



Healthy Herbs





SOUTH LANARKSHIRE GREENSPACE – HEALTHY HERBS PACK **FOREWORD**

Why healthy eating?

A balanced diet provides a basis for good health and helps to protect us from serious illnesses such as coronary heart disease, diabetes and cancers. Healthy eating can also prevent tooth decay and weight gain. In Scotland, all of these problems are more common than in most other countries in Europe.

Various reports have highlighted the current dietary problems in Scotland. Failure to eat the recommended amounts of fruit and vegetables is a major problem. Eating too many foods with a high fat content such as meat and dairy products, sweets, sugary drinks and salty snacks also has a lot to do with our present poor health record.

What can you do?

Healthy eating is about having a variety of foods. This doesn't mean that you have to completely change what you have always eaten or totally cut out the foods that you enjoy.

The main messages are to:

- Eat more fruit and vegetables
- Eat more bread, cereals and potatoes
- Eat less fat, salt and sugar

The leaflet included in this pack makes healthy eating easier to understand by showing the types and proportions of foods needed to make a well balanced and healthy diet. It also gives practical suggestions on how we can adapt our diets in line with the healthy eating guidelines.

Where do herbs fit in?

Herbs play an important role in healthy eating as they can pep up your cooking and transform a simple healthy meal into a culinary delight.



INTRODUCTION

Herbs are wonderful and rewarding plants to grow, being both decorative and useful. They bring colour and scent to the garden and are versatile and quick to establish. Herbs are perhaps most commonly grown to be used in cooking. This pack will introduce you to the versatility of herbs, and will highlight the many other beneficial uses that they have. The pack is divided into various sections, so you don't have to work through the whole thing! Once your herbs are established you can choose what you want to do with them. Look through the sections and see what you like. Alternatively, you can simply grow them and watch as they attract birds, butterflies and other insects into your garden.

This Healthy Herbs Pack has been funded by



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Evaluation Form
(We would appreciate your views
on this pack)



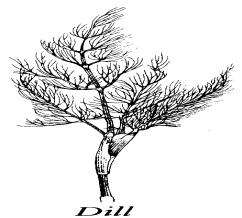
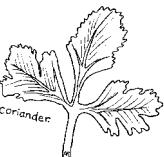
Introduction to herbs used in this pack

One of the joys of growing herbs is that everyone can do it. The majority of herbs are fairly easy to grow, and if you don't have a garden, they can be grown in pots and window boxes. They can also be grown in troughs or growbags where there is a patio or balcony, and for those with a garden, they can be planted within existing flower beds, or in a specially created herb garden or bed.

Eight herbs have been supplied with this pack. Parsley, chives, coriander, dill, basil, summer savoury, marjoram(oregano) and thyme.

Ten herbs have been specially selected and highlighted for use with this pack. These have been chosen as they are relatively easy to bring on from seed, but why not experiment and choose some more herb seeds to grow and use. Rosemary is more difficult to cultivate from seed and so it may be advisable to buy a small plant from a garden centre or nursery. *The latin names of the following herbs have been inserted in brackets*

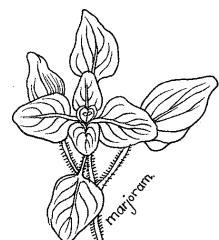
BASIL: (*Ocimum basilicum*) Widely used in Mediterranean cooking, this tender half hardy annual is susceptible to frost damage. Ideally it should be grown in a pot to be brought indoors during cold weather. Growing to a height of 30-60 cms, it has large shiny leaves and small white flowers that bloom in clusters. Once established, pick the tops out often as this will make the plant branch out and produce more leaves.



CORIANDER: (*Coriandrum sativum*) An easy to grow hardy annual that grows to a height of around 60 cms. Its lower leaves are bright green and look similar to flat leaf parsley, while the upper leaves are more feathery, and it has pinkish white flowers. The seeds, leaves and roots of this herb are all used, especially in Asian cooking.

DILL: (*Anethum graveolens*) The soft, feathery leaves and clusters of small deep yellow flowers make this an attractive garden herb. A tender annual, that grows to a height of 60-90 cms, the leaves and seeds are commonly used in cooking. The seeds scatter as soon as they are ripe and should be picked and dried immediately for winter use.

LEMON BALM: (*Melissa officinalis*) An aromatic hardy perennial known for its fresh lemon fragrance. It can thrive in some of the poorest soils, growing to a height of around 60-90 cms. Pale yellow or white flowers bloom throughout the summer.



MARJORAM: (*Origanum vulgare*) A strongly scented hardy evergreen, it forms a low hummock of tiny green leaves, from which upright stems of small pink flowers erupt in summer. It has a strong flavour



MINT: (*Mentha*) A quick growing and often invasive herb which comes in many varieties. It is a hardy perennial and can grow to a height of about 60-90 cms. Its long spearlike leaves have a refreshing, clean aroma. Lilac and cream flowers are produced in late summer. To contain invasive growth, plant mint in a container from which the bottom has been removed, set in the ground.



and is used mainly in Italian cookery. There is often confusion over marjoram and oregano. The latin name for all marjoram is *origanum* and the herb known as "oregano" is wild marjoram (*origanum vulgare*).



PARSLEY: (*Petroselinum crispum*) A hardy biennial which can be harvested all year round with winter protection. Flat-leaf and French parsley are the two most common varieties and are grown mostly for their flavour or for use as a garnish. An ideal herb for container growing, it normally grows to about 30 cms in height. Leaves should always be picked from the outside, allowing the new leaves to grow from the middle of the plant.



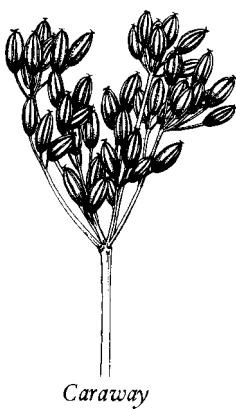
ROSEMARY: (*Rosmarinus officinalis*) A strongly flavoured evergreen shrub. With its aromatic, needle shaped, blue-green leaves, it is easily identifiable. Different varieties are available, tall upright kinds and tumbling prostrate forms. Not all are very hardy, so choose carefully. It produces blue, white or pink flowers in late spring.



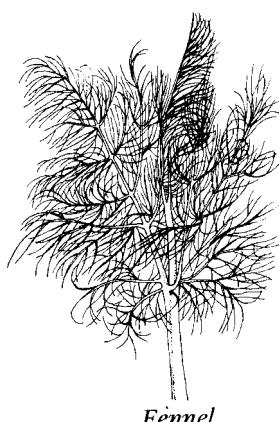
SAGE : (*Salvia officinalis*) Native of the Mediterranean region, it is widely used in cookery. This is a hardy evergreen shrub of which there are a number of varieties, all with slightly different flavours. The most commonly grown is *salvia officianalis*, a small woody perennial that grows to about 30 cms in height and is quite shrubby in appearance. It has oblong, veined, grey-green leaves that are slightly downy. It flowers in late summer and has a spicy scent.



THYME : (*Thymus vulgaris*) Wild thyme is perhaps the most common form of this strongly aromatic herb, although there are many other varieties of this native of the Mediterranean region. A hardy evergreen perennial, it spreads well and is often used for ground cover. Grows to a maximum height of about 23 cms, its pungent leaves are grey-green, tiny and dotted with scent glands. Small mauve flowers appear at the end of leaf stems in summer.



Caraway



Fennel

Did you know? The Romans believed that Parsley worn as wreaths around their necks prevented drunkenness.



GROWING YOUR HERBS



Sowing:

1. Fill your standard size seed tray with a recommended seedling compost. Firm and water the compost.
2. Sprinkle seeds thinly on top of compost. Cover with a thin layer of compost and lightly water with a fine nozzle.
3. Cover with a sheet of newspaper, place propagator lid over top and place in desired temperature for germination. Check your seed packet for germination time.
4. Check regularly for germination and remove paper as soon as germination takes place.

