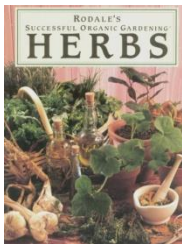




CHAMOMILE December 2015

Notice Board

January 30th 2016. Visit to Helen Wilson's Lavender Farm. Shared lunch. Bring a folding chair. Meet 12.30 at Mobil service station cnr. Opaki and Te Ore Ore Rd. to pool cars. Helen's address is 1453 Castlepoint Rd.



Book Review (October - Alison Cane) Successful Organic Gardening: HERBS by Pat Michalak



New Zealand edition edited by Cheryl Maddocks, horticulturist and landscape designer, gardening writer who has written over 25 books, with Keith Smith, organic consultant and prolific author. Published 1995 by Moa Beckett.

The author, Pat Michalak, owns a farm in eastern Pennsylvania where she grows organic herbs. The book is part of a series on organic gardening including titles on Herbs, Companion Planting, and Vegetables.

The book is presented in two sections:

- (a) How to select, plant, maintain, harvest and use herbs without using synthetic fertilisers or pesticides, and
- (b) A Plant by Plant Guide - a reference section detailing requirements and characteristics of most herb species.

Why organic? - Organic gardening involves following the natural cycle by creating a balance of the nutrients plants require and the activity of insects and disease organisms. The goal of the organic gardener is to keep all the natural cycles in balance.

The book is set out in a logical order starting with understanding your garden and the style of garden envisaged, then choosing plants to suit the climate and locality. A climatic regions map is included to assist in decision making. Next comes cultivation, planting and maintaining the garden. The final section in the first part of the book covers preserving and using herbs e.g. cooking, medicinal uses and crafts. While these sections are generally quite short (2 - 3 pages), the book is providing an overview rather than detailed specifics of a particular plant or process. I found it a book to cover everything for a beginner, or a quick reference for a gardener with a bit more knowledge.

The second part of the book contains the plant by plant guide. This part includes coloured photos and descriptions of more than 100 plants arranged alphabetically. Throughout the book are beautiful coloured photographs and diagrams illustrating points made in the text, making the book very enjoyable to read. These photos and diagrams help to identify plants and also provide layout and order examples.

(continued on next page)

(Book Review, continued from p.1)

While the book is set out in a logical order, the comprehensive list of contents and index allow for easy dipping in and out of specific topics. Together with the volume on "Companion Planting", these books form an excellent reference collection for any gardener and an enjoyable read for anyone.

Here are links to two articles in support of using organic or non-synthetic pesticides in the garden:

Radio New Zealand item on the effect of glyphosate on soil bacteria - this interview is very interesting and alarming as the use of this herbicide increases resistance to antibiotics. Included with this item is a recipe for a vinegar weed spray* I use on my garden. Ref.: <http://rnz.to/1LYJfzw>

*4 cups white vinegar

1/4 cup salt

2 tsp dishwashing liquid

Mix until salt is dissolved then pour into sprayer. Spray on fine day

NZ Herald article giving a cancer warning on the use of three pesticides, one being glyphosate
http://www.nzherald.co.nz/lifestyle/news/article.cfm?c_id=6&objectid=11421018

Rosa's Winning Condiment Recipe

The recipe as given below, is the original from an American idea. Rosa changed it with 1 & 1/2 cups olives, 2 tbsp oil, 4 tbsp balsamic, 2 tsp fresh thyme and 2 tsp fresh chopped rosemary. She used both cayenne & chilli pepper, more garlic and didn't add salt and pepper. Rosa says that's the whole idea of these base recipes - add and subtract to suit your taste.



Base Recipe Ingredients

1 cup chopped kalamata olives

1 cup chopped dried figs

1/2 cup water

1 Tbsp olive oil

2 Tbsp balsamic vinegar

1 tsp rosemary

1 tsp thyme

1/4 tsp cayenne pepper

2 cloves garlic, minced

salt & pepper to taste

Directions

Combine figs and water in a saucepan over medium heat. Bring to a boil and cook until tender and liquid has reduced. Remove from heat; stir in olive oil, balsamic vinegar, rosemary, thyme and cayenne. Add olives and garlic and mix well. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Cover and refrigerate for at least 4 hours or overnight to allow flavours to blend.

To serve: unwrap cream cheese block and place on a serving platter. Spoon tapenade over cheese and sprinkle with 1/3 cup chopped toasted walnuts. Serve with slices of French bread or crackers.

