

# Herb Garden Diary



**The Purple Gate Farm Newsletter**

January 2010

*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.*

My husband, Bud and I went to Arlington Texas to celebrate Christmas with our adult children, their spouses, grand children and one great grand child. On the long drive, one of my daughters, Catherine said “wouldn’t it be fun to have a White Christmas?”

**Unlikely**” Bud and I agreed. Conventional wisdom is that it never snows for Christmas in this part of Texas.

On Christmas Eve, it began to snow! **“It won’t stay on the ground,”** we all agreed. We just knew the snow would be gone before it hit the ground.

By 10 o’clock the ground was completely covered with snow!

Wow! we all said in disbelief as we stared out the window. And Christmas morning my Great-Grandson explored snow.



Well, I hope for more surprises in 2010. Those surprises that are **“most unlikely”** are the best. Especially those that defy our pessimistic expectations. So go ahead and make those New Years Resolutions. And ignore those that say:



A New Year's resolution is something that goes in one year and out the other.

~Author Unknown

I personally prefer this attitude:

Cheers to a new year and another chance for us to get it right.

~Oprah Winfrey

So all you herb gardeners out there...get out the seed catalogues and begin dreaming up that perfect herb garden you always knew you had in you to create. It could happen this year.

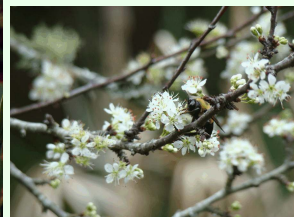
## A few highlights for 2009



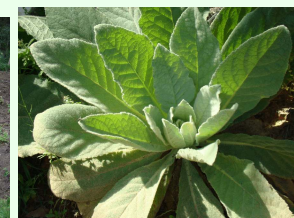
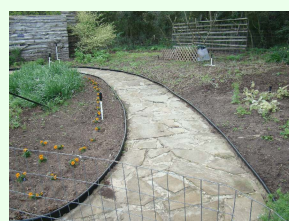
**Early Spring, removing excess plants from the ponds**



and spreading them on the gardens to enrich them



**The first signs of spring and the new growing year.**



**New plants coming up and familiar ones spreading out to face the new year.**

**And we were on our way into 2009.....**

## The Nose Knows

submitted by Mary H. Mills, The Purple Gate Herb Farm

The use of aroma to enhance a feeling of well-being, for religious practices and as remedies has been with us for some time. The rich scents derived from plants are mentioned in Ancient Chinese, Egyptian, Greek and Persian texts. For much of written human history it has been known that fragrances have psychological benefits and effects on the human mind and body. Some scents have a relaxing effect

while others excite and stimulate humans. The history of Aromatherapy continues to the present and pops up everywhere today.

A new form of scent appreciation offers us a scientific approach to

“sniffing your way to health and happiness.” The word “aromachology”; a hybrid of “aroma” and “physio-

psychology” has been coined to describe a new scientific approach to the study of the effects of aroma on the human being. Both Aromachology and Aromatherapy promote the positive effects of fragrance on the mood and emotion. Aromatherapy is more commonly known, uses natural herbal oils and is used in alternative herbal remedies. Aromachology stresses controlled, scientific study of natural and synthetic odors, is driven by corporate sponsorship and ultimately is aimed at commercial profits especially in the perfume industry. If you put the word “Aromachology” in a Google search you will see that it is gaining ground as a remedy for many ills that befall us. Here are a few examples:

### Lose weight, relieve stress and alter moods

Japanese scientists acknowledge that people have inhaled the scents of plants since ancient times to reduce feelings of anxiety and depression, to fight inflammation or induce sleep. The Japanese Shiseido cosmetic company researchers have recently discovered that smells like grapefruit, pepper, fennel and tarragon can help people lose weight. They have developed lotions with these smells to encourage sniffing to a thinner you. They have reported the first scientific evidence that certain

fragrances alter people’s gene activity and blood chemistry to relieve stress with a whiff of bracing lemon, simulating rosemary and soothing lavender.

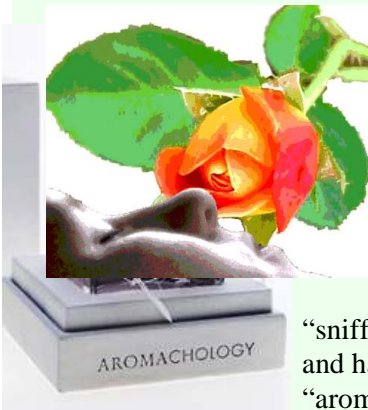
### Relax away pain and anxiety

Aromachology has been reported to soothe fear and anxiety that often accompany and complicate labor pains. Several different essential oils were used in a variety of ways. Lavender foot baths stimulate circulation and relieve pain, massages with clary sage to calm the nervous system and help with breathing and rose oil compresses to help the pelvic bones to relax and expand. I am sure that this information was initially gleaned from existing aromatherapy texts!

### Making Scents

A kindergarten teacher was reported as using a “smart spray”, a spritz of lavender and rosemary essential oils to get her students to pay attention and concentrate. She uses a cotton ball soaked in vanilla to aid in establishing a quiet time.

We know that visual and auditory stimulation play a dominant role in human communication. Olfactory sensations also become associated with particular men or women in life and literature. After Shave Lotions and Perfume sales attest to fact that olfactory sensations are noted, sought and valued. Social interactions on the internet at the present time lack this communication channel so face to face contact is still the best way to get a full appreciation of another person. The nose knows!



Aromatherapy can be found in unexpected places!