



Greetings everyone,

Around this time every year, the Jassy Dean Trust on Waiheke holds its annual garden safari, showcasing about 16 private gardens to the public. I had the chance to visit a few for a change, as usually this event combines with the Waiheke Olive Festival, where we are busy promoting our Herb Spread. This year the two events are being held on separate weekends, the Olive Festival coming up in a fortnight on the 21-22nd November.

[http://www.jassydeantrust.co.nz/garden\\_safari.html](http://www.jassydeantrust.co.nz/garden_safari.html)  
<http://www.waihekeolivefestival.co.nz/Welcome.html>

I visited 6 of the gardens, picking out a variety which ranged from a "square foot" backyard edible garden, to expensive but tastefully landscaped sloping sections created to enhance the aspects out towards vineyards, mangroves swamps or over the sea. Waiheke has all sorts of hidden garden gems tucked away in the most unlikely places, and this month is definitely the perfect time of year for showcasing them, before lack of rain dries everything up! I was particularly interested in 'working garden's' as opposed to those which had been mass planted with ornamentals to enhance a brand new estate, although I did hear about one such garden which had been thickly planted with sub-tropicals creating an instant jungle effect within 1 year.



The "square foot" garden I visited, included a glasshouse, raised vegetable beds, which also surrounded each fruit tree, climbing edible plants such as raspberries, grapes and kiwifruit growing over a pergola, asparagus beds, and fruit trees which had been grafted with better producing varieties, all in a tiny 15m square section. Another garden belonged to an old family estate at Woodhouse Bay, way out in the back-blocks, which were beautifully maintained by the manager who resided there full time. Old-fashioned roses with that classic rose perfume climbed over archways,

and fences, strawberry beds thick with massive red strawberries, giant lettuces and other vegetables in raised beds all neatly arranged in rows, a hundred different coloured and textured annuals and perennials in every corner, drooping out of pots and hangers, the original 109 yr old shack arranged with antique gardening tools and dried herbs and flowers hanging from the rafters, a large pond filled with lilies and ducks, and orchards of fruit, figs and olive trees... Everywhere you cast your eye, another colourful delight was displayed, and the air wafted with fragrances...

Of particular interest also, was some copper alembic stills which a Waiheke couple are now importing. These ancient Greek/Arabic designs, were demonstrated to produce some wonderfully aromatic plant water and essential oils from raw plant material. Just a handful of lemon balm, rosemary, rose geranium, or even roses, produced a small amount of essential oil which sat on top of the aromatic plant water. Both oil and water could be used for cosmetics, insect repellents, air fresheners, hair product, etc. For those who bored of plant extracts, distilling a bottle of wine or apple cider, with perhaps fruit or spices added, produced some very delicious and potent 40 proof alcohol! To be consumed with caution!!!



Inspired by the plant oils which were demonstrated, I thought I would feature two of those I inhaled on the day, remembering how useful they are around the home, garden and kitchen:



**Rosemary:** Originating in Asia, but now flourishing around much of the world, and particularly being associated with the Mediterranean, Rosemary is one of the hardiest and most versatile herbs you can have around the garden. Adding a sprig to your roast meat or vegetables, your soups and stews, cheeses, even some desserts, gives an aroma and taste that is uniquely fresh, and slightly pungent, creating something fancy from what would otherwise be a plain dish.

Rosemary is said to increase circulation, stimulating the appetite and improving your memory. With school exams coming up, why not put a bunch of rosemary in the study room, or make sure you add it to the family meals. Scientific research reveals: "Rosemary has been reported to decrease capillary permeability and fragility. Extracts have been used in insect repellents. The plant may have anticancer properties and has spasmolytic actions, liver and immune effects, and other various actions from asthma treatment to aromatherapy. It has antimicrobial actions against a variety of bacteria, fungi, mould, and viruses." Do not take Rosemary in large doses, as it can cause seizures, or miscarriage. I have used Rosemary essential oil to ease bruising and sore muscles, congestion from chest and head colds, deter head-lice, heal cuts and school-sores, .... The list goes on - it is an 'essential' for every first-aid kit.



**Geranium:** There are at least 700 varieties of geraniums, although only three are used to make essential oils. I saw the deepest dark red geranium on the garden safari, and a soft, furry leaved, mint variety, (which I once had in my own garden), and had to use all my self-control not to pinch cuttings from them. Geraniums are another hardy herb, which thrive in hot, dry climates, and don't seem to mind the odd frost. Originating in South Africa, but also being more associated with Mediterranean countries, geraniums, like rosemary, grows very easily from cuttings, and are perfect for

hanging baskets, pots, or filling up a corner of the garden. Plus, they have some wonderful fragrances. I have cinnamon and rose geraniums, which grow where we can brush past them, releasing the fragrance, I have purple, pink and red geraniums, which colourfully fill up dry or rambling corners, I have a white, climbing geranium, which always needs cutting back....

Geranium essential oil is said to help balance the emotions, and makes a delicately, fresh and sweet smelling addition to massage oils, baths, potpourri and essential oil burners. I sometimes put a few drops on my vacuum cleaner bag, to help freshen the room when vacuuming, or put drops in a spritzer bottle to spray around the room. Added to other fragrance such as orange, cinnamon, rose, chamomile, sandalwood, etc, it can add that extra relaxed and contented 'mood' to your home environment. Geranium has also been used to repel insects, treat acne and dermatitis, improve circulation, treat bruising, and balance oily/dry skin.



### Herb Spread Recipe of the Month:



#### Chicken with Herb Spread!

Herb Spread goes well with almost any chicken dish. I even put a spoonful into our chicken curry to add extra nutrition and a few 'greens'. To get the most out of the flavour, baste the chicken (whole or pieces) before you roast or bake it. The oil will help to crisp the outer layer of chicken, and the herbs will add flavour. Herb Spread added to bread-crumbs makes an instant stuffing, just add a little extra water to bind the mix. And lastly, drop a spoonful of fresh herb spread onto the plate as a side-sauce to serve. Delicious, and easy.

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