

## AUGUST NEWSLETTER

Greetings everyone,  
Early signs of Spring are popping up around us, with Daffodils, Jonquils and even Jasmine scenting the warming air. My vegetable garden is providing us with all our green vegetables, - broccoli, cabbage, spinach, and acres of silverbeet which is delicious steamed and then drizzled with Tamari, a squeeze of garlic and some good quality olive oil. The weeds at our Herb Gardens are also thriving, so I'm planning a big weeding session there over the next couple of weeks now the soil is drier. If properly bundled, and mixed with some seaweed and heavier grade mulch, these unwanted weeds should be dead and ready to spread back on the gardens in 3 months time as much needed mulch during the hot, dry summer!



**Waiheke Herbs**

Now, you may not have found us at the Auckland food show last weekend, instead, we were exhibiting in a less frenetic fashion at Nosh. On Saturday, we were present at the large store in Glen Innes which has a wonderful (and very busy!) cafe, and on Sunday we visited the new store in Greenlane. Nosh 'Metro' is conveniently situated in a central location close to the intersection of Great South Rd and Greenlane West main roads, and is brimming with quality general and speciality foods, including a range of alcoholic beverages coming soon. The staff are very attentive and friendly, and we wish them all the best with this new venture.



And yesterday, we sent off our first Herb Spread export order to Hong Kong which is very exciting, - lets hope it 'spreads' well over there!

Finally, a big thanks to all our regular customers who have been using Herb Spread in their winter meals lately, - you have kept us going through this quiet time of the year on Waiheke Island.

This month we thought we would look at **PARSLEY!** This quiet but constant herb is the basis of our Herb Spread. There are two main varieties: flat leaf or Italian parsley which has long stalks, grows higher and has a stronger flavoured leaf, and curly-leafed parsley which is milder and 'bunchier'! Parsley grows well almost all year round, being particularly vigorous over the winter months unless it is very cold, with each plant lasting for about two years before it goes to seed during late summer and easily self-seeds all over the place if it is happy! It is also quite disease and pest resistant, so never needs spraying – another bonus! Several years ago, a friend of mine edged all her gardens with a border of parsley, which looked fantastic - fluffy, bright green, edible rows which nicely offset all her various flowers and shrubs. This fascinated me, so I took a few of her seedlings back to my own garden, to try the same effect. Even though my rows ended up in random bunches, the parsley grew vigorously and were blended into my first trial

jars of Herb Spread. At the time I was a Barnados childcare-giver, and my little flock of pre-schoolers were all quite keen on nibbling away at the parsley. This natural enjoyment of parsley for young palates is still noticeable with Herb Spread today – almost every child who tastes it for the first time looks quite pleased with the taste, and many urge their parents to buy it for them!! I don't even need the offer of a free toy or store playground to persuade them!!

**Culinary uses:** Perhaps it is the slight sweetness of Parsley (chewing a sprig is said to sweeten the breathe and cancel the pungent after-effects of garlic) that gives it's appeal to children, or that their intuition tells them that it is so full of goodness; Vitamins A and C, K, minerals - iron and calcium, and folic acid. Parsley's volatile oils- particularly myristicin - have been shown to inhibit tumor formation in animal studies, and particularly, tumor formation in the lungs. Myristicin has also been shown to activate the enzyme glutathione-S-transferase, which helps attach the molecule glutathione to oxidized molecules that would otherwise do damage in the body. The activity of parsley's volatile oils qualifies it as a "chemoprotective" food, and in particular, a food that can help neutralize particular types of carcinogens (like the benzopyrenes that are part of cigarette smoke and charcoal grill smoke).



Originally from the mediterranean, parsley has been cultivated for over 2000 years, and is generally used today as a garnish (and sadly left on the plate!...) I, for one, like to nibble my garnish after the meal as it does indeed freshen the palate. A handful of chopped parsley thrown into salads, soups, stews, seafood or vegetarian meals (or a spoonful of Herb Spread), livens up many meals with flavour, colour and extra nutrition. Since it has a stronger flavor than the curly variety, Italian flat leaf parsley holds up better to cooking and therefore is usually the type preferred for hot dishes. It should be added towards the end of the cooking process so that it can best retain its taste, color and nutritional value.

**Medicinal Uses:** Regular consumption of Parsley has got to be good for you with all it's qualities: helping to keep your heart and joints healthy, your blood and digestive tract 'clean' and your immune system primed. In fact, parsley was originally used by the Greek and Romans for purely medicinal purposes - it wasn't until the middle ages, that it began being used as a seasoning. Parsley seeds are even more potent, and are traditionally used to treat problems associated with digestion, the kidneys, arthritis, bladder, menstruation, and sciatica. However, do not overdose on Parsley, due to the presence of oxalates which could crystallize if they become too concentrated in body fluids, causing health problems.

**Majickal Uses:** The ancient Greeks held parsley to be sacred, using it to not only adorn victors of athletic contests, but also for decorating the tombs of the deceased. It certainly has endured as a 'garnish'! According to [www.gardensablaze.com](http://www.gardensablaze.com) "Parsley is bound to Mercury and air. In ancient times, it was associated with death and funeral ceremonies. Today, magically speaking, Parsley is associated with lust, good luck, communicating with other planes, protection, purification, fertility, reincarnation, health, strength, vitality, divination, passion, meditation, rituals for the dead, and happiness."

## Herb Spread Recipe of the Month:

### Seafood platter!

Regularly, our customers enthusiastically share their favorite uses for Herb Spread which are wide and varied, and often involve seafood; mussels, scallops, oysters in the shell, pink salmon, tuna, prawns, baked or fried snapper... the list is endless. I certainly prefer extra flavour on my seafood, especially garlic, herbs and olive oil, which also look decorative. I either throw some in the hot pan or on the barbeque moments before I add the seafood, and/or smear it on the top afterwards. Mmm delicious!



Well, that's it for this month. I hope you have enjoyed the read, and found something interesting and useful.

**Wishing you all health, wealth and well-being** From Wendy and the Waiheke Herbs Team!