HERB SOCIETY OF MANITOBA NEWS

Mission Statement: The Herb Society of Manitoba is dedicated to promoting knowledge, use and enjoyment of herbs through education, programs, research and sharing the experience of its members with the community.

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Common Sense Warning:

Any information in the HSM News is not intended to prescribe or diagnose in any way or meant to substitute for professional help in any way. The intent is to offer general information and historical use of herbs.

Editor's Message



Hello and Goodbye!

A different greeting this time, and I am reminded of the song *"Hello, Goodbye"* sung by my favourite group, **The Beatles.** The tune runs through my mind as I write this message and send my thoughts to you. In producing my last issue as your Editor, I feel the mixed emotions associated with those two words.

So first of all, I want to express my sincere thanks to our outgoing President Debra B., to the incoming President Shelly W. and to all the present and past Board and Committee members for their support over my term as Editor of the HSM newsletter. Thank you very much for providing your reports and updates on HSM activities, committees and associated information for each issue to help keep us informed. In addition, I appreciate you letting me use my creativity and ideas when beginning the daunting but exciting task of starting up a new look and new newsletter, just over three years ago. It's been a rewarding experience and certainly has kept me busy during the extended pandemic period…. that's been a bonus too.

I am also grateful to the members who sent in recipes and provided wonderful herbal and gardening articles,



Herb Society of Manitoba Scholarship

Our scholarship applications are now available on our website for students and/or educational institutes to apply for a scholarship. We will continue to have two scholarships of $200.00 each. The Student scholarship will go directly to a qualified individual to assist in their education, while the Education Institute scholarship will be available for specific herb/gardening/agricultural programs. Scholarships will be awarded on a point system established by the HSM Board and will be coordinated by the Education Committee.

If you know of a student or education institute's program that is deserving of a scholarship, please ask the student or teacher to apply. All application information is on our website: **www.herbsocietymb.com**

plus information and responses from time to time for HSM newsletter content. All of your submissions and comments provided were very much appreciated!

Lastly, my thanks to the members who graciously allowed me to ask them both serious and light-hearted questions on herbs, gardening, their experiences and much more for the "Meet Your Members" interviews I conducted over the past three years. It was a pleasure talking to you and laughing with you through these interviews! Thank you for sharing yourselves and your thoughts in letting us get to know you better.

Big hugs to all of you above!

Now if any of you are thinking of taking on the Editor position, maybe even for a few issues (or longer if you find you like it as I have), please think about it. It's a very creative and exciting endeavour! Get in touch with me if you have any questions.

Now back to the September 2022 issue! Inside you'll find engaging reports and summaries, articles and recipes to keep you informed and entertained as you swipe through the pages. And please don't forget to print out and complete your HSM Membership Renewal form. HSM is a great group to belong to and it's made up of great people like you! I hope to see you at our in-person meetings and look forward to getting back to a more normal way of socializing and being with others again. It takes some getting used to going out to public gatherings again, and I'll still be wearing a mask, but won't it be nice to get together once more.

I hope you've enjoyed reading the HSM News as I've enjoyed writing to you here. With best wishes,

Sandra Holmberg
Editor, HSM News

President's Report

September 1, 2022



Greetings Everyone,

As I sit and contemplate the changes autumn brings I realized that this is my last President's Report. It has been an absolute pleasure meeting the many members over the years and working with the talented boards, who have and will continue to guide and strengthen the Herb Society of Manitoba (HSM). As for myself, my interactions with HSM as Past President will be very limited as I have not yet recuperated to the point that driving in the cold and dark evenings is safe.

The exciting news for this fall is that the HSM will again be holding in-person meetings at the Canadian Mennonite College (CMU) at 7 pm on the 3rd Monday of each month. Members will be notified by email. Look for emails coming from **kridsmith@hotmail.com**

I have spoken to CMU and have asked to hold our meeting as Hybrid meetings which means that we have members attend in person and those who cannot physically attend would be able to attend via Zoom. CMU has informed me that they are able to provide this service but the choice of proceeding or not will be up to the new HSM Board. A hybrid meeting may take place in September or maybe later in October, time will tell.

