

HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA
THE FESTIVAL OF FLAVOR AND FRAGRANCE
SWEET HERBS

The Herb Society of America, June 6, 2009
Theresa Mieseler

Sweet herbs have a pleasing aromatic flavor or fragrance that triggers our senses. This is due to a volatile oil present in the plant that is specific to that plant. Some of these plants have long been used as a kitchen herb to flavor a soup, sauce, meat, dressing, salad or even in tea. These herbs can be nourishing and relaxing. Others you will see have an entirely different use. The scent of these herbs can perhaps change your mood - you can't help but feel good when you absorb the fragrance of lemon verbena!

Basil, Cinnamon

Ocimum basilicum 'Cinnamon'

Description: Annual; 2'.

Cinnamon basil is compact with pointed green leaves and light lavender blossoms. Leaves are a nice addition for a flavored basil vinegar. Makes a delicious sorbet.

Culture: Well-drained, medium-rich soil in full sun. Plant basil only after night temperatures stay above 60°.

Propagation: Seed

Notes: To delay flowering cut the tips of basil and begin harvesting when plant reaches 10-12" high.



Chamomile, German

Matricaria recutita

Description: Annual, 15".

German chamomile has a sweet apple scent that makes a nice tea. It is used in nonalcoholic and alcoholic beverages, ice cream and ices, candy, baked goods and chewing gum.

Culture: Full sun

Propagation: Seed

Notes: Chamomile will reseed once established, plant for butterflies, medicinal use. It is native to the south and west of Europe.



Lemon Grass

Cymbopogon citratus

Description: Best grown in containers. The scented leaves are used to flavor fish, soups, curries and sauces.

Culture: Full sun, well drained soil.

Propagation: Root division

Notes: Lemon grass origin is unknown and found only in cultivation and flowers are rare.

Trim off the grassy top and root end and peel away the outer fibrous layers until you reach the tender core. For minced lemongrass chop up only the bottom four inches or so. Bruising the lemongrass with the side of a knife or cleaver helps release the fragrant, flavorful oils.



Lemon Verbena

Aloysia citriodora

Description: Lemon verbena has one of the best lemon flavor of any herb. Use in tea, vinegar, desserts and chicken. The dried leaves of this plant add wonderful aroma and a nice green color to potpourris. It will surely perk up anyone who smells the lovely fragrance.

Culture: Tender perennial grown in full sun.

Propagation: Cuttings

Notes: It is cultivated for its essential oil and absolute in France, Algeria and Morocco. It is marginally hardy in Zone 8. It is native to Argentina.



Marjoram, Sweet

Origanum majorana

Description: Use sweet marjoram in poultry, sausage, sauces and herb butters. Small white flowers appear in late summer. It is thought to be native to North Africa, the Middle East and part of India.

Culture: Grow in the garden or a container by itself since it requires good air circulation so it does not contract disease.

Propagation: Seed

Notes: Egypt, France and Canada are major sources of dried sweet marjoram imported in the United States. The leaves, flowers and tender stems are used to flavor syrups, stews, dressings, omelets, sauces, stuffing and sauces.



Mint, Kentucky Colonel

Mentha cordifolia 'Kentucky Colonel'

Description: Kentucky Colonel is attractive with wrinkled leaves and an excellent flavor. Use in making mint juleps and mojito as well as in cooking chicken, lamb, veal, beef, duck, cakes and cookies.

Culture: Moist conditions, sun or shade. It is a friendly herb and likes to travel around visiting other parts of the garden.

Propagation: Cuttings, root division.

Notes: Found naturalized throughout Central America and the southwestern United States. After Ferdinand Magellan claimed the Philippines for Spain in 1521 the herb was transported there.



Sage, Frieda Dixon

Salvia elegans 'Frieda Dixon'

Description: Frieda Dixon is similar to Pineapple Sage in that flavor and fragrance are the same but its growth habit is shorter. These sages are native of Mexico and have stunning salmon tubular flowers fading to pink in late fall. Use the fresh leaves to flavor drinks and fresh fruit. Bright red flowers appear in late summer/early fall.

Culture: Well-drained, medium-rich soil in full sun.