Developing Research into Impact of Plant Essential oils: Rosemary

The Spring issue of the NZ Neurological Foundation's newsletter reports the developing work of researchers at Northumbria University into the impact of plant essential oils on memory and cognition. The researchers' rosemary essential oil study findings were presented at the Annual Conference of the British Psychological Society in 2013. These suggested that rosemary essential oil may enhance the ability to remember events and to remember to complete tasks at particular times in the future.

Two years on from presenting their study, the research team's aroma-based focus has been extended. One particular interest is related to cognitive functioning and subjective mood, the extent to which these might be open to alteration by exposure to aromas. The team has also been looking to see if changes to subjective mood are reflected in changes to cognitive performance, that is, do aromas that make you feel more alert, make you react more quickly or remember more?

Grow Your Own Pharmacy

Presentation by Val Richardson at the October Tuesday Meeting

The information for this presentation was taken from an article in NZ Gardener, August 2010.

If, like me, you realise in autumn that planning for winter remedies should have been made in springtime, then the following information is timely.

Get Well – Get Planting Plant now to be able to prepare for the winter

- | | |
|------------|------------------|
| 1. Plant | 2. Grow |
| 3. Harvest | 4. Make remedies |

WARNING

Self treatment with herbs is appropriate for minor conditions and for providing symptomatic relief from some diseases. However, serious, life-threatening, long term conditions should be treated by a professionally trained herbalist and professional treatment is also recommended for pregnant or breastfeeding women.

Choice of herbs

A variety of herbs may be used to make winter remedies. Ten popular ones are thyme, calendula, sage, elecampane, echinacea, chamomile, horseradish, willow, garlic and aloe vera. Today I have brought four to show you and will talk about them in detail – thyme, calendula, sage and garlic.



Thyme (*Thymus vulgaris*) is an elixir for colds, flu, coughs, tonsillitis and laryngitis. The essential oil thymol is regarded as one of the most potent antimicrobials. This aromatic herb is also rich in flavonoids, saponins and other antioxidants, and research shows that it can help arrest the aging process.

Use as a tea to ease sore throats and colds; add a few drops of the essential oil to boiling water and inhale to loosen phlegm and relax the muscles of the respiratory tract; add to honey – gently heat 1 cup of honey and ½ cup fresh thyme for 15-20 mins. Take 1 tsp. three times per day to relieve coughs, colds and sore throats.

Grow from cuttings or sow seeds. Thyme prefers a sunny spot in free-draining soil.



Calendula (*Calendula officinalis*) or pot marigold has anti-inflammatory, antifungal, antibacterial and antiviral properties.

Use externally as a salve made from a tincture for skin problems, burns, wounds, grazes, infections, rashes and eczema. Internally calendula tea is used as an immune and lymphatic stimulant to help fight bacterial, viral, fungal and parasitic infections.

The flowers are used medicinally, and orange rather than yellow are considered the most effective. Gather the whole flower heads after the dew has evaporated and dry in a warm place out of direct sunlight.

Grow calendula from seed. Deadhead to encourage flowers.



Sage (*Salvia officinalis*) has been used historically as a brain tonic, to treat ulcers, snake bites and to combat TB and to make a person immortal! Modern research suggests that sage may help in the treatment of Alzheimer's disease and also to help improve the memory.

Use as a remedy for treating colds. It has antiseptic and antibiotic properties and makes an excellent treatment for sore throats, infected gums and mouth ulcers when made into a tea (15g dried sage and 500 ml boiling water) and used as a gargle.

Grow in free draining soil in full sun.

(continued on next page)

(Grow Your Own Pharmacy, continued)



Garlic (*Allium sativum*) is a master at warding off colds, the flu and sore throats. It is a broad-spectrum fighter, effective against bacteria, fungi and viruses. It is also reported to be effective in preventing cardiovascular diseases, lowering blood-pressure and cholesterol levels and inhibiting blood clotting.

Use by crushing or chopping raw garlic, then leave for 5-10 mins at room temperature for the biologically active compounds to develop. Eat raw if possible or in ½ cup warm milk. Drink 3 times a day for colds.

Grow in a sunny spot in fertile well-drained soil. Plant individual cloves pointy end up 5 cm deep and 15 cm apart. Traditionally, plant on the shortest day and harvest on the longest day.