Pricking out:

1. Place the cell tray inserts into another seed tray and fill with a recommended potting compost.
2. Remove each seedling carefully by loosening compost around roots with a fork and lifting by the first leaves avoiding damage to the root and place one in each cell.
3. Lightly water the seedlings and keep moist in growing season.
4. When the plants have grown sufficiently and weather conditions allow, remove the individual plants in their compost by pushing up from the bottom of the insert, avoiding damage to the root.

Planting out:

Once your seedlings are established, there are various things to be considered prior to planting out, whether they are being planted in pots or directly into the garden.

Growing conditions:

As with any other plant it is essential that the right growing conditions are available for your herbs, to ensure that they are vigorous and healthy. Generally speaking, most species of herb prefer well drained soils in a sunny and sheltered spot, perhaps along a wall or fence. However some herbs may have more specific requirements and it is always advisable to check the particular conditions preferred by each herb prior to planting them out.

Other considerations:

When creating a herb garden or planting them into a bed, it is important to consider the height that plants will eventually reach. Taller herbs, such as dill and lovage should be planted to the back of the bed, medium sized herbs to the middle, and the shorter herbs and those that provide ground cover should be positioned to the front. Herbs such as thyme and oregano are good ground covering plants and can be used to form a carpet of plants.

Wherever possible choose a spot close to the kitchen or back door. This makes gathering easier, especially in wet weather!

Soil Preparation:



Dig the soil over thoroughly, preferably before winter so that winter frosts will break it up and improve its texture and drainage. Immediately prior to planting, dig in some compost or well rotted manure to enrich the soil. Water immediately.

Do not plant herbs too close together as many are spreading plants and need room to grow. Check seed packet for guidelines.

Aftercare:

Once planted, pick herbs regularly to encourage healthy growth. In herb beds it is important to trim back the more vigorous species in spring time to prevent them taking over.

The growing season of herbs planted in pots can be extended, by bringing them into greenhouses or conservatories when the first autumn frosts are forecast.

Common Pests & Diseases:

Herbs on the whole are less vulnerable to pests and diseases than other groups of plants. This is perhaps due to the strong aromatic oils that most contain; these have anti-bacterial and insect-repelling properties. Therefore strongly scented herbs such as thyme, lavender and rosemary are seldom troubled by pests.

However, from time to time pest and disease problems do arise and the most commonly encountered are:

Pests: caterpillars, slugs and snails, aphids such as greenfly and blackfly
Diseases: rust, mildew

The best way to prevent the occurrence of any of these is to prevent their build up in the first place. Keep soils in good condition, by adding compost or organic mulches, and by weeding and watering. Where possible remove any pests by hand!

The use of insecticides and pesticides should always be avoided as these are environmentally damaging to soils and watercourses and can upset the delicate balance of species in certain habitats. Furthermore, as herbs are usually grown to be used as ingredients for food, and health and beauty products, it makes sense to eliminate the use of chemical sprays and toxic substances.

Other ideas:

Although for the purpose of this pack various types of herb have been especially selected for use, in future, when choosing your own herbs to grow , you can be more adventurous and selective in your choice.

Here are some things to consider when choosing which herbs to grow:

1. How much room do you have? Always consider this as some herbs are very vigorous and can quickly take over an area or bed.



2. Also consider what you want the herbs for and which ones you think you will use the most. If they are grown solely for culinary purposes a selection including mint, dill, sage, parsley, basil, rosemary, thyme and chives is a good one. Other herbs such as marigolds and nasturtiums, may be grown solely for their flowers, or perhaps even their scent, while others may be grown for homeopathic purposes.

You may also want to group herbs according to their different colours. The following herbs have similar shades:

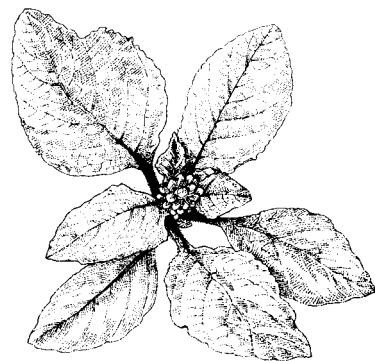
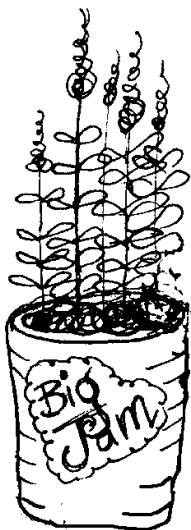
YELLOW: tansy, feverfew, chamomile, yarrow

PINK: chives, some mints, lavender, rosemary

RED: borage

ORANGE: nasturtium, marigold.

WHITE: woodruff, garlic, chives, lavender, some mints



Borage



Did you know? Rosemary is believed to grow well in the garden of a happy household.



HARVESTING & STORAGE

Cutting:

For herbs that will be used immediately, pick when the plants are actively growing, in spring, summer and autumn. Always give the plants a chance to grow, so wait until they are established before cutting for use and storage. "Little and often" is a good guideline when cutting herbs.

Storing:

Most herbs can also be picked for winter storage and use, but some herbs such as basil, parsley and chives should be used fresh wherever possible.

Picking and harvesting herbs for storage and winter use is relatively easy to do, but it is important to do this at the proper stage of the herbs' growth.

Most herbs should be harvested for storage just as they come into flower and before the seeds form, as they will be at their best then. Ideally they should be gathered on a warm dry day, so that the leaves and flowers are already quite dry. Gather them in the morning before they begin to wilt in the heat of the day. Discard any old or discoloured leaves, and cut only those that are free from damage.

There are two main ways of preserving herbs - DRYING and FREEZING.

DRYING:

Herbs need to be dried as quickly as possible in order to preserve their flavour and colour. However drying them in direct sunlight will damage them.

There are **3** main ways to dry herbs:

- 1.** The simplest and most traditional way of drying herbs is to pick them with fairly long stems, bundle these together and hang the bunches upside down in a warm and dark place to dry. Ideal places are airing cupboards, attics and cellars. You will know when the herbs are completely dry as they will rustle when touched. This should take about 2-3 days. When dried out, the leaves should be removed from the stalks and stored in a screw top container until needed. Store containers in a cool dark place. Do not crumble the leaves until you are ready to use them as this will help to further preserve their flavour.
- 2.** Another way to dry herbs is in the oven. Heat the oven on its lowest setting and place the herbs inside to dry. Setting the oven to its lowest temperature is essential as if the oven is too hot the herbs' etheric oils will evaporate. Turn them occasionally to ensure they are thoroughly dry and check the leaves regularly to make sure they do not burn. Store as before.
- 3.** An even quicker way to dry herbs is in the microwave. Strip the leaves from the stems and place them in a single layer on a sheet of absorbent kitchen paper. Cook on high for 1 minute, then turn the leaves over and cook for another 1-1.5 minutes until they are completely dry.



It is always advisable to label and date dried herbs as they can look quite different from the growing plants.

If possible, do not keep herbs for longer than one year, that is from one harvest to the next.

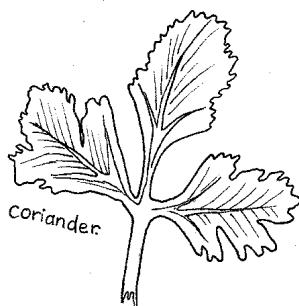
Drying herb flowers:

If you want to dry herb flowers, pick them carefully to avoid damaging the petals. Choose flowers with long stems and tie them together in bunches. Hang them upside down in a warm, dry place as before. If the flowers do not have long stems, place the flowers carefully on a wire cooling rack so that the air can circulate around them, and leave in a warm, dry place.