Propagation: Cuttings



Scented Geranium, Rober's Lemon Rose

Pelargonium 'Rober's Lemon Rose'

Description: According to Dr. Arthur Tucker it is supposedly a hybrid of *P. graveolens* x *P. tomentosum* from Ernest Rober in California in the 1940's. It has a nice lemony rose fragrance.

Culture: Well-drained, medium-rich soil in full sun. It can be grown in the garden or a large container, flowers are pink.

Propagation: Cuttings.

Notes: Leaves are coarse and irregularly lobed, making it very distinguishable from other scented geraniums.



Stevia

Stevia rebaudiana

Description: Stevia is native to Paraguay. Stevioside is 100 to 300 times more sweet than sucrose, non-caloric, anticariogenic, non-fermentable, does not darken up on cooking and is highly stable when exposed to both acids and heat.

Culture: Stevia plants grow best in a rich, loamy soil.

Propagation: Seed, cuttings

Notes: From *Herb Clips*, *American Botanical Council*, 10-15-2008: "Steviol glycosides are intensely sweet compounds derived from the South American plant stevia (*Stevia rebaudiana*). In June 2008, Wisdom Natural Brands (Phoenix, Arizona) announced that it will market its SweetLeaf® stevia product as a sweetener after self-affirming generally recognized as safe (GRAS) status. Previously, stevia products were only marketed as dietary supplements in the United States.1 Stevia preparations have been used by natives of Paraguay and Brazil from pre-history and as a sweetener in Japan since the 1970's."



Sweet (Holy) Grass

Hierochloë odorata

Description: European grass with a scent similar to new-mown hay. Used by the Native American Indians to weave sweet-grass baskets and incense ropes. It is also used to flavor vodka to produce zubrowka.

Culture: Full sun.

Propagation: Root division

Notes: Most commonly found as braids, Sweetgrass can be unbraided and lit, blown out, letting it to smolder.



Recipes

Arugula Salad with Heirloom Tomatoes and Red Onion

Makes 6 servings

8 cups arugula
4 sliced heirloom tomatoes, using a mix of colors
1/2 small red onion, thinly sliced

Theresa's Herb Salad Dressing

1/2 cup extra-virgin olive Oil
1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan Cheese
1/4 cup herb flavored vinegar
1 large clove garlic, chopped
1 tablespoon coarsely snipped fresh basil
1 tablespoon garlic or onion chives
1 tablespoon coarsely cut fresh parsley
1 tablespoon tarragon
1 tablespoon unsalted sunflower seeds
1 teaspoon honey
1/2 teaspoon dry mustard

Arrange arugula on a large platter. Arrange tomatoes and red onion on top of arugula. Drizzle with dressing and serve.

Cinnamon Basil Sorbet

3 cups bottled or frozen apple juice
1/2 cup sugar
10 - 12 leaves cinnamon basil
Freshly squeezed juice of one lemon

Combine all the ingredients except lemon juice in a blender and blend on high until the sugar is dissolved and the basil leaves are completely pulverized. Add lemon juice and chill thoroughly. Freeze in ice cream or sorbet maker. Delicious!

Recipe from *Fabulous Sorbets*, Jim Long, 2004

Calming Chamomile

1/2 cup chamomile or chamomile-ginger tea
1 apple peeled, cored and chopped
Quarter cantaloupe, peeled, seeded and chopped
1 tbsp. fresh German chamomile flowers
2 tbsp. plain yogurt
1 tbsp. liquid honey (or to taste)
In blender, combine chamomile tea, apple, cantaloupe, chamomile flowers, yogurt and honey. Process as directed until smooth.
Serves 1 or 2.

Recipe from *The Smoothies Bible*, Pat Crocker, 2003.

Lemon Grass Tea

3 stalks lemongrass
2 tablespoons honey
2 tablespoons Japanese green tea leaves

Remove tough outer leaves from 2 stalks of lemongrass and finely chop lemongrass stalks, including the darker tops.

Bring 4 1/2 cups water, chopped lemongrass and honey to a rapid boil. Lower heat and simmer for 10 minutes.

Place a green tea bag in a heat proof pitcher. Pour lemongrass infusion over the tea bag and let steep for 3 - 5 minutes and strain. Cut remaining lemongrass stalk in half lengthwise, then crosswise. Let sit in tea until cool. Refrigerate until very cold and serve over ice.