Along with restarting our new year with in-person meetings, we will also be welcoming a new HSM Board. As stated before, I have enjoyed my three years as your President and look forward to the new ideas and plans that come with new Board members. Please consider joining the members who have volunteered to let their names stand for Board positions.

Each of our retiring members have agreed to assist those willing to volunteer with HSM. We are very lucky to have a Board that is kind and generous with each other, always helping when there is a need. Please think about joining and ensuring HSM remains a strong and flourishing organization. Remember, HSM cannot function without a full Board.

The positions which require a volunteer in order to create a full Board are: **Vice President**, **Treasurer**, **Newsletter Editor** and **Fundraising**. I am available to discuss what each Board position is all about and its duties. We also have a written job description for each position to share with interested members. Please email me at **DebraHerbSociety@gmail.com** and we will arrange a time to chat about the position that interests you.

Those members who are willing to continue sharing their talents with HSM for 2022- 2023 are:

- **Cindy L.** who agreed to continue working on Programming, which means we can expect more of the great presenters we have enjoyed on Zoom this past year.
- **Diane W.**, as Secretary to the Board, volunteered to continue sharing her boundless energy and common sense. Diane has also decided to volunteer to take on the role of Membership Chair. A job she will adore as it gives her a ring side seat when it comes to meeting and chatting with members each month.
- **Bobbie and Don B.** have reconsidered and are willing to again coordinate Hospitality. Lucky for us as Bobbi's treats are always yummy. The many members who bring refreshments each meeting really make the meetings a time of camaraderie and comfort. Nothing like a hot beverage and a treat to soothe the soul.
- **Shelley W.** will assume the role as President. She comes with many years of experience with HSM as Treasurer and Vice President, with her at the helm we can expect to enjoy many future adventures. I will become the Past President.
- **Kathleen L.** has agreed to remain on the Board as an Advisor. With Kathleen's extensive talents and previous leadership in many HSM roles and her impeccable record keeping, she is the obvious choice as our historian.

These volunteers and those who are nominated will be confirmed by a vote at the November 21st, 2022 Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Agnes L. has agreed to the role of HSM Archivist. She will catalogue and archive the yearly Board minutes and contracts. Agnes will also continue to store and provide herbal reference materials as required. Although the role of archivist does not sit on the HSM Board, we truly appreciate Agnes's willingness to act as Archivist and librarian.

I certainly will miss **Sandra H.** as our HSM News Editor. I imagine that we will see her creative talents pop up in some other format as the years progress.

To each and everyone of you I extend my gratitude for your ideas, sharing of your energies and talents, and ongoing dedication to HSM.

I wish you all a sunny colourful Fall season filled with health, happiness and the love of family and friends.

Adieu as your President!

Debra Barrett

For more information on the Herb Society or to contact us:

Write: Herb Society of Manitoba, PO Box 61004 RPO
Grant Park, Winnipeg R3M 3X8
Website: www.herbsocietymb.com
Email: herbs@herbsocietymb.com

Committee Summary Reports

Committee Summary reports are provided here when relevant information is available.

Membership

My name is Diane Wall and I've just taken over the Membership role.

There hasn't been any membership activity over the summer, which is expected. We will be charging for memberships this year when we resume in-person meetings in September. The good news is that prices have not increased!

The prices are **$25 for an Individual Membership**, **$35 for a Family Membership**, **$15 for Students** and **$5 for Guests**. If a guest decides to join that night, the $5 guest fee paid will be applied against the Membership fee. If there is someone you know who would be interested in the topic for the month, please reach out and invite them to the meeting as a guest.

Our HSM membership has grown slightly over the past couple of years with no fees being charged. Some people took the opportunity to learn more about HSM by attending our Zoom presentations.

Starting this September 2022, we plan to have monthly meetings once again at the Canadian Mennonite University (CMU). Members will be notified of meeting information.