Drying herb seeds:

Cut the seed heads from the plant just as they begin to turn brown. Place the seedheads in a large paper bag and leave to dry in a warm room. As the seeds dry, they will fall out of the seedhead to the bottom of the paper bag. Store the seeds in glass jars out of direct sunlight.

Did you know? *Coriander leaf is the world's most popular herb.*



FREEZING:

Fresh herbs can also be frozen, although some herbs do become rather limp when thawed! Herbs such as basil, parsley and chives are, however, more suited to this process than drying.

Once the herbs have been washed and patted dry, they can be tied into small bunches in polythene bags. The bags should be sealed to make them airtight and placed in the freezer. When required they can be added directly to dishes, however herbs such as parsley can be crumbled whilst still frozen. This is a good way of storing a bunch of a few different types of herb, such as a bouquet garnis, that can be added directly to casseroles and soups.

Another way of freezing herbs is the ice-cube method. Blanch and chop herbs and place in an ice cube tray and fill up with water. To use, drop a herb cube in the pan while cooking.



HERB FOLKLORE.

In the past most plants, but in particular herbs and flowers, were associated with particular meanings or special messages. For example, it was once very popular to send posies of flowers with hidden messages of love and friendship, so a posy of thyme, mint and sorrel would be sent to show affection. Here is a list of some common herbs and the symbolic meanings that they have become associated with over time.

The Language of Herbs

<i>Bay wreath</i>	Honour
<i>Basil</i>	Love
<i>Balm</i>	Sympathy
<i>Chamomile</i>	Energy in adversity, initiative
<i>Coriander</i>	Concealed merit, hidden worth
<i>Cowslip</i>	Pensiveness, happiness
<i>Elder</i>	Zealousness
<i>Fennel</i>	Force and strength
<i>Garden sage</i>	Esteem
<i>Hop</i>	Injustice
<i>Hyssop</i>	Cleanliness
<i>Lavender</i>	Distrust
<i>Marjoram</i>	Joy
<i>Mint</i>	Virtue
<i>Nasturtium</i>	Patriotism, optimism, splendour
<i>Parsley</i>	Celebration, festivity
<i>Pennyroyal</i>	Flee away
<i>Peppermint</i>	Cordiality
<i>Rocket</i>	Rivalry
<i>Rosemary</i>	Remembrance
<i>Sage</i>	Virtue, wisdom
<i>Sorrel</i>	Affection
<i>Southernwood</i>	Bantering, jest
<i>Spearmint</i>	Warmth of sentiment
<i>Sweet basil</i>	Good wishes
<i>Thyme</i>	Energy, affection
<i>Verbena</i>	You have my confidence



Did you know? Dried sage leaves were once smoked in pipes as a cure for asthma.



WILDLIFE SECTION

Herbs are extremely beneficial to wildlife, providing a rich source of food and shelter for a variety of animal species. Their strong scent, coupled with the brightly coloured flowers that many herbs produce, attract a wide range of bees, insects and birds. By planting herbs in your garden you can create a wildlife haven for many of these species, that are being threatened by the removal of their natural habitats elsewhere. Planting herbs can also indirectly attract an even wider range a species into your garden. The insects attracted to herbs will in turn attract various insect-eating birds and animals, as a rich feeding ground is suddenly opened up to them. Then as your herbs produce seed, insect eating birds are replaced by seed eating birds. A herb garden can therefore act as a permanent residence for some species, a hunting ground for others, and can quite literally make a difference to a species' survival or extinction.

It is amazing the wildlife you can attract and encourage by planting just one or two herbs, so go on, get planting and see what you can see! As well as making a positive contribution towards wildlife conservation, the pleasure to be gained from watching the wildlife in your garden is as good a reason to plant herbs as any!

BUTTERFLIES and MOTHS are attracted to many varieties of herb. Butterflies in particular like lavender, thyme, and sage; however, a particular favourite is marjoram. Also look out for the MAGPIE MOTH around mint.

Sage flowers hold precious nectar for HONEYBEES and BUMBLEBEES and both are attracted to the scent of lemon balm.

Herb loving insects such as LACEWINGS (eaters of greenfly with their green bodies and gossamer wings veined with pale lime colour) are frequent visitors about taller growing herbs. HOVERFLIES (often mistaken for wasps) are also frequent visitors. If you allow some of your plants to grow flower heads and ripen seeds, LADYBIRDS and CARDINAL BEETLES will appear.



Composting

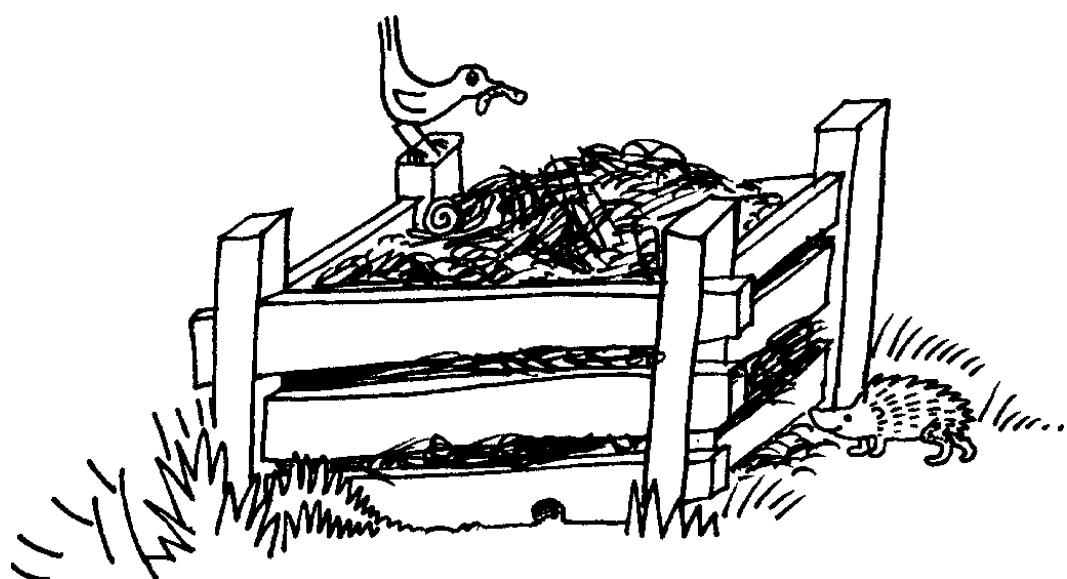
Compost is a mixture of decomposed organic materials, such as vegetable plant waste, weeds, paper etc. The mixture looks like a very rich, dark soil which is very rich in nutrients and when added to garden soil can improve its fertility, structure and water holding capacity.

By using compost instead of PEAT you will be helping to protect wildlife for the future. Peat comes from peatlands which are very fragile, threatened habitats where many specialised plants and animals live. In Britain more than 95% of our lowland peat bogs have been destroyed or damaged by peat extraction. Once these special habitats have been destroyed they will never be replaced.

- Using compost instead of peat helps give bog wildlife a chance to survive.
- Not having to go to the shops by car to buy peat reduces pollution and saves you money.
- Using your home made compost saves on wasteful packaging of purchased products.
- Producing compost uses up organic waste, which would otherwise have to go to a landfill site.

Compost Corner

Why not make your own compost by building a heap or by filling a container like an old dustbin? If you do happen to use a bin or decide to make a wooden frame make sure there are vents for good air circulation. Build it up by adding layers of different waste vegetation and cover the top to keep in heat. The compost is ready when your mixture has turned dark brown and crumbly, it will also have an earthy smell.



COOKING WITH HERBS

Today herbs are most commonly grown for use in the kitchen where they are used to add flavour or provide a garnish rather than be used as a dish in their own right. It is often argued that the British don't use herbs enough in their cooking, but the depth of flavour they can bring to even the simplest of dishes makes experimenting with them very worthwhile! The information below should help you choose the right herb for the right dish and there is a recipe section included, to give you some more ideas.

