

# Herb Garden Diary



*The Purple Gate Farm Newsletter*

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*Our Herb Garden Diary Newsletter explores herbal knowledge, practical garden information with historical insight and current research to reveal the delight and enrichment of life by the growing and using of herbs. We explore the seasons in our south central Texas gardens and share our gardening experiences in this environment.*

Most gardeners want to control what grows in their specially prepared soil and well watered garden areas. A plant that appears unexpectedly is often pulled promptly. It may spoil the esthetic of the planned design of the garden. The gardener may fear it is invasive or doesn't know what the plant is. It is considered a WEED.

In Shakespeare's, King Richard II, Act 3, Scene 4, we encounter this wisdom:

I will go root away

The noisome weeds, which without profit suck

The soil's fertility from wholesome flowers.

And in the Second Henry VII we find:

Now 'tis the spring, and weeds are  
shallow-rooted;

Suffer them now, and they'll o'ergrow the garden,

And choke the herbs for wat of husbandry.

**Wait!**

Our attitude towards plants is a singularly narrow one. If we see any immediate utility

in a plant we foster it. If for any reason we find its presence undesirable or merely a matter of indifference, we may condemn it to destruction forthwith.

- Rachel Carson

Ralph Waldo Emerson, in Fortune of the Republic, wrote in 1878:

What is a weed? A weed is a plant whose virtues have not yet been discovered.

Perhaps the virtues have been discovered and a little investigation will reveal unexpected virtues of those bothersome weeds. One example of this

is a little flower that catches my eye often in the garden areas.



The little blue flowers dance merrily in the breeze and I am unable to "weed" them out. They are so pretty. On examination I see that they grow on a clump of grass. I wonder if this weed has a name.

There is not a sprig of grass that shoots  
uninteresting to me

- Thomas Jefferson

I begin looking for information in Native Plant and weed books in my library. Other inquisitive people have taken note of this plant.

I found that this little grass has both a common and Latin name.. It is noted that variety of this grass is found in the Eastern and Southeastern United States and as far west as Texas. Blue Eyed Grass is *Sisyrinchium angustifolium* in Latin and is classified in the family Iridaceae.

Imagine. that little weed has such impressive names and family ties.

**A flowering weed;  
Hearing its name,  
I looked anew at it.**  
- Teiji

Have any of you found hidden virtues in common weeds to share with the us? Send your info to Mary Mills for the next newsletter

[pgherbfarm@aol.com](mailto:pgherbfarm@aol.com)

Further investigation revealed that this weed may be very useful as a medicinal herb.

American Indian tribes used a variety of Blue Eyed Grass species in a variety of ways as medicine. A decoction of the whole plant was taken for stomachaches, the roots were used as a purgative, and an infusion of washed roots were taken for asthma., an upset stomach, heartburns and ulcers. A decoction was taken for hayfever and by women for “an injured womb”. The Cherokee infused the roots to treat diarrhea in children. They understood that eating certain plants could help body functions. Blue Eyed Grass was eaten to help regulate bowel movement.

Members of the Menominee made a compound decoction of the plant to help a woman expel afterbirth.

Does this give you pause? Will you pull this lovely little weed in the future? Maybe a little investigation will be rewarding. Or maybe you would rather dig it out carefully and place it in it’s own special place in your herb garden. It would be a great addition to a xeriscape garden or wildflower garden.