Submitted by Diane W.
Membership Chair

Hospitality

It has remained status quo since we were last able to meet in early 2020, as nothing has been spent on hospitality and not much has changed since then. However, when we resume in-person meetings this year, watch this space for hospitality news once again!

Bobbi and Don B.
Hospitality Co-ordinators

Treasurer's Report

Here are the July 2022 Monthly Revenue and Expenses amounts:

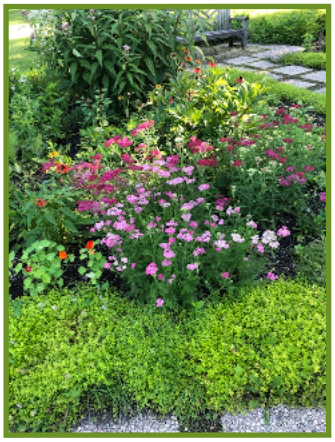
July

Revenue $ 3.58
Expenses $174.40 (storage rental, name renewal and website fee)

Shelley W.

HSM Herb Garden

by Shelley W., Herb Garden Co-ordinator



Even though the Herb Garden was waterlogged on several occasions and even though the plants were put in later than ever, the Herb Garden was a lush garden to be in this summer (as the photo shows).

The yarrow was the best we have seen and the colours beautiful.

The deer left the nasturtiums uneaten - we are not sure why but they also offered a pop of colour rarely seen.

The weeds were everywhere and required a lot of work from the volunteers to remove them - but they did - at least 2 wheel barrows full each Tuesday morning.

Despite the work and despite the noise from the road work beside the garden, it was great to catch up with the other volunteers and it was great to answer questions from visitors.

Now we are taking stock of the garden and deciding what needs to change for next year. What happened to the summer?

Membership Renewal Information

As a result of COVID-19 and Manitoba Health Orders over the past two years, we did not charge for memberships as the Herb Society of Manitoba (HSM) did not offer programs for our members.

Earlier in 2022, HSM started offering programs for members and guests through online Zoom meetings.

This year, we are going the extra step and arranging "in-person" meetings as well as online; therefore, we are collecting membership dues again.

How can you pay?

1. The traditional way, by coming to the **Monday, September 19th meeting** and pay in person, or
2. by mailing a cheque, made out to the **Herb Society of Manitoba**, and sending it to **PO Box 61004 RPO Grant Park, Winnipeg, MB R3M 3X8**
3. Please note: ******There is no e-transfer capability at this time*****

Either way, please fill in your **Membership/Renewal form** that is located on the next page of this newsletter and attach it to your payment. Thank you.

Herb Society of Manitoba

PO Box 61004 RPO Grant Park
Winnipeg, MB R3M 3X8

herbs@herbsocietymb.com
www.herbsocietymb.com

The Herb Society of Manitoba is dedicated to promoting knowledge, use and enjoyment of herbs through education, programs, research and sharing the experience of its members with the community.

❑ Membership Application / ❑ Renewal for 2022 - 2023

Make cheques payable to Herb Society of Manitoba

Name:_____

Address:_____

City:_____ **Prov:**_____ **Postal Code**_____

Phone #:_____ **Cell #:**_____

Email address:_____

☐ **By checking here, I give consent to HSM to periodically send me information regarding the activities of the Society as well as information about the activities of the other Gardening Clubs.**
If you no longer wish to receive our e-mail communications, you can safely unsubscribe at any time by replying to this e-mail. Alternatively, you may telephone the Membership Representative at 204-467-5777.

How did you hear about us?