Lemon Verbena Jelly

2 heaping cups fresh lemon verbena leaves, cut up
2 1/2 cups boiling water
1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
4 1/2 cups sugar
2 to 4 drops yellow food coloring, optional
1 3 ounce package liquid pectin (Certo)

Place cup leaves in a large bowl. Pour boiling water over leaves. Cover and let stand for 15 minutes. Strain and measure 2 cups of the herb liquid into a heavy saucepan. Add lemon juice and sugar. Stir well. Bring to a full rolling boil over high heat, stirring often. Add food coloring. Stir in pectin and return to a full rolling boil. Boil hard for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Pour into hot, sterilized jelly jars, leaving 1/4 inch head space. Adjust lids and process in a boiling water bath for 5 minutes. Makes about 2 pints of jelly.

Recipe from *The Best of Thymes*, Marge Clark, 1997

Herb Flavored Butter

1 tablespoon fresh sweet marjoram, chopped
1 tablespoon fresh chives, chopped
1 tablespoon fresh chervil, chopped
1 tablespoon fresh Italian parsley, chopped
2 sticks unsalted butter, room temperature
1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
1 garlic clove

Place fresh and patted dried herbs in food processor, add garlic, butter and lemon juice and process until a nice green color appears, herbs should be finely minced. Use fresh on breads, baked potatoes and veggies or freeze for later use.

Ginger-Mint Vinegar

4 cups fresh mint leaves, cleaned and dried (no moisture on leaves)

1 1-inch piece of fresh ginger root, peeled and coarsely chopped

2 quarts cider vinegar or champagne

Wash and dry mint leaves and place in clean glass jar. Add chopped ginger root, pour vinegar over leaves and root.

Seal with a non-metallic lid. Let set a cool, dry place for about 3 weeks. Discard leaves and root. Strain vinegar through a coffee filter. Pour into an attractive glass bottle. Cork or seal.

Recipe from *The Best of Thymes*, Marge Clark, 1997

Pineapple Sage Salsa

2 cups of canned pineapple, cut into small bits

1 sweet red pepper, chopped

1 fresh jalapeno pepper

1/4 cup red onion, chopped

10 - 12 leaves of pineapple sage, chopped

Juice of 1/2 lime

Combine all ingredients and let marinade for 2 hours before serving.

Rose Geranium Flavored Sugar

Rober's Lemon Rose Geranium

Raw sugar

Wide mouth canning jar with lid

Wash and thoroughly pat dry geranium leaves - they must be very dry. Layer geraniums and sugar, alternating the two, until the container is full. After one week remove the leaves and discard. Cover the scented geranium sugar tightly and store in the cupboard. Use in baking or cooking or spring on pancakes.

Sour Cream-Vanilla Pancakes

4 servings

4 large eggs

1 cup all-purpose flour

2 packets SweetLeaf SteviaPlus

1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder

1/2 teaspoon powdered vanilla

1/4 teaspoon salt

2/3 cup sour cream

6 tablespoons milk

Nonstick spray or butter for the griddle

Toppings of your choice

Separate the eggs, placing the yolks in a small bowl and the white in a large one. Preheat griddle.

Combine the flour, SteviaPlus, baking powder, vanilla powder, and salt in a medium-large bowl. In a separate bowl, beat together the sour cream milk, and egg yolks until smooth. Add this mixture to the dry ingredients, and stir until thoroughly combined.

Beat the egg whites until they form soft peaks, then slide the beaten whites into the batter. Use a rubber spatula in a circular motion from the bottom of the bowl to fold everything together. The mixture should be fairly - but not perfectly uniform.

Spray the hot griddle with nonstick spray, and if desired, melt in a little butter. Scoop up large spoonfuls of the fluffy batter and place on the hot griddle. Fry the pancakes on each side for about 3 to 4 minutes, or until light golden brown. (Turn only once or they could become tough.) Serve hot, with toppings(s) of your choice.

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Reference:

The Big of Herbs, Dr. Arthur Tucker, 2000

Theresa Mieseler
Shady Acres Herb Farm
7815 Highway 212
Chaska, Minnesota 55318
952.466.3391
herbs@shadyacres.com
www.shadyacres.com