

SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER

Greetings everyone,
We are a little late with our newsletter this month – we have been very busy preparing for the Audit of our Food Safety Programme which happened last Thursday. Having a NZ Food Safety Authority approved programme means we can begin supplying New World supermarkets. We will target specific New World's where there are currently no existing nearby outlets, so keep an eye out if you already shop there.

Other developments for Waiheke Herbs include a repeat export order to Hong Kong of double the original order, interest in whole batch loads from Korea, and trialling of a herb Aioli at the local Waiheke Market which has so far proved very popular. Made with whole mustard seeds, caper berries, grape-seed and olive oil, we hope to get this tasty product into the shops in 2010.



We have chosen lovely LAVENDER, as our herb of the month. My (stoechas) Lavender hedge (pictured left) is bursting with large dark purple flowers, which we use in our Herb Spread, since this variety has the best culinary flavour. There are many different varieties of Lavender, pinks, blues, large, small, grown for decorative, therapeutic or culinary use... Dentata or English Lavender (pictured right) is the most common and popular variety for hedging as it is very hardy, and flowers almost all year round, but is too musty for flavouring food with.

The two most commonly grown varieties for therapeutic use are Grosso, (pictured below left) and Angustifolia. LAVENDER essential oil is one of the most commonly produced and used essential oils as it is relatively safe and has such a wide range of uses. Even Waiheke Island has a lavender farm, "Waiheke Blue



Lavendar" (directly across the valley from our herb gardens!) where the Grosso variety is grown, producing enough essential oil via a steam distillation plant on the mainland, to create a wide range of divinely scented health and beauty products such as soap, powder, balms, cremes and even a lavender water spray which is made from the water component left over during the distillation process. Huge amounts of lavender produce a small amount of essential oil, so it is a very concentrated product. Angustifolia (pictured right) is a largish shrub with very long stalks and highly perfumed flowers which bloom in summer. However, it doesn't like getting too dry. In fact, most of the types of lavender that I have grown tend to have a best life of about 3-5 years before it gets very woody, and not as attractive. Trimming them back carefully after flowering helps to keep the shrub looking tidy, but ideally, new shrubs should be planted regularly. Fortunately, lavender seems to grow easily from cuttings taken in Autumn or early spring.



Medicinal Uses: Lavender has such a wide range of uses, I always keep some in my first aid box and bathroom, and go through more of this than any other essential oil. It is safe to use neat (carefully), or you can mix it with a good quality vegetable oil such as grapeseed, avocado or almond to make it go further:

- * add a few drops to your bath to create a soothing, relaxing and healing bath, - especially good for mellowing young children at the end of the day.
- * dab onto your own or your child's pillow or temples to assist in falling asleep,
- * rub on burns to soothe and heal, (I have experienced many remarkable results in healing burns with lavender!)
- * rub on skin to deter mosquitos or other biting insects,
- * spray around the room to freshen and deter flying insects

Culinary uses:

I have seen lavender used to flavour shortbread, meats, soups and custards. Here is an interesting recipe which my son and I developed after watching that tv programme: "Grow your own Drugs":

Healing Throat Lozenges: Add 1 cup honey, 1 cup sugar, 1 tsp lemon juice to a pot and boil for about 10 minutes, stirring constantly until a drop placed on an ice tray forms a hard ball. Take off the heat and stir quickly until the mixture begins to thicken. Add: 3 drops spearmint essential oil, 2 drops Lavender essential oil, 5 drops Aniseed essential oil. Pour into a tray lined with waxed paper. When it has hardened a little, press cut marks in 1" squares. Place in freezer to harden quickly, then break along cut marks. Put pieces in a jar with icing sugar to help avoid sticking together. These lozenges soothe throats and help avoid/heal ulcers. My son says they make him feel relaxed! (or maybe that's an excuse to eat more of them!!) Aniseed has natural anesthetic properties, and is much milder than cloves which is often suggested for toothache, but can actually burn your mouth if not well diluted. So always take care with essential oils, test very small diluted amounts before use, and take note of any warnings.

Majickal Uses: In the Temple of King Solomon, lavender was one of the herbs used for aspurging. Lavender is a traditional aid in sharpening vision and clarifying thinking, which makes it an excellent herb for scholars (and exemplifies its Mercury aspect). Lavender is also good to incorporate into love magic, and although it is often associated with chaste love, it is also connected to fertility and has been added to wedding cakes for that reason. This magic herb is usually associated with midsummer festivals and is used to attract the Faery. Grind and add a little frankincense to make a great incense.

Herb Spread Recipe of the Month:

Vegetarian Tortillas!

This is another quick and easy meal, which tastes delicious and is good and healthy. All you need is:

- 1 tin of kidney or other beans (unless you want to soak and cook your own dry beans)
- 1 tin chopped tomatoes
- heat the above ingredients until it is quite thick
- fresh chopped tomatoes and onions
- fresh salad: rocket, coleslaw, mesclun etc. (seasonal!)
- grated cheese (optional)
- aioli, chilli sauce, Herb Spread.



Layer the beans and tomato mix onto warmed tortillas, and layer with fresh salad vegetables, cheese and sauces including Herb Spread. Wrap firmly into a sausage shape, and enjoy!

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!



Waiheke Herbs