Brochure		Newspaper		Social Media		Community Events	
Radio		TV		Website		Referral	

If you are interested in participating or volunteering in any of the following, please check the area(s) of below:

Herb Garden		HerbFest		Newsletter	
Executive / Board Member		Hospitality		Speaker / Workshops / Education	
Fundraising		Newsletter Editor		Special AD Hoc Committees (short term)	
Special Events		Vendor / Market Table		Communications Volunteer	

Type of membership: ___ **Individual $25.00** ___ **Family $35.00 (Max. of 4 residing at the same address)**
___ **Student $15.00 (minimum age of 16 with student I.D.)**

Date: MONTH_____**DAY**_____**YYYY**_____ **Membership Card**_____

Paid by: Cash____**Cheque** ____ **e-transfer** ____ **(herb.financial@gmail.com) Receipt #**_____

Date entered into database_____

HSM's PRIVACY POLICY
We respect your privacy. When you become a member, we are committed to protecting your privacy rights and your personal information. The information you provide is used to keep your informed of Herb Society of Manitoba's activities. We will not use this information for any other purpose without requesting your further consent.

Speaker of the Month Information

by Cindy Louër, Programming Chair

Our last monthly meeting topic of the 2021 - 2022 fiscal year in June was presented by myself and called **Back to Basics: Growing and Harvesting Herbs;** a part of our HSM slide show used in presentation to other groups. It was followed by a group discussion about our gardening experiences and questions.

I selected excerpts from our HSM slide show to create a presentation that focussed just on growing and harvesting herbs for our final monthly meeting. It gave our members a chance to see part of what we show to groups who book our organization to present to their membership. Then we had a group discussion where members could talk about their gardening experiences and share them with the group. Members talked about successes, problems and alternative solutions to common gardening problems. We were able to share different experiences with herbs that we all love, like cilantro, lovage and mint, to name a few.

I think everyone came away from that meeting with some helpful hints and tricks to improve our gardens this year.

A Sneak Peek! Next Presentation on Monday, September 19:

A brief Bio and description of the upcoming presentation provided by **Dr. Eva Pip**:

Dr. Eva Pip has taught Botany and Plant Physiology courses at the University of Winnipeg for nearly 40 years. She has a special interest in ethnobotany and herbs in folklore, as well as toxic compounds produced by plants. She has a large garden and lives in eastern Manitoba.

"The Herb Safety Primer" describes how to handle, process, and use herbs safely, in the light of recent biochemical research, which may be surprising. The presentation details a number of herbs that are found in Manitoba gardens which should be treated with care and caution. Recommendations are provided for safely purchasing herb seeds and herbal products.

Herb of the Month

Here are the **Herbs of the Month for 2022/2023**, consisting of some fragrant and favourite herbs to use in the kitchen for cooking, pickling, sauces, tea and more!

September 2022	**Rosemary**	**October 2022**	**Basil**
November 2022	**Tarragon**	**January 2023**	**Lemon Verbena**
February 2023	**Chives**	**March 2023**	**Parsley**
April 2023	**Oregano**	**May 2023**	**Cilantro**
June 2023	**Dill**		

Herb of the Month for September - Rosemary

by Karen Smith, Communication Chair



The **Rosemary** plant (*Salvia rosmarinus*) is a fragrant herb that grows as a perennial rounded evergreen shrub. *(As a perennial, it is best suited for Zones 7 and up but some varieties have been cultivated to withstand colder winters such as in Zones 5 and 6, given adequate protection. In other Zones, it is grown as an annual).*

It features slender, needle-like, gray-green leaves on erect woody stems. It produces clusters of small, light blue to white flowers typically in the late spring to early summer, though it can bloom at other points of the year as well. The shrub has a moderate growth rate and spreads when planted.

It is best to plant **Rosemary** in the spring once the weather has warmed and there's no frost in the forecast. Containers indoors generally can be started at any time of year. **Rosemary** grows best in a sunny spot that has soil with sharp drainage. Make sure no taller trees or shrubs in the area are so close that they will shade the **Rosemary**.

Rosemary also grows well in containers both outdoors and indoors, as long as it gets enough light. Space rosemary shrubs at least 2 to 3 feet apart. Plant seedlings and nursery plants at the same depth at which they were growing in their previous container.

Seeds should be just barely covered with soil when planting. A support structure is typically not necessary for this shrub. A well-draining sandy or loamy soil is best for rosemary. It doesn't grow well in heavy clay and wet soils. A slightly acidic to neutral soil pH is ideal (6.0 to 7.0).

