

Herb Garden Diary



The Purple Gate Farm Newsletter

September 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.

Don't Forget!

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

**"Try to remember the kind of September
When life was slow and oh so mellow
Try to remember the kind of September
When grass was green and grain so yellow**



**Try to remember the kind of September
When you were a young and a callow fellow
Try to remember and if you remember
Then follow--follow, oh-oh."**

- Try to Remember, Lyrics by Tom Jones and Harvey Schmidt

Yes, follow your memories of other September's, of the fullness of summer and the rich colors of the coming autumn. For me September is my month for musing on my journeys through the years. I hope you are filling your September Memory Chest with wonderful things to remember.

Our brains are very complex and sensitive organs.



The brain needs vital nutrients and antioxidants to stimulate proper circulation and combat the effects

of toxins, pollutants, drugs and other inhibitors of brain functions. What is needed are nutrients and oxygen to stimulate, cleanse and improve the brain's neurotransmitter functions. Many herbs have been shown to help stimulate the mind and prevent memory loss by providing antioxidant protection and blood circulation. Stimulating blood flow to carry oxygen to the brain will improve thinking and concentration as well as improve memory. The stimulation of blood flow also improves circulation to all other organs increasing the feeling of well being.

Symptoms such as short-term memory loss, ringing in the ears,

dizziness, headaches, depression and other impaired mental performance can be due to drug interactions, high blood pressure, anxiety, thyroid malfunction and many other factors. Consulting a doctor can help you treat these problems. Simple lifestyle changes such as quitting smoking or controlