

Herb Garden Diary



June 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.

There is no shortage of herbal activities in the Austin area. We try to keep the members of the Austin Herb Society informed so they can participate in educational and entertaining events. Here is a selection from some members.

I got this message from Jan Bland. Check out the link, it is interesting. (Mary Mills)

Mary

This was submitted by Patty Freeman for the Potpourri

here is the link to an article in the Statesman about the AHS trip to Provence last year

<http://www.statesman.com/life/travel/travel-matters-deals-reels-and-a-readers-trip-690101.html>

~~~~~

**Ellen Zimmerman of EZ Herbs had an open house that was cancelled because of weather. Bud and I and a few others did not get word and showed up on her doorstep. She graciously invited us in and walked through her garden and workshop.**



**We enjoyed the garden tour and her informative, informal**

**talks in the workshop.**

## A Dilly of a Meeting

Submitted by Mary Miller



Gwen Sederholm and Shirley Brinkman made an interesting and informative presentation on the Herb of the Year, Dill, at the Culinary Group's April Meeting.

### History

The origins of the herb are thought to be in southern Europe and western Asia where it was prized as a flavoring and medicine. There is evidence of cultivation in Switzerland and traces in Roman ruins in Great Britain. It is among the oldest medicinal herbs and probably spread north into central Europe in medieval times.

Hippocrates used for cleansing the mouth. Ancient soldiers applied burnt seeds to wounds to heal. Emperor Charlemagne made it available at banquet tables for over indulgent guests to benefit from its carminative (aids in expelling gas) properties.

Children were given seeds of dill or fennel to chew in church to keep them quiet. Both types came to be known as "meetin' seed".

It was also used as a charm against witchcraft and one could ward off an "evil eye" spell by carrying a bag of dried dill over the heart.

### Cultivation

Dill is an annual plant and in central Texas dill likes cool weather. Plant it from seed in the fall, late winter or early spring. Once established it often reseeds itself. It likes well drained soil and full sun (shade will reduce yield). Don't plant it near fennel or other members of the Apiaceae family (carrots, parsley, anise).

### Storing

Dill will keep fresh in the refrigerator for about 2 days, wrap in damp towels or place the stems in water. Freeze in airtight containers or place in ice cube trays with broth or water for stews or soups. Store the seeds in a cool, dark spot or in a sealed glass container for up to 6 months.

## Culinary

Dill works well with eggs, butter, sour cream, yogurt and it is especially compatible with seafood (try in tuna salad) and many other foods. It should be used raw or added at the very last minute because the oils are quickly destroyed by heat. Make dill vinegar for canning pickles (in central Texas dill is ready long before the cucumbers).

## Medicinal Uses

Dill is a source of calcium and reduces bone loss. It has dietary fiber and contains magnesium and iron. It is a soothing dietary aide; seeds have been known to make a soothing tea for colic in babies. It protects against free radicals and carcinogens. It's called "chemo protective" as it helps neutralize benzopyrenes from cigarette smoke or charcoal grill smoke. It shares with garlic the ability to prevent bacterial over growth. It prevents constipation but also used for diarrhea and dysentery. Poultices of leaves applied to boils and to reduce swelling and joint pain

## Harvesting Seeds

Cut off flower heads when the seed begins to ripen. (Ripe seeds are toxic to some birds so it is best to remove them from the garden before they are completely mature.) Place heads upside down to dry in a paper bag in airy dry place for a week. Seeds then separate easily. Store the seeds in airtight container 3-10 years.

The following dill dishes were shared at the meeting. A few of the recipes are also included.

Spinach and Dill Rice (Lucinda Rudin)

Tzatziki Dip (Gail Smith)

Lemon and Dill Aioli with fingerling potatoes (Norisse Jastillana)

Dill Biscuits (Sandra Holland)

Dilly Casserole Bread (Barbara Broering)

Cucumber with Dill Sandwiches (Jane Clarke)

Oyster Crackers (Gwen Sederholm)

Dill and Garlic Butter (Gwen Sederholm)

Dilly Bread and Tuna Salad with Dill (Shirley Brinkman)

Nicoise Salad (Gwen Sederholm)



## Recipes

Dill & Garlic Butter----Lots of chopped garlic and enough dill (fresh or dry, or both) to be seen. And of course, butter.

### Hidden Valley Ranch Crackers

3/4 C. olive oil

1 pkg. Hidden Valley Ranch. Dressing (original recipe 1.0 oz.)

1 tsp. dry dill weed

1/4 tsp. lemon pepper

1/4 tsp. garlic powder

12-16 oz. plain oyster crackers

Whisk together first 5 ingredients.

Pour over crackers, stirring to coat.

Place on baking sheet and bake at 275, 15-20 min.

Makes 11-12 cups

### Salad Nicoise

Garlic salad dressing (Gwen adds lots of chopped garlic to oil & vinegar dressing)

1 can albacore white tuna

3/4 to 1 lb. red "c" potatoes, cooked al dente, cut into cubes

(who is this Al Dente anyway)????

1/2 lb. green beans cooked al dente, cut to about 1 1/2"

1 Cup pitted Kalamata olives chopped

1/2 bunch dill, chopped

1/2 bunch parsley chopped

Salad greens

Toss first 7 ingredients together

Mound on plate of greens

You can really play with this recipe--more or less of all ingredients to your taste.

### Dilly Casserole Bread

## Pillsbury 1969 “Treasury of Bake Off Favorites”

2 ½ to 3 Cups all purpose flour  
2 T sugar  
1 T instant minced onion  
2 tsp. dill seeds  
1 ¼ tsp. salt  
¼ tsp. soda  
2 ¼ tsp. active dry yeast (1 pkg)  
1 Cup cottage cheese  
¼ Cup water  
1 T butter  
1 egg

Butter, softened

Coarse salt

Oven 350      Yields- One round loaf

In a large bowl combine 1 cup of flour, sugar, onion, dill seed, salt, soda, and dry yeast.

In saucepan heat cottage cheese, water, and butter until mixture is warm.

Add egg and warm liquid to flour mixture. Blend at low speed until moistened. Then beat at medium speed for 3 minutes. Stir in remaining flour to form a stiff dough.

Cover. Let rise until light and doubled in size, about 1 hour.

Stir down batter. Turn into well greased 8-inch round casserole (1 ½ or 2 quart). Cover. Let rise in warm place until light, about 30 to 45 minutes.

Bake at 350 for 35 to 40 minutes until golden brown. Brush with butter and sprinkle with coarse salt, if desired.

## A Scent-sational Presentation



Our May speaker was Melanie Van Aken of the Heron's Nest Farm. Melanie described her journey from mid-wife to farmer. She is blessed with a husband, Fred, who shared the dream of growing herbs in Blanco, Texas. Together they have created a wonderful farm and it is apparent they take pleasure in sharing their experiences. Fred has developed unique rainwater harvesting projects run by solar power to water his Echinacea and Lavender fields.

Melanie has researched and created unique products from herbs grown at Heron's Nest.



Melanie invited the Austin Herb Society members to mix essential oils to develop special scents that pleased each individually. As can be seen, we had a wonderful time experimenting.

**Heron's Nest is located at**  
1673 River Bend Dr.  
Blanco, Texas 78606

Phone number: (830) 833-2627

Email at [heronsnest@txwinet.com](mailto:heronsnest@txwinet.com)



## The American Botanical Council,

Austin, TX, USA celebrated Herb Day, May 1

They had an open house allowing visitors to stroll herbal demonstration gardens on their own.



The plants were labeled



and the labels were informative.

We later joined renowned herbalist Christopher Hobbs for an inspiring herb walk. Christopher discussed liver health, organic diet, and herbs for stress relief.



Mark Blumenthal recognized the sponsors of ABC's newest garden, the Ayurvedic Garden devoted to the centuries of Ayurvedic healing tradition.



American Botanical Council

P.O. Box 144345

Austin, TX 78714-4345

Phone: 512-926-4900 x-114

Fax: 512-926-2345

Email: [Rebecca@HerbalGram.org](mailto:Rebecca@HerbalGram.org) Web: [www.herbalgram.org](http://www.herbalgram.org)

**Saturday, May 22nd**

Our annual Member's Garden Tour was a little different this year. As we had no volunteers who wanted to show their gardens, we planned to start at Judith Craft's house for breakfast at 9:00.



Then we car-pooled from there out to the **Indigenous Women's Center, aka Alma deMujeres**, right across the road from The Crossings. It is a beautiful 23 acre property with a medicine wheel herb garden, lodge, cabins and a lovely piece of Cypress Creek.



We were greeted by Maria Elena Martinez and she purified each of us with burning sage mixed with pine resin.



We chanted our way down to the garden to drum beats

and dedicated the gardens to the four directions.



The potluck dinner we shared was welcome and enjoyed by all. It was a delicious assortment of herb seasoned dishes.

**Don't miss upcoming events!**

## AUSTIN HERB SOCIETY FIELD TRIP

JUNE 12

### BLANCO LAVENDER FESTIVAL

Please join us for a fun day in Blanco immersing ourselves in all things lavender. We will begin early as it will be getting hot much sooner than we will want, so everyone meet at the old Albertson store's parking lot in Oak Hill (that's at the Y) at 8:30 a.m. We will carpool from there to Blanco.

We will visit Hill Country Lavender Farm which is the original lavender farm. We will stay about an hour and tour the farm then head for the square in Blanco. There will be booths set up all around the square and a speaker's bureau going, though the website still does not have the topics and times listed. We will have plenty of free time on the Square. Lunch will be at 12 at the Red Bud Cafe on the north side of the Square. We will have box lunches and lavender lemonade, plus they make all kinds of sweet goodies. Cost is around \$13 per person. It is air conditioned and we will be more than ready for a rest by that time. We will leave Blanco and head for Heron's Nest Herb Farm. We will take our time there as there is an art show going on as well as cooking classes. Heron's Nest is a sponsor of ours so we definitely want to support them.

After Heron's Nest anyone who wants to continue on to the other farms may certainly do so. I will most likely be ready to return to Oak Hill. It should be a fun day and I hope you can join us. Feel free to bring a friend along, just let me know how many so I can be sure the restaurant has enough food saved for us. Sign up sheet and directions will be available at our meeting on June 1. Also, lots of information on the website,

[www.blancolavenderfestival.com](http://www.blancolavenderfestival.com).

If you have further questions,

please call, 894-0767 or

e-mail, [harveybell2000@yahoo.com](mailto:harveybell2000@yahoo.com).

Pam Bell