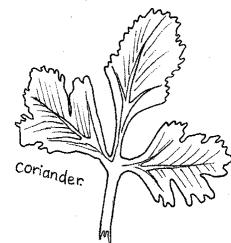
BASIL:

Basil has the spicy overtones of aniseed and is strongly associated with Italian food. It complements green vegetables, salads, soups, eggs, fish, cheese, lamb, pizzas and pasta sauces. Basil is especially delicious with tomatoes and any tomato based sauce.



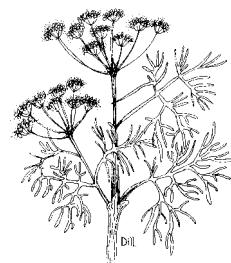
CORIANDER:

The flavour of coriander leaf is strong, pungent and earthy, quite different from the more aromatic citrus flavour of the coriander seed. Although both are from the same plant they are not interchangeable. Coriander leaf is particularly associated with curries and Thai, Indonesian and South American dishes. It also complements chicken, fish, rice, and tomatoes and is often sprinkled over dishes as a garnish.



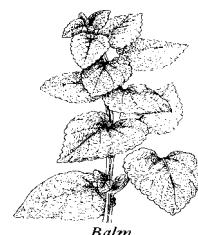
DILL:

Dill has a fresh anise-like flavour and aroma. Leaves and seeds complement fish, chicken, minced meat, vegetables, soups, eggs and cheese. Use an alternative to parsley in omelettes and quiches.



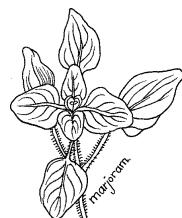
LEMON BALM:

Lemon scented, heart-shaped leaves which either dried or fresh make an excellent herbal tea. Can also be used in salad dressing.



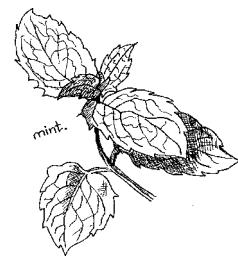
MARJORAM:

Used in a number of Italian dishes, it goes especially well with tomatoes. Also complements lamb, chicken, veal, pork, fish, pizza, vegetables, cheese, eggs and stuffings.



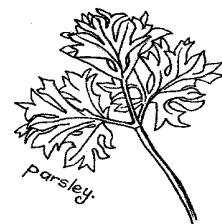
MINT:

Superbly refreshing flavour, useful in sauces and jellies and subtly improves the flavour of peas, beans, carrots, beetroot, potatoes and spinach. Traditionally used in the UK as a summer herb for flavouring lamb.



PARSLEY:

One of the best known culinary herbs, it is a "must" for the herb garden. Again an essential ingredient of bouquet garni, it also complements lamb, chicken, ham, casseroles, fish, vegetables, salads, eggs and cheese, soups and sauces. Ideal for more delicate dishes, as it does not overpower delicate flavours.



ROSEMARY:

Has a strong pine-wood aroma and a bittersweet flavour. Complements lamb, pork, chicken, oily fish, game, vegetable soups and marinades. Its fresh camphor like aroma is a good counterbalance to rich or fatty foods, particularly lamb.



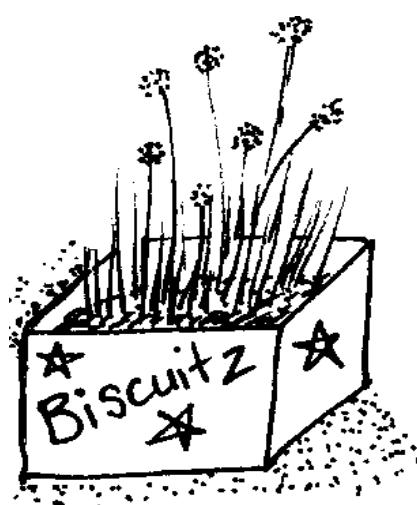
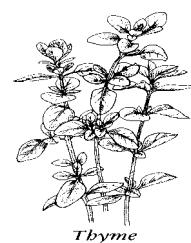
SAGE:

Its strong, fresh flavour makes it a popular culinary herb. Has an affinity with fatty foods and is best used with pork, duck and goose. Is also excellent with onions, fish, cheese and liver.



THYME:

The strong fresh flavour of thyme blends well with other herbs without overpowering them. One of the principle ingredients of a bouquet garni, it complements chicken, lamb, beef, rabbit, turkey, vegetables, fish, cheese, eggs and soups.



RECIPES

These recipes have been chosen as they are quick, easy and relatively cheap to make. As it is also important to eat a healthy and well-balanced diet, these recipes are nutritious and healthy too.

Each recipe serves four people unless otherwise indicated.

Always take extra care when preparing food for people with allergies to certain foodstuffs.

Tomato & Rice Soup with Basil

Ingredients:

½ tbsp olive oil



1 large onion



1 clove garlic, crushed

1 small red pepper, deseeded and chopped

900g /2lb ripe tomatoes, peeled, deseeded and chopped (Tinned tomatoes may be used)



1 tbsp tomato puree

sprig of oregano

775ml /pint chicken or vegetable stock

45g/ 1 ½ oz risotto rice, preferably arborio

3 tbsp chopped basil

freshly ground pepper

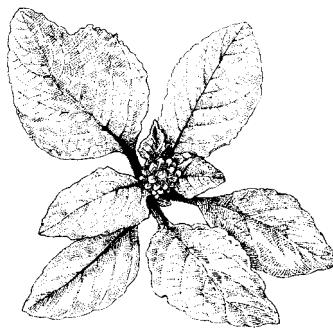
bread sticks or crusty Italian bread.

Instructions:

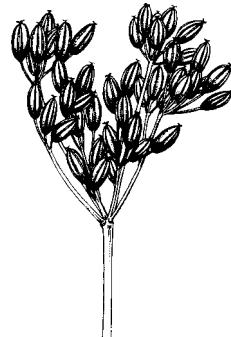
1. Heat the oil in a large saucepan over a moderate heat, add onions and garlic and cook slowly without browning for approximately 4 mins.
2. Stir in the red pepper and cook for a further 2 mins.
3. Add the tomatoes, tomato puree and oregano and stir in wine and stock. Season, bring to the boil, then lower heat, cover and simmer for 20 mins.
4. Add rice, cook for a further 15 mins, or until the rice is tender.
5. Serve accompanied by bread sticks or crusty Italian bread.



Bay



Borage



Caraway



Carrot, Orange and Coriander Soup

Ingredients:

½ tbsp oil
2 medium onions, sliced
1 lb (450g) carrots, peeled and diced
1 ½ pints (300ml) pure unsweetened orange juice
2 tbsps chopped fresh coriander
freshly ground black pepper
4 tbsp natural yoghurt - low fat
sprig of coriander to garnish
4 tbsp stock - chicken or vegetable



Instructions:

1. Heat the oil in a large pan and fry the onions until very soft. Add carrots and fry for another two minutes.
2. Stir in stock and the orange juice and coriander and simmer covered for 40 - 50 minutes or until the carrots are very tender.
3. Liquidise the soup and serve garnished with swirls of yoghurt and a sprig of coriander.

Rosemary Potatoes

Ingredients:

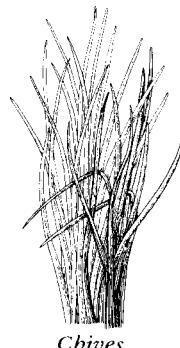
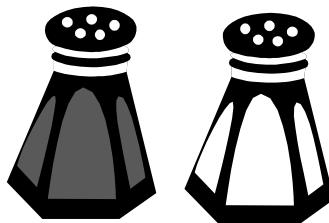
1 lb (450g) new potatoes
2 tbs olive oil
1 clove garlic, chopped
2 tbsp chopped fresh rosemary
3 tbsp chopped chives (3 tsp dried chives)
Ground black pepper

Instructions:

1. Par boil the potatoes until just cooked but still firm. Slice in half.
2. Heat the oil in a large pan. Add the potatoes and garlic and fry gently until browned evenly. Add the rosemary and chives and stir fry for 1-2 minutes more.
3. Season with pepper and serve. An ideal accompaniment to any dish!