Rosemary shrubs have good drought tolerance once well-established and it's better to underwater rather than overwater them. Allow the top few inches of soil to dry out between waterings, and then water so that the soil is evenly moist but not soggy. This shrub likes warm weather and moderate humidity levels.

Most **Rosemary** varieties can't survive temperatures below 30 degrees F *(-1 degree Celcius),* but they have good heat tolerance for temperatures between 55 degrees F to 80 degrees F *(12 to 27 degrees Celcius)*. Moreover, high humidity can lead to rot and fungal issues, especially if there isn't enough air circulation around the plant.

Rosemary can be harvested at almost any time of year, though spring and summer are when it grows most actively. And the leaves are most flavorful and aromatic just before the plant blooms. To harvest, use pruners to cut off 4- to 6-inch stem tips.

Use fresh **Rosemary** sprigs or leaves in cooking as you like. Or hang the stems upside-down in a dry, cool, well-ventilated area for drying, which should take a couple of weeks. Once the stems are dry, strip off the leaves and keep them in an airtight container in a pantry.

Interesting Note:

Rosemary and Lavender are similar in appearance. Both are shrublike with woody stems, and they feature aromatic leaves that are long and thin. However, **Rosemary** plants generally grow larger than Lavender. **Rosemary** blooms form among the foliage while Lavender blooms rise above the foliage on flower spikes. And Lavender has a lighter and more floral taste and aroma.

Information Sources: thespruce.com and

https://www.torontomastergardeners.ca/gardeningguides/how-to-grow-rosemary-a-toronto-master-gardeners-guide/

HSM Archive News

Submitted by Agnes Leung, HSM Archivist

An update from the Archive of the Herb Society of Manitoba (previously the Bev Lloyd Library):

As reported in the June newsletter, the majority of the library books had been moved from Agnes's basement to be stored at Shelly W.'s home. No further action has taken place to date.

Still in storage at Agnes's basement are the old Leaflet folders (newsletters of the former Friends of the Conservatory) and the past Prairie Sage Quarterly up until it became digital (former newsletters of Herb Society of Manitoba). There are no printed copies of the newsletter in storage since then.

Then there are some herb-related books left from the book culling which will be used for reference purposes, upon request by members.

There are still 17 overdue books taken out by members since before the pandemic began. Members are reminded they can return the books when the Herb Society resumes in-person meetings.



Photo of her recent garden harvest provided by Agnes L.

Kitchen Corner: *Sharing our favourite recipes with herbs*



by Sandra Holmberg

It's September once again, the beginning of the Fall season and one of the prettiest times of the year. It also means we have a large bounty of fresh herbs and vegetables available, both in our gardens and at many wonderful markets in and outside the City. This month we are featuring potatoes, tomatoes, peppers and zucchini as well as rosemary, basil, bay leaf and thyme. These herbs always add incredible flavour to any dish and we definitely enjoy the finished results!

1) Skillet Roasted Potatoes with Rosemary

Source: Jacques Pepin

There is nothing better than roast potatoes with rosemary, our September Herb of the Month. Here's a skillet roasted version provided by the wonderful Jacques Pepin!

Ingredients:

2 pounds small new potatoes (about 24), thoroughly washed and any damaged spots removed
3 Tbsp olive oil
1 Tbsp butter
1 cup water
1/4 tsp salt or to taste
2 Tbsp fresh rosemary leaves or 2 teaspoons dried

Preparation:

Place the potatoes in one layer in a large saucepan and add the oil, butter, water and salt. Bring to a boil, cover and cook over high heat for about 8 - 9 minutes.