~~~~~

Who was Dioscorides?

A look Back into Herbal History

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

Pedanius (Pedianus) Dioscorides was born in Anazarbos (now Nazarba, near Tarsus in Turkey).

He was an army doctor who served with the Roman legions for 20 years in Greece, Italy, Asia Minor and in Provence in modern-day France. He treated battle wounds of soldiers, treated dysentery, the plague and the common cold with simple herbs. His extensive

travels, his access to the library at Alexandria where he studied other ancient texts, and his interest in studying, collecting and identifying medicinal plants resulted in his compiled medicinal treatise called De Materia Medica (60-78 A.D.) . Dioscorides showed interest in the practical uses of plants including what was known of their roots, foliage, and other physical characteristics. His descriptions of plants made it easy for his readers to identify the plants he discussed. He included methods of observation of particular plants in various stages of development, recommendations of the best time to harvest, medicinal uses, methods of preparation, and recommended dosages.

De Materia Medica was hand copied in monasteries for over 14 centuries before printing was invented. During the 1500-1600 A.D. many herbals were printed and now you can read the word of generations of herbalists. If you are interested I found a source of .pdf downloads of the De Materia Medica in English on the internet:

De Materia Medica

Pedanius Dioscorides

Tess Anne Osbaldeston, translator and editor

<http://www.cancerlynx.com/dioscorides.html>

Book I: aromatics (or spices), oils, salves, trees and shrubs (liquids, gums, and fruits)

Book II: animals, animal parts and products, cereals, pot herbs and sharp herbs

Book III: roots, juices, herbs and seeds

Book IV: herbs and roots not previously discussed

Book V: wines and minerals.

Also you can order a book:

To order

Dioscorides. *De materia medica*. - five books in one volume:

A new English translation by T.A.Osbaldeston.

Introductory notes by R.P.Wood.

First Edition, 2000.

Published by IBIDIS Press, Johannesburg, South Africa.

To purchase

<http://ibidispres.scriptmania.com/contact.html>

Please Note: You are welcome to share this © article with friends, but do not forget to include the author name and web address. Permission needed to use articles on commercial and non commercial websites. Thank you.