Chervil



Chives



Liver with Sage and Mushrooms

Ingredients:

- 1 tbsp oil
- 3 shallots, chopped
- 750g (1 ½ lb) calves liver, skin removed and cut into strips.
- 8 fresh sage leaves
- 125ml(4 fl oz) stock (Vegetable)
- 8 button mushrooms, halved
- freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley



Instructions:

1. Heat oil in a frying pan and cook shallots for 2 mins.
2. Add liver and sage and cook over a high heat for 2 mins or until liver changes colour. Remove from pan, leaving juices.
3. Stir stock into pan, bring to the boil and boil rapidly until almost evaporated, scraping any sediment from the base of the pan. Return liver to pan, add mushrooms and cook for 2 mins longer. Season to taste with black pepper and mix parsley through.

Scampi Provencale

This recipe is a quick and easy recipe that can be cooked in the microwave.

Ingredients:

- ½ tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 400g (14oz) canned plum tomatoes, chopped, (reserve the juice)
- 5 tbsp stock (Fish or vegetable)
- 1 tbsp fresh thyme, chopped
- 1 tbsp fresh basil
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tbsp cornflour
- 675g (1 ½ lb) prawns



Garlic

Instructions:

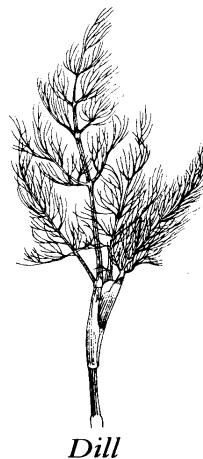
- 1 Combine olive oil, onion and garlic in a deep bowl and cook on high for 5 mins, stirring frequently.
2. Add the chopped tomatoes, stock, herbs, pepper and stir together well. Heat for 2 minutes on high.
3. Mix the reserved tomato juice with the cornflour and add to the sauce. Cook on high for 3 mins and stir well until completely blended.
4. Add the prawns to the sauce and cook on high for 2-4 mins or until they are tender and the sauce has thickened. Remove the bay leaf before serving on a bed of rice or pasta.



Baked Salmon and Dill

Ingredients:

175g/ 6oz carrots
175g/ 6oz celery
225g / 8oz courgettes
600g / 1 ½ lb piece middle cut salmon
1 tbsp chopped fresh dill
salt and freshly ground black pepper
45ml/ 3tsp lemon juice
dill sprig to garnish



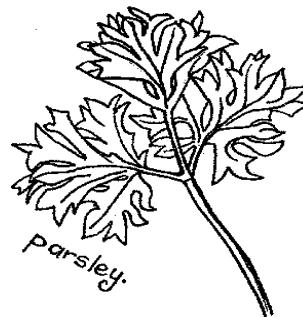
Instructions:

1. Cut peeled carrots, celery and courgettes and into thin neat strips. Rinse the salmon and pat dry with kitchen paper.
2. Using a medium sized flame-proof casserole dish add the vegetables and stir over a high heat for 2-3 mins. Mix in the dill. Place fish on top of the vegetables, season well and pour over lemon juice.
3. Push a piece of damp grease proof paper right down on top of the fish. Cover with a tight-fitting lid. Bake in the oven at 170C, Gas mark 4 for 35 mins.
4. Lift the fish onto a serving dish and ease off the skin. Surround with the vegetables and pour the remaining juices over . Garnish with sprig of dill.

Sage and Parsley Mushroom Risotto

Ingredients:

30g / 1oz dried mushrooms
115g / 4 oz fresh mushrooms
1 tbsp oil
1 small onion, finely chopped
350g / 12oz risotto rice
2 ¼ pts hot chicken or vegetable stock
2 tbsp chopped fresh parsley
2 tbsp chopped sage
3 tbsp finely grated parmesan cheese
Freshly ground black pepper



Instructions:

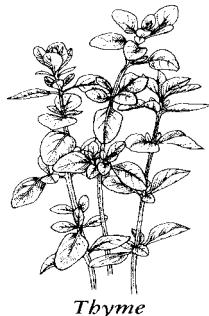
1. Put the dried mushrooms in a small bowl and cover with warm water. Leave to soak for 20 mins, then rinse thoroughly, drain and chop, reserving a few for garnish.
2. Heat oil in a saucepan over a moderate heat. Add the onion and cook for two mins to soften. Stir in the rice and the fresh mushrooms and cook for ten mins until the rice is translucent. Add ¼ pt of stock and chopped mushrooms and cook for 3 mins, until all the liquid is absorbed.
3. Add 575ml / 1pt of stock to the pan, lower the heat, cover and simmer for 10 mins, until the stock is absorbed. Add another 300ml / ½ pt of stock and continue to cook as before. Keep checking and adding stock until the rice is tender. Total cooking time will be 20-30 mins.
4. Stir in the remaining butter with the chopped herbs, seasoning and add half the parmesan. Serve, garnished with the remaining mushrooms and parmesan thinly shaved.



Chicken with Thyme

Ingredients:

4 skinless chicken breasts
1 tbsp olive
freshly ground black pepper
juice of ½ lemon
2 tbsp chopped fresh thyme



Instructions:

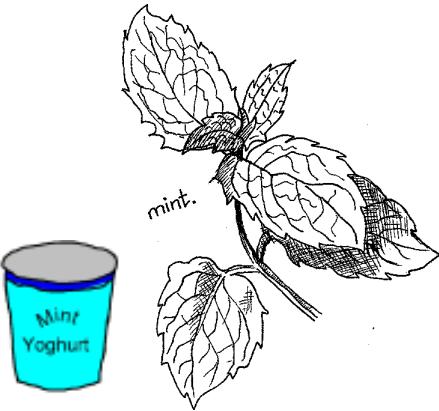
1. Marinate chicken in lemon juice and thyme for a 2 hours in the fridge before cooking, or overnight if time allows.
2. Put chicken pieces in an oven proof dish and bake for 25 mins.

Remove from oven and drain off excess fat.

Spicy Kebabs with Mint Yoghurt

Ingredients:

450g (1lb) minced lamb
1 tbsp plain flour
salt and pepper
½ tsp. ground cinnamon
grated rind of 1 lemon
1 egg beaten
1 onion, chopped
mixed salad to serve
Dressing:
1 tbsp chopped fresh mint
225g (8oz) plain yoghurt



Instructions:

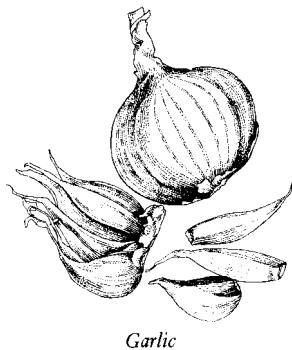
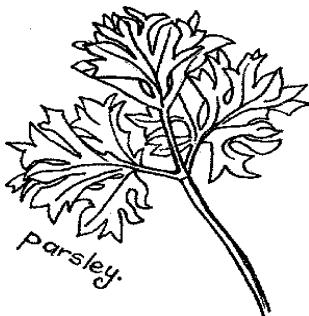
1. To make dressing, blend together mint, and yoghurt. Cover and chill.
2. Mix together lamb, flour, seasoning, cinnamon and lemon rind.
3. Add egg and onion. Mix well and divide into 16.
4. Pre-heat grill. Shape mince into ovals and thread onto 4 skewers. (When shaping the mince, make it as firm as possible before threading onto skewers.)
5. Put under the grill and cook for 12-15 mins, turning halfway through. Serve on a bed of salad, with yoghurt dressing. An alternative is to serve with brown rice or wholemeal pitta bread.



Italian Pork Chops

Ingredients:

4 pork chops
2 tbsp finely chopped oregano
Olive Oil
400g (14oz) can tomatoes
1 tbsp tomato puree
grated rind and juice of 1 lemon
1 clove crushed garlic
chopped parsley to garnish



Instructions:

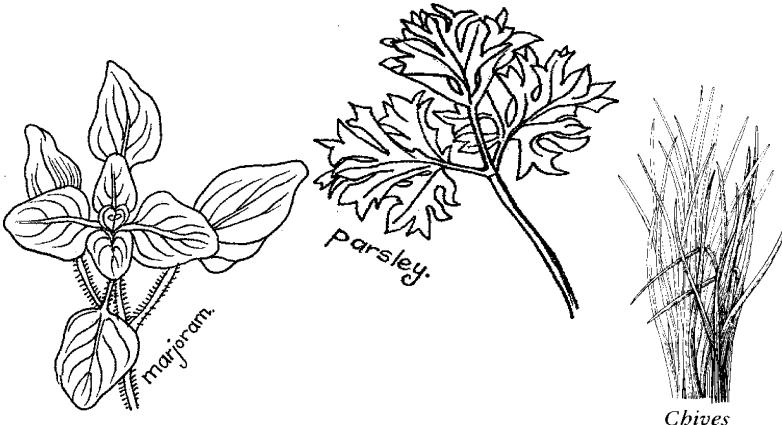
1. Brush both sides of the chops lightly with olive oil, then sprinkle with pepper, oregano and marjoram. Grill chops for 10-15 mins until cooked, turning occasionally.
2. While the chops are being grilled, mix the tomatoes, tomato puree, lemon juice and garlic in a small pan. Bring to boil, cover and simmer for 10-15 mins.
3. Remove chops from grill and pour over sauce. Serve topped with lemon rind and parsley.

Cheese and Herb Scones: (Makes 10)

These scones can be made with parsley, chives or marjoram, or a mixture of all three.

Ingredients:

100g (4oz) self-raising flour
2 tsp. baking powder
100g (4oz) plain wholemeal flour
pinch of salt
½ tsp. paprika
50g (2oz) margarine
75g (3oz) cheese, finely grated
4 tsp. chopped fresh herbs
8tbsp milk
milk to glaze



Instructions:

1. Pre-heat the oven to 220C / 425F /gas mark 7. Sieve the self - raising flour and baking powder and place in a large bowl with the wholemeal flour. Add salt and paprika and rub in the margarine.
2. Add the cheese, herbs and milk and mix to form a soft dough. Place on a floured board and knead gently.
3. Roll out the dough to a thickness of 1 cm (1/2 in) and cut out the scones using a 5cm (2in) pastry cutter. Place on a greased baking tray and brush the top with milk. Bake in the oven for 10-15 minutes. Cool on a wire rack.



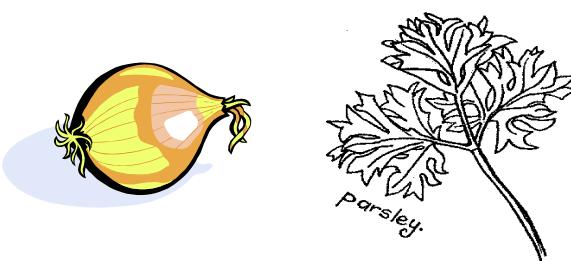
SAUCES:

Parsley Sauce

Parsley sauce is one of the classic accompaniments for fish. Serve with plain grilled or poached fish. This recipe makes $\frac{1}{2}$ litre (Enough for 4 people)

Ingredients:

1/2 onion
1/2 litre semi-skimmed milk
1/2 oz cornflour
1 tbsp chopped fresh parsley
1/2 tsp black pepper



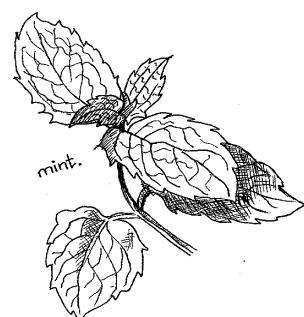
1. Add the onion and parsley to milk and bring to the boil.
2. Set aside for 10 mins, then remove the onion.
3. Mix the cornflour with a little cold water.
4. Add to the milk gradually, stirring all the time.
5. Add the pepper and simmer for 5 mins.

Mint Sauce

This is the classic sauce to serve with roast lamb. Make 1 hour before serving to allow time for the flavour to develop.

Ingredients:

Small bunch of mint
10 oz (2tsp) sugar
15ml (1 tbsp) boiling water
15-30 ml (1- 2 tbsp) vinegar



1. Place the mint and sugar on a board and chop finely.
2. Put in a pan and add the boiling water.
3. Stir until the sugar has dissolved.
4. Stir in the vinegar to taste.

FLAVOURED OILS:

Herb oils are easy to make and not only look pretty but are useful in cooking, especially for more adventurous cooks. Ideally extra virgin olive oil should be used, but groundnut oil is an acceptable alternative. The following herbs are particularly recommended for use in flavouring oils: BASIL, BAY, CHERVIL, DILL, FENNEL, ROSEMARY, LOVAGE, MINT, SAGE and THYME.

Here are a few herb oil recipes to try.

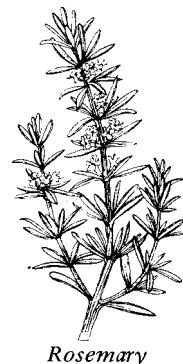
Use around 800ml (1 1/3 pint) olive oil. There is little point in using very expensive extra-virgin olive oil here as the ingredients will pack in plenty of flavour. Fill a glass bottle with the ingredients listed and top up with olive oil. Store in the fridge or a cool larder for at least two weeks before using.



Chilli & Rosemary Oil

Excellent with grilled lamb chops or any grilled fish with a high fat content.

- 8 hot chillies
- 1 long sprig of rosemary
- 4 pieces orange peel



Lemon, garlic and thyme oil

Better with grilled vegetables and salads

- peel of 2 lemons, pith removed
- 8 sprigs of fresh thyme
- 10 peeled cloves of garlic
- 12 peppercorns
- 3 bay leaves



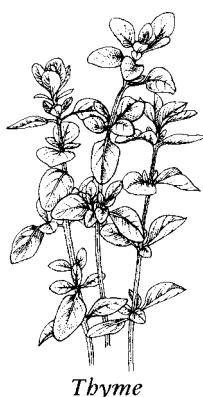
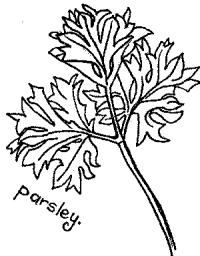
Mustard, vinegar and butter can all be livened up in a similar way, by adding your favourite herb.

Bouquet Garnis:

Bouquet garnis are bunches of fresh herbs which are used to add flavour to stocks, stews, vegetables and soups. The classic combination is parsley, thyme and a bay leaf, with twice as much parsley used as the other two herbs. The bunch of herbs should be tied with a piece of string and removed before serving. Alternatively herbs can be chopped and enclosed in a small square of muslin. If you use muslin other flavourings can be added such as dried citrus peel or cloves of garlic.

The herbs included in bouquet garnis can vary according to taste and the dish you are cooking. Other good combinations of herb are:

- Parsley, chives and thyme (for poultry dishes)
- Parsley, bay and lemon thyme (for lamb dishes)
- Parsley, bay, thyme and citrus peel (for pork dishes)
- Parsley, bay, thyme and cloves (for beef dishes)



Did you know? Lemon Balm is often known by its botanical name "melissa" (the Greek word for bee) as bees are attracted by its scent.



ARTS & CRAFTS

As well as the obvious culinary use for herbs, it is also possible to use herb leaves and flowers in a variety of ways to decorate your home or to make attractive gifts for others. Lavender is perhaps one of the more commonly used herbs for decorative purposes, often used to make scented coathangers, drawer liners etc. However there are many other herbs with beautiful fragrances and attractive flowers and foliage that can be used in a similar way. Here are some ideas for you to try.

Pressed Herb Cards:

You will need:

Fresh herb flowers and leaves
White paper - any size up to A4.
Flower press / hard back book
Rubber-based glue
Card - A4 (Choose a colour that suits the herb or flower).

1. Gather a selection of fresh herb flowers and leaves. Place them in single layers between sheets of clean, white paper and press tightly in a flower press, or between the covers of a heavy book for several weeks.
2. Once the herbs are thoroughly dried, remove them carefully and arrange them in your chosen design on the cardboard, folded in the shape of a card. Glue them down with rubber based glue.
3. If you are sending these through the post, use fairly thick envelopes to ensure they are not damaged in transit.

Herb Pot Pourris

You can make your own pot pourri using your own favourite flowers and scents.

1. Gather the flowers and leaves when they are quite dry and dry them thoroughly as outlined above in the Harvesting and Storage section.
2. When dry mix together the herbs and flowers in different colour and scent combinations.
3. To help prolong the fragrance of the herbs, mix in a fixative. Many fixatives themselves are fragranced and so add to the overall perfume of the pot pourri. Try cinnamon powder, nutmeg, cloves, vanilla pods or the seeds of coriander.

Note: Don't discard the stems of dried herbs once the leaves and flowers have been picked for pot pourri. Group them together in bundles and tie them with string. If you are lucky enough to have an open fire, these can be added and the heat releases the fragrance of the herbs and scents the room.



Fresh Herb Vases / Wreaths

Herbs, particularly when they are in flower, can look just as attractive in a vase as a more traditional bunch of carnations or daffodils. The different flowering times of the various herbs ensures that you will always have a choice of flowers and a wide range of foliage to choose from!

A woven cane wreath can be decorated in minutes with fresh herbs. Simply thread the herb stalks into the wreath (there is no need for glue or wire) and add a ribbon to hang the wreath.

Muslin Bath Sachets

These are a bathtime treat to relax you after a stressful day. Just add to bath water!

You will need:

Remnants of muslin
Narrow ribbon
Oatmeal
Powdered milk
Mixed dried herbs

1. For each bag cut a piece of muslin 10 X 15 cms (4 X 6 in)
2. Fold the muslin in half lengthwise and sew the bottom and sides to make a sachet. Trim the top edge with pinking shears.
3. Turn the sachet inside out (so that the seams are on the inside)
4. In a large bowl, mix together equal quantities of oatmeal and powdered milk and sufficient herbs to scent the mixture. Fill the sachets half-full with this mixture.
5. Tie a matching ribbon around the top of the sachet and loop the ribbon over the bath tap so that the bath water will run through the sachet.

Did you know? *If parsley is scattered in fishponds, it is said to heal sick fish.*



HEALTH & BEAUTY

Historically, herbs were cultivated for their medicinal and tonic properties. Although this practice has declined in recent years, with the introduction of modern pharmaceutical products, there is much to be said for using natural alternatives wherever possible, to avoid and ease a host of minor ailments and to boost inner and outer health and beauty.

Although many people are sceptical about the benefits of herbal remedies and natural beauty products, others believe that there is much truth in what we consider to be "old wives tales". Indeed, today homeopathic medicine and aromatherapy are often recognised as complementary allies to conventional medicine. Being completely natural, they tend not to have the negative side-effects that conventional medicines can have.

Herbs are used in various ways to heal the mind and body and to promote health and well-being. They are used in HOMEOPATHIC MEDICINE, a natural alternative to more traditional medicines, that treats ailments with many herbal based remedies. Herbs are also found in many of the oils used in AROMATHERAPY, a treatment where natural essential oils are used in healing, relaxation and treatment of stress related conditions. They are also used as ingredients for many beauty products.

This section is intended to give you an insight into some of the beneficial and health promoting properties that many herbs are thought to have.

BASIC HERBAL PREPARATIONS

Infusing: Put one and a half handfuls of fresh herbs or 1 oz (25g) of dried into a heatproof container. Bring 1 pint (570 ml) distilled water to the boil. Pour over the herb immediately and cover. Steep for 30 minutes. Strain and store in a refrigerator for up to three days.

Decocting: This method is usually employed for the tougher parts of herbs. Put 1 oz (25 g) of the herb into a saucepan (not aluminium or copper). Add 1 pint (570 ml) distilled water, bring to the boil and simmer for 30 minutes. If more than half the liquid has evaporated, top up with water to make half a pint (275 ml). Cool, strain and bottle. Keep in the refrigerator and use within a few days.

Macerating: Use this method for herbs likely to lose some of their therapeutic value if heated. Pack a glass jar with the crushed, fresh herb. Cover with vegetable oil, cider vinegar or pure alcohol. Seal and leave for two weeks, shaking the jar each day. Strain and top up with fresh herbs. Repeat until the liquid smells strongly herbal. Strain, seal and bottle. Keeps well and retains its scent.

Pulverizing: Grind, bruise or mash plant fibres and seeds using either a pestle and mortar or an electric blender.



PLEASE NOTE:

1. This section is in no way intended to be used instead of professional medical advice and wherever necessary always seek advice from your doctor.
2. Only use herbs that you recognise and know to be safe to use. If you are in any doubt do not use.
3. When using herbal oils, always follow instructions carefully. Herbal oils can be very potent and they should be avoided during pregnancy, unless otherwise indicated. Do not use on sensitive skin and when using shop-bought oils, remember that they should NOT normally be used undiluted.

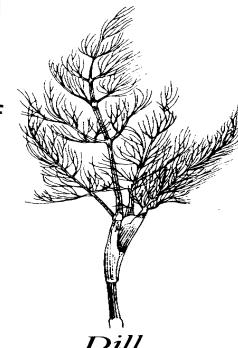
Here are some of the herbs you can grow and some of their uses!

DILL:

Is a good digestive and is probably the first herbal remedy you ever tried as it's an ingredient in gripe water!

FOR HICCUPS: chew some dill seeds or make a decoction and sip slowly.
Decoction: Bruise or crush dill seeds and add a teaspoonful to 9 fl oz of cold water in an enamel or glass pan. Bring to the boil then simmer for 15 minutes. Strain and leave to cool.

FOR INDIGESTION: sip decoction as above.

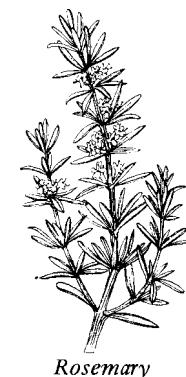
**ROSEMARY:**

Has a number of therapeutic properties and uses.

- Anti-bacterial and anti-oxidant properties - is useful as a disinfectant.
- Analgesic- Good for treating headaches and neuralgia
- Astringent - Good for treating oily skin.
- Anti-spasmodic - Good for the digestive system.

FOR TIREDNESS/WHEN YOU'RE FEELING DOWN: Add a cupful of rosemary infusion to a bath of water, or try a cup of rosemary tea. It is also good when you have a cold to get you wakened in the morning.

FOR FEVER: To help cool down and to fight infection, apply a cooled infusion of rosemary as a compress to the legs or feet. (Don't use cold or chilled compresses to reduce a fever, just cool ones.)

**Rosemary Essential Oil:** (Avoid during pregnancy)

- This oil is good for massaging aching muscles.
- It also makes a good insect repellent, add 3 drops of geranium and 3 drops rosemary oil to a tablespoon of oil and apply to exposed skin. (Not for use while in the sun)

MINT:

Another herb with a number of therapeutic properties.

- Antiseptic - Often found in disinfectant solutions
- Digestive - Commonly used in commercial indigestion remedies
- Antispasmodic - often prescribed in oil form by GP's for conditions such as irritable bowel syndrome.
- Analgesic - mint oil can be used as a toothache "first aid" measure.
- Stimulant - found in bath preparations designed to refresh rather than relax.
- Decongestant - menthol is commonly used in preparations to help ease cold symptoms/ clear blocked noses etc.
- Cooling - used in foot creams/lotions.



FOR TRAVEL SICKNESS / SEVERE NAUSEA: Infuse mint by adding boiling water to mint leaves, add some grated stem or root ginger and leave to stand for 15mins. Strain and sip as required.

FOR HEADACHES: Soak a piece of clean gauze or cotton in mint tea which has been chilled - wring it out and apply to the forehead.



Mint Essential Oil:

Extreme care should be taken with this. Never use undiluted on the skin, and never use as a bath essence on its own. Don't use it at night as it may keep you awake. Do not use during pregnancy, and do not use on sensitive skin.

- Can be applied neat on cotton wool to a painful tooth.
- Mix 4tsp soya oil and 2 drops of mint oil for a lotion for bruises or swelling, and apply to the affected areas - repeat over the next few hours.

PARSLEY:

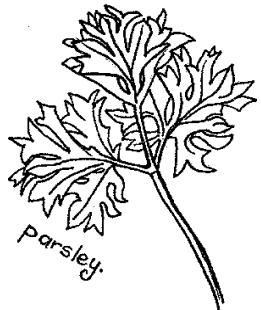
More commonly a culinary herb, but does have some therapeutic qualities.

- Diuretic - Eating parsley or drinking parsley tea helps reduce fluid retention.
- Febrifuge - Can help bring down body temperature.
- Digestive - Chewing a sprig of parsley, adding it to soups/stews, or drinking parsley can help ease indigestion.

FOR THREAD VEINS: Boil 3 sprigs of parsley in a pint of water for two minutes, then leave to stand for 5. Add 1 drop of calendula oil and leave to cool. Apply to skin with cotton wool. Store refrigerated in an airtight container.

FOR SORE AND ITCHY EYES : Parsley can be juiced (blended) and dabbed on the eyes using cotton wool. It is especially useful for "hay fever eyes".

FOR BAD BREATH: Chew a sprig after eating or to freshen breath.



Parsley Essential Oil: Not widely available and not recommended for use except by a qualified aromatherapist. Is said to relieve the symptoms of PMT.

Did you know? Basil is one of the herbs symbolizing love. At one time young girls would place a pot of basil on their windowsills to show that suitors would be welcomed.



Herbal Oils:

As mentioned above, herb oils are commonly used in aromatherapy. These essential oils generally have to be bought, however it is possible to make your own bath oil.(See later section).

Essential Oils can be used in the following ways:

1. Massage
2. Added to bath water - as per manufacturers instructions.
3. Inhalation - a few drops of oil in a large pot with fresh boiled water. Place your head over the pot to inhale the vapour. Place a towel over your head and the pot to keep the vapour in.
4. To freshen rooms - use a herbal oil burner.
(Always follow instructions on use carefully.)

Herbal Teas:

Herbal teas are a refreshing alternative to traditional tea and coffee and can be used to calm and cure a host of ailments.

Rosemary tea can help reduce pain and tension and lift the mood. It can also help indigestion where there's cramp-like pains in the stomach due to its anti-spasmodic properties.

Parsley tea can help ease fluid retention.

Mint tea is very good for digestion and as a pick me up drink. Also helps to reduce nausea.

When making herbal teas or tisanes, unless otherwise stated, use 15g (½ oz) dried herb or 25g (1oz) fresh herb to 600ml (1pint) boiling water.

NATURAL BEAUTY PRODUCTS

Make all lotions and potions in small quantities, and once open keep in the refrigerator.

Rosemary Hair Rinse:

This is easy to make and is excellent for bringing out the shine in extremely dark hair. Use it as a final rinse after shampooing. To make the equivalent for fair hair, simply replace the rosemary with chamomile flowers.

Infuse a few stalks of rosemary in hot water for several minutes. Strain the liquid, allow to cool then bottle.

For dandruff treatment, steep 1 oz of fresh rosemary and 1 oz fresh mint in enough white vinegar to cover - leave for 2-3 weeks. Use after shampooing.

Mint Footbath:

Refresh tired and aching feet by soaking them in a soothing mint footbath.

Make an infusion of 1 tablespoon mint and 2.25lt (4pints) boiling water. Leave water to cool slightly and infuse for 15 minutes, then strain. Immerse your feet in the water for 15 minutes after checking that footbath is cool enough.



Apple and Mint Astringent:

This will improve the texture of the skin and add colour.

Place 3 tsp. chopped fresh mint and 2 tbsp apple cider vinegar in a screw top jar. Leave for 7 days. Strain the liquid into a bowl and add 285ml(½ pint) water. Stir well, pour into clean jars and store in a cool place.

Sage and Peppermint Facial Steam:

This will improve circulation and cleanse the skin. It is not suitable for dry skins. Always wash or cleanse face before use.

Fill a large bowl with 1lt (2pints) boiling water and add 2 tbsp freshly chopped sage and 2 tbsp freshly chopped peppermint. Hold your head about 30cm (12in) above the bowl and cover with a large towel to prevent the steam escaping. After 10 minutes gently pat your face with a face cloth rinsed out in cold water.

Dill Nail Strengthener:

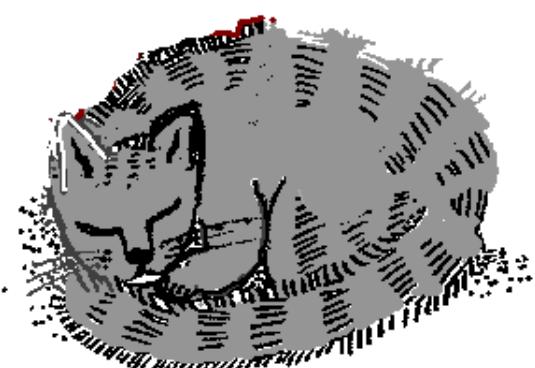
Mash 4 tbsp fresh dill seed and pour a cup of boiling water over them. Leave the liquid to cool for 10 minutes . Soak fingers for 5 minutes and then pat dry. This process can be carried out on a regular basis.

Mint and Lemon Face Mask:

This is suitable for an oily skin. Place 1 tsp lemon juice, 1 egg white, half a cucumber (peeled and chopped) and some fresh peppermint leaves in a blender or food processor, and puree. Leave the face mask on for 10-15 minutes before rinsing off with tepid water.

Rosemary Mouthwash:

A cooled strong infusion used as a mouthwash to freshen breath while the anti-bacterial properties work. This can help sore throats and toothache too. To make infusion add 2 tbsp chopped fresh or dried leaves to one pint of boiling water. Leave to stand for five to ten minutes and strain. Use when cool.



Herbal Bath Oils:

These are relaxing when added to bath water, and they can soften hard water, which can leave skin feeling dry. Collect old perfume bottles or glass jars with stoppers to display the oils in your bathroom. The oils can be made in two ways.

1. Buy a bottle of almond oil and decant into smaller bottles. Add a couple of drops of a herb essential oil, such as lavender, thyme or rosemary and shake the bottle to mix the oils thoroughly.
2. Using fresh herbs, add sprigs of flowering herbs such as lavender or rosemary to bottles of almond oil and leave in a warm place for several weeks for the oil to absorb the herbs' scent. Stir or shake the mixture daily. Strain the oil and add a couple of spoonfuls to the bath water.

Note: Take extra care when adding oils to bath water, as the bath can become very slippery and dangerous.

Did you know? *It was believed that sage strengthened the memory, hence a sage or wise man would have a long memory.*



Sage Flowers

