Lavender. Obviously there is room for a cross-Channel rivalry here. The English Lavender claims to possess the finest, true lavender scent: **vera**. In fact, it is the basis of the huge commercial market in lavender. French Lavender, on the other hand, (according to dear Mrs. Grieve, _A Modern Herbal_, 1931, reproduced by Dover Publications, 1971), is "probably the lavender so extensively used in classical times by the Romans and Libyans as a perfume for the bath." This is a fairly distinguished citation, which endures despite the fact that its aroma is judged by some to be "musty," by others "musky" (a distinction one might have thought more clear), and, by the more discriminating, "like a cross between lavender and rosemary."

So, among these worthies, the question remains, which do you have? Or even,

which do you want to have?

The above list should help if you have purchased lavender with a nursery tag in the pot and are unsure where you stand among the synonyms.

If you have no lavenders, or wish to increase your holdings, and are looking for guidance, you might consider the attributes you most seek. If you are very involved in processing, and want to extract oils, for instance, you might choose the larger-leaved Spike varieties for a greater yield of oil. Be forewarned, however, that oil extraction requires _enormous_ quantities of material for a start.

If you live in a harsh, cold-winter area, the hardier *L. angustifolia* (vera) might be your best choice.

For deck or terrace edging, parterres, or walkway borders try the smaller varieties: Hidcote, or Munstead, for example.

If your lavender has wooly white foliage, in a mound of about 12" height, and blooms late in the season on towering stems topping at 3' or so, you probably have *L. lanata*. Its scent will be similar to that of *L. angustifolia*.

The *L. pinnata* and *L. multifida* cultivars have greyish, ferny foliage.

L. dentata has little "teeth" along the edges of the leaves. Its scent is said to suffer from the same shortcomings as that of the *Stoechas* lavenders.

For historical interest, or from the standpoint of a collector, of course, one cannot have too many lavenders. And all of them are equal candidates for inclusion in the garden.

"...we shall find a cleanly room, lavender in the windows,
and twenty ballads stuck about the wall."

-- Izaak Walton, *The Compleat Angler*, 1653-1655.

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2.16 Lemon balm

Latin name: *Melissa officinalis*.

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2.16.1 Growing Lemon balm

From: jera@ksu.ksu.edu (JR Schroeder)

Lemon Balm, is a hardy perennial member of the mint family (Lamiaceae).

I've found it easy to propagate from seed or by dividing the clump in spring or late August; cuttings don't seem to work well. A mature plant forms an ordinary-looking rounded clump that's about 2' across. It doesn't

spread as rampantly as some of it's relatives, although it can become weedy if you let it go to seed (this is a good way of getting little plants to share, though :)).

There is a variegated form, very attractive but less vigorous (it is hardy in my Zone 5 winters). I've found that if you stress this form, it reverts to completely green, until it recovers from the stress (which may take the rest of the season). I haven't tried propagating this one from seed; it is true from cuttings and divisions.

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2.16.3 Using / Preserving Lemon balm

From: doliver@minerva.polari.stel.net, Northwind Farm Publications
Someone asked about lemon balm tea: should it be used fresh or dried, etc. We are great lovers of lemon balm tea. We grow a patch of it, harvesting the leaves all summer for fresh tea. In the fall, we gather the crop and air-dry it for winter. The flavor is different depending on whether it is fresh or dried; I prefer the fresh, but dried is fine. Bruising the leaves before brewing the tea definitely intensifies the flavor.

To prepare the tea, just steep the leaves in boiling water for a few minutes. Personal taste will determine the amount to use (don't skimp) and the brewing time. Try adding some of your other favorite tea ingredients for a little variety. Chamomile and hops make a soothing (maybe sedative or soporific for those sensitive to these ingredients) combination with the lemon balm.

I have never heard of any toxic effects or contraindications to the use of lemon balm. From personal experience, I'd say it's perfectly harmless.

From: ericf@central.co.nz (Sue Flesch)

Put some fresh stalks in a muslin bag or similar and hang over hot tap while running a bath. Scents the bath beautifully. Nice dried and added to pot pourri.

Sue Flesch, Nelson, New Zealand

> What can I do with all this lemon balm?

From: denysm@vcn.bc.ca (Denys Meakin)

It makes a good refreshing tea. Just steep a stalk with the leaves in boiling water for a few minutes. Experiment with different amounts until you get the strength of brew you like. You can dry the leaves for making tea in the winter.

Lemon Balm Cordial

From Vicki Oseland <viki o@earthlink.net>, quoting 'The Complete Book of Herbs and Spices' by Sarah Garland:

4 sprigs lemon balm
2 sprigs hyssop
2 sprigs basil
2 sprigs mint
2 sprigs sage
1 Tbs. chopped, crushed angelica root
2 oz. sugar
2 1/2 cups brandy

Steep the herbs and sugar in the brandy for a fortnight, shaking occasionally. Strain and repeat with fresh herbs if the taste is not sufficiently pronounced. Strain and bottle. Take a Tbs. of this digestive before meals.

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End of part 3 of 7

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