Reduce the heat and continue cooking, covered, over low heat for about 10 minutes to brown the potatoes. Add the rosemary and cook, stirring occasionally, 2 to 3 minutes longer. Serve. *Note: If you need to get rid of a bit of water left in order to brown the potatoes, uncover the pan to reduce the remaining liquid, then cover to finish browning.*

2) Quick Fresh Tomato Sauce

Yield: about 2 1/2 cups
Source: David Tanis, NYT Cooking

David Tanis writes, "In August and September, when tomatoes are at their ripest, make a batch of fresh tomato sauce….The flesh of the tomato should be dense, sweet and blood red. This makes a very fresh and bright-tasting sauce in a manageable small batch. Take advantage of good tasty tomatoes and fill a few (containers) for the freezer."

*Ed. note: An easy fresh sauce for freezing, especially if you have lots of tomatoes to make a couple of batches - some to freeze and some to use right away. I also want to note that I've seen on Instagram that some have dehydrated leftover tomato skins after blanching tomatoes and once they are thoroughly dried, have buzzed up the skins to make a **tomato powder** to be added for extra umami and tomato flavour to any number of dishes! Thought this was a brilliant idea that I had to share; it makes me wish I had a dehydrator!*

Ingredients:

5 pounds tomatoes
3/4 tsp salt
2 Tbsp olive oil
1 Tbsp tomato paste
1 garlic clove, halved
1 basil sprig (that has several basil leaves)
1 bay leaf

Preparation:

Cut tomatoes in half horizontally. Squeeze out the seeds and discard, if you wish. Press the cut side of tomato against the large holes of a box grater and grate tomato flesh into a bowl. Discard skins *(or see the note on dehydrating above)*. You should have about 4 cups.

Put tomato pulp in a low wide sauce pan over high heat. Add salt, olive oil, tomato paste, garlic, basil and bay leaf. Bring to a boil, then lower heat to a brisk simmer.

Reduce the sauce by almost half, stirring occasionally, to produce about 2 1/2 cups medium-thick sauce, 10 to 15 minutes. Taste and adjust salt. it will keep up to 5 days in the refrigerator or may be frozen.

3) Melted-Pepper Spread

Yield: about 2 cups, enough for 8 to 10 toasts
Source: Francis Lam, NYT Cooking

Francis Lam says that, "Think of this as a cousin of the classic pepper stews pepperonata or piperade, but cooked down and caramelized to feature the peppers and onions' sweetness and luscious, spreadable texture. It's terrific as a condiment for eggs, simply cooked meats and fish, or spread on toast for a quick meal with hearty toppings, like cheese and herbs, leftover meats or roasted vegetables."

Ingredients:

12 ounces onion (about 2 medium)
1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
Kosher salt
1 1/2 pounds red bell peppers (about 3 or 4 medium)
4 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
1 tsp fresh thyme leaves (about 6 sprigs)
1 1⁄2 tsp red wine vinegar, or to taste

Preparation:

Slice the onions thinly, into 1/8 inch half-moons. (A food processor is great here, and you can reuse it for the peppers later.)

Heat the oil in a large, tall-sided skillet over medium heat. Stir in the onions and 2 big pinches of salt. Stir every couple of minutes so they become soft without getting too much colour (browning in spots is fine), about 10 minutes total.

Meanwhile, stem, seed and slice the peppers into 1/8 inch strips.

When the onions are ready, add the peppers and garlic and another 2 big pinches of salt, and stir until the juices collects on the bottom of the pan, then let it cook. After about 10 minutes, the juices may have cooked off, so keep a closer eye on the pan, and stir more frequently so it doesn't burn.

After 5 minutes or so, or when the sound has turned from a steamy bubble to a more crackling sizzle, you'll want to stir about 30 seconds to a minute, to pick up any bits that have caramelized, and dissolve them back in.

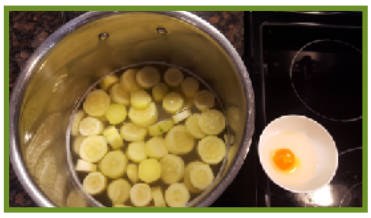
After another 5 minutes, or when the peppers are very soft and spreadable and everything smells fantastic and sweet, add the thyme and vinegar and cook, stirring, for 1 more minute. Taste, and add more salt or vinegar if desired. Remove the peppers from the heat, and let cool. Store, refrigerated, for up to 10 days. It tastes best at room temperature or warm.

4) Zucchini Soup (and Stir-Fry Suggestions)

Source and photos: Agnes Leung

Agnes writes, "This summer I decided to grow zucchini for the first time and am delighted by the resulting zucchinis from just one plant. I think the herbs I planted close by have attracted the bees to help pollinate the zucchini plant. My family enjoys a simple Zucchini Soup that I would like to share with you (kind of Chinese style as I use a Chinese salted egg in it). Besides the soup we also use the zucchini in stir-fry vegetable dishes with a meat added to it. It can be chicken breast, pork tenderloin or beef steak sliced thinly, marinated and added to the veggies. The mixed vegetables include broccoli, cauliflower, red pepper and green onion (added towards the end). So you see it is a very colourful dish."

Ingredients:



2 medium zucchinis, cut into ¼" discs
1 Chinese salted egg (raw, not cooked. Superstore sells them in a box of 6)
1 litre (907ml) Campbell's chicken broth (no salt added)

Preparation:

Separate the yolk from the white of the salted egg and add the yolk and the sliced zucchini into a pot with the chicken broth. Bring to a boil, then turn down to medium heat and cook until the zucchini is fork tender, about 10 to15 minutes.



Beat the egg white and add it to the soup, stirring as you are adding so it gives a cloudy appearance to the soup. Let boil for half a minute more and your soup is done. Makes 4 servings.

Agnes's note: I do not add seasoning to the soup as the salted egg adds enough salty flavour for me. You can do a taste test and add salt to your liking.

Harvesting and Preserving Herbs (and other links!)

Introduction by Sandra Holmberg, (Ed.)

When researching harvesting methods of herbs last month, I came across an article on the North Carolina State University (NCSU) website in the Horticulture Information Leaflets section, entitled "Harvesting and Preserving Herbs for the Home Gardener" at *https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/harvesting-and-preserving-herbs-for-the-home-gardener* Since it's a timely topic for the September newsletter and has good, basic information on harvesting and preserving of herbs, I have reproduced it here below. This month, I'm sure many members are harvesting their abundance of herbs to preserve for later as well as to enjoy fresh right now.

Another couple of interesting articles I found were about leaving certain vegetables to harvest after frost and which evergreen herbs are best suited for indoor growing. Both are in the Sage Garden Blog that is located on Winnipeg's own Sage Garden Greenhouses website. You can check out these articles in the following links:

"Why Do Some Veggies Get Sweeter After Frost" which can be found at *https://sagegarden.ca/blogs/the-sage-garden-lab/why-do-some-veggies-get-sweeter-after-frost* and

"Tips for Growing Herbs Indoors" which can be found at *https://sagegarden.ca/blogs/the-sage-garden-lab/tips-for-growing-herbs-indoors* website

Harvesting and Preserving Herbs for the Home Gardener from

NCSU Extension Publications, Horticultural Information Leaflets, which states *"This publication originally authored by **Ervin Evans and Jeanine Davis**. Jeannine Davis is Extension Specialist, Herbs/Organics/Specialty Crops/Vegetables"*

Harvesting Herbs

Herbs should be harvested when the oils responsible for flavor and aroma are at their peak. Proper timing depends on the plant part you are harvesting and the intended use. Herbs grown for their foliage should be harvested before they flower. While chives are quite attractive in bloom, flowering can cause the foliage to develop an off-flavor. Harvest herbs grown for seeds as the seed pods change in color from green to brown to gray but

before they shatter (open). Collect herb flowers, such as borage and chamomile, just before full flower. Harvest herb roots, such as bloodroot, chicory, ginseng, and goldenseal, in the fall after the foliage fades. Some general guidelines to use include:

- Begin harvesting the herb when the plant has enough foliage to maintain growth. Up to 75% of the current season's growth can be harvested at one time.
- Harvest early in the morning, after the dew dries, but before the heat of the day.
- Harvest herbs before flowering, otherwise, leaf production declines.
- Herb flowers have their most intense oil concentration and flavor when harvested after flower buds appear but before they open.
- Herb flowers harvested to dry for craft purposes should be picked just before they are fully open.
- Annual herbs can be harvested until frost.
- Perennial herbs can be clipped until late August. Stop harvesting about one month before the frost date. Late pruning could encourage tender growth that cannot harden-off before winter.
- Harvest tarragon or lavender flowers in early summer and then shear the plants to half their height to encourage a second flowering period in the fall.

Preserving Herbs

Herbs acquire their fragrance and flavor from oils that evaporate into the air when the leaves are crushed. Ideally, you should use fresh herbs for cooking, but it is possible to retain some quality for later use. There are several methods to preserve herbs.

Freezing is one of the easiest methods to preserve herbs. Rinse the herbs quickly in cold water, shake off the excess, then chop coarsely. Place generous pinches of herbs in water-filled ice cube trays and freeze. Transfer herb-cubes to plastic bags or air tight plastic containers. Another method for freezing is to spread the herbs loosely onto a cookie sheet to freeze, then transfer the herbs into a large plastic bag and seal. When they thaw, herbs will not be suitable for garnish, but can be used in cooking. Do not re-freeze herbs after thawing.

Drying is the traditional method of herb preservation. If the herbs are clean, do not wet them. Otherwise, rinse dust and dirt from the foliage, shake off the excess water, and spread the herbs out to dry on paper towels or dishcloths until all surface moisture has evaporated. Remove any dead or damaged foliage. Then, tie the stems into small

bundles with twine or string and hang them upside down in a warm, dry, airy place out of the sun. Be sure to make small, loose bundles and allow for good air circulation around each bunch.

UV rays from the sun and moisture from dew and frost can discolor and severely reduce the quality of many herbs. Thus, it is best to dry herbs indoors in a large empty closet, attic, or unused corner of a room. Drying herbs look quite attractive drying in a kitchen or pantry. If none of these places are practical, herbs can be dried in a barn, shed, or (least desirable) under the cover of a porch. Sage, thyme, summer savory, dill, and parsley are easy to dry. Basil, tarragon, and mints may mold and discolor if not dried quickly.

An alternative to hanging herbs to dry in bunches is to spread the herbs out on window screens. Suspend the screens over sawhorses or the backs of chairs. Turn the leaves often to ensure even drying.

To air dry herbs with seeds, tie the herbs in small bundles and suspend inside a paper bag with holes punched in the sides. Suspend the bag in a dark area with good air circulation. Collect the seeds when they are dry, and store in rigid light-proof containers.

Microwave drying is a quick and easy method to dry small amounts of herbs. Lay a single layer of clean, dry leaves between dry paper towels and place them in the microwave for 1 to 2 minutes on high power. Drying will vary with the moisture content of the herb and the wattage of the microwave oven. Let the leaves cool. If they are not brittle, reheat for 30 seconds and retest. Repeat as needed. Thick leaved herbs may need to be air dried for several days before microwaving.

Conventional ovens can also be used to dry herbs. Spread the herbs on cookie sheets and dry at the lowest temperature setting possible. Home food dehydrators also do an excellent job of drying herbs. Follow the directions provided with the dehydrator.

Herbs are sufficiently dry when they are brittle and crumble easily. When the leaves are dry, separate them from their stems and package the leaves in rigid containers with tight fitting lids. Glass or hard plastic are best, although heavy-duty zip-lock plastic bags can be used. To preserve full flavor, avoid crushing the leaves until you are ready to use them. Store dried herbs in a cool, dry place away from sunlight, moisture, and heat. Many herbs can be keep for a year if stored properly.

See the **Horticulture Information Leaflets** link for more in the NCSU Horticulture Information series.

The Last Page … A Harvest of Herbs!

Here's a quick guide with popular cooking uses of various herbs, sent in by Debra B:



Happy September everyone!

And I hope you have a very Happy Thanksgiving next month xo