Terms used to describe remedies

Tea/Infusion: In water - 15 g dried leaves/30 g fresh to 500 ml boiling water. Leave 10 mins. Best made fresh as and when needed.

Essential oil in water - inhaled or use as a gargle.

In oil/vinegar - fresh/dried herbs, left in warm place 3-10 days

In honey - 1 cup honey, ½ cup fresh herbs, gently heated (1tsp/3xday)

Tincture: Flowers/leaves in alcohol (ethanol) – I use vodka. Leave in warm place for 10/14 days.

Decoction: Roots dried, chopped/ground, boiled in water for 10 mins.

Syrups: Use an infusion, decoction or tincture and add sugar or honey.

Eaten/used directly: Seeds (echinacea); garlic; aloe (gel).

Compress: Cloth soaked in an infusion and applied directly to the skin.

Poultice: Topical application of fresh herbs.

Explanation of medical terms

Phytochemicals: plant chemicals

Antioxidants – natural/man made: May prevent or delay some types of cell damage. Found in many foods, fruit & veges.

Anti: defence/opposing e.g. antimicrobial; viral; biotic.

Cide: killer. e.g. bactericide.

Analgesic: relieving/opposing.

Immune/lymphatic stimulant: to fight infection.

Christmas Lunch 14 November



Our Christmas lunch was held this year at the home of Lyn Beaumont, Chester Road, Clareville. We enjoyed a bring and share lunch with Paulownia wines and learnt from Lyn's landscape designer daughter, Stacey Burkett, about the essentials of garden design.

Herb of the Month (November: Sue Laurence): The Elder Tree (*Sambucus nigra*)

Habitat

Elder commonly grows near farms and homesteads. It is a nitrogen loving plant and thus thrives near places of organic waste disposal. Elders are often grown as a hedgerow plant in Britain since they take very fast, can be bent into shape easily and grow quite profusely, thus having gained the reputation of being 'an instant hedge'. It is not fussy about soil type or pH level and will virtually grow anywhere where it gets enough light.

The tree varies in height between 3 and 10 metres. It is an elegant plant, with cork-like bark, delicate leaves, clusters of white flowers in spring followed by dark red berries in autumn. All parts can be used.

Mythology and folklore

Standing at Samhain which is the end of the cycle of the agricultural year and a new beginning, Elder brings a message of transformation, change and spiritual renewal.

Elder acquired ill repute from its traditional use, and subsequent cursing, as the wood of the Cross upon which Christ was crucified and then as the tree from which Judas Iscariot hanged himself. It became an emblem of death, trouble and sorrow. But Elder's sinister reputation is far older than Christianity and is thought to have sprung from ancient and now forgotten animistic beliefs.

In German and Scandinavian lore, the tree was inhabited by the Elder Mother (*Hyldemöer*) or Lady Elder, whose permission must be sought before the tree was even touched, let alone cut. In order to make use of the magical power of the tree, the correct prayers and offerings would have to be made otherwise Hyldemöer would take her revenge.

It is said that a witch can turn herself into an elder tree and its wood is used for the making of magic wands. (The most powerful wand in the realms of the Harry Potter novels is a wand made of sambucus known as the "Elder Wand".)

The scent of the white elder flowers was said to poison anyone foolish enough to fall asleep beneath the tree. Sitting under, or more riskily sleeping under, an elder at midsummer was said to enable one to see the faeries, or even see them going to their midsummer feast. The danger then was of being transported into the Underworld and not being able to escape. Elder is certainly associated with a spirit being, or Queen who is a guardian of the Underworld, where faeries and spirits of the dead reside.

Health Benefits of Elder

Elderflower has been used in traditional medicine all over the world in many different cultures because of its antiseptic and anti-inflammatory properties. The most common uses are for colds and flu, sinus infections, and other respiratory disturbances. As a supplement, elderflower also has diuretic and laxative properties and is helpful in relieving occasional constipation. Elderflower has antibacterial and antiviral properties and may also help alleviate some allergies and boost the functioning of the immune system. Topically, elderflower might help reduce pain and swelling in joints due to some forms of arthritis and is used to stop bleeding. As an oral rinse, elderflower can be used for its antiseptic properties as a mouthwash and gargle. Elderflower also reduces blood sugar levels, very similar to the way insulin works.

The berries are rich in vitamins and minerals and are best used as a tonic syrup to ward off winter ailments. They are full of vitamins and thus strengthen and support the whole body. In particular a vitamin J is mentioned, which is specifically indicated to counteract pneumonia. Elderberries are reported to be of value as an alterative remedy in rheumatic conditions. They also soothe sore (inflamed) nerves and help to improve poor circulation.

An ointment made with fresh green leaves (traditionally known as Unguentum Sambuci Viride - Green Elder Ointment) can be used for the treatment of chilblains, sprains, bruises and wounds and was also once valued as an emollient. Leaves boiled with linseed oil makes a soothing application for haemorrhoids. Old herbals mention the use of green Elder leaves against nervous headache

Food

The flowers of [Sambucus nigra](#) are used to produce [elderflower cordial](#). The French, Austrians and Central Europeans produce elderflower syrup, commonly made from an extract of elderflower blossoms, which is added to [Palatschinken](#) filling instead of blueberries. People throughout much of Central, Eastern, and South-eastern Europe use a similar method to make a syrup which is diluted with water and used as a drink. [St. Germain](#), a French liqueur, is made from elderflowers. Hallands Fläder, a Swedish [akvavit](#), is flavoured with elderflowers.

(continued on next page)

(Herb of the Month, The Elder Tree Sambucus nigra continued)

Despite the similarity in name, the Italian liqueur [sambuca](#) is mostly made with star anise and fennel essential oils extracted by vapour distillation. It also contains elderflower extracts with which it is flavoured to add a floral note, to smooth and round off the strong liquorice flavour.

In Germany, yoghurt desserts are made with both the berries and the flowers.^[5]

[Wines](#), cordials and [marmalade](#) have been produced from the berries or flowers. Fruit pies and relishes are produced with berries. In Italy (especially in [Piedmont](#)), Germany and Austria, the [umbels](#) of the elderberry are batter coated, fried and then served as a dessert or a sweet lunch with a sugar and cinnamon topping, known as "Hollerkuchel

Fruit pies and relishes are produced with berries. In Italy (especially in [Piedmont](#)), Germany and Austria, the [umbels](#) of the elderberry are batter coated, fried and then served as a dessert or a sweet lunch with a sugar and cinnamon topping, known as "Hollerkuchel

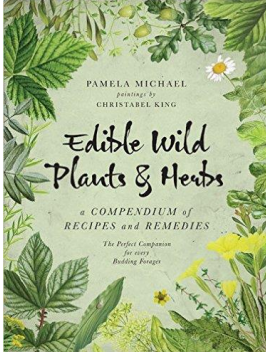
Elderflower cordial (River Cottage) - Copies of this recipe were handed out at the meeting. I'm happy to email it to anyone - ed.)

Herb Federation Biennial Conference Masterton 2015

Below is a selection of photographs from the conference: showing workshops, participants, the Saturday night dinner and the bus trips.



Book Review (November: Agnes Jones) Edible Wild Plants and Herbs by Pamela Michael



This book was brought to our club as a suggested book to buy for our library. I've since heard that we've bought it and I know it will be enjoyed by many people.

At the beginning Pamela acknowledged the help from her family so it's a 'comfortable' read.

The selection of plants and herbs are in alphabetical order and start off with the history of the plant, where it originated, its folklore, uses and healing properties. For instance for 'Ash' it was noted that this wood was used for building carts, coaches and ploughs. Its healing use was to alleviate the pain of rheumatism and to treat liver disease.

With each chapter there's a full page coloured photograph. It then finishes off with recipes using the plant both for eating and to use in a drink.

The book is a 'feast for the eyes' and I can't wait for my turn to borrow it from our library.

The Wairarapa Herb Society (*Estab. September 1982 and registered under the Charities Act No. C.C. 29074*).
P O Box 42 Masterton.

Objective: To promote and share knowledge of herbs, their cultivation and use.
The Society can accept no liability for any ill-effects resulting from information presented in this newsletter.

Meetings held on the third Tuesday of the month at the Senior Citizens Hall, High Street North, Carterton (opposite Wild Oats Café). As far as possible, Saturday meetings are held on the 1st Saturday of each month.

Annual Sub:

Individual: \$20*; Families: \$30*

*\$5 reduction on subscription if paid up member of Herb Federation.

Quarterly Newsletter

Executive Committee: Debbie Dittmer, Agnes Jones, Val Richardson, Andra Bramwell, Christine Paul, Bill Edginton, Shelah Agnew, Lorraine Erith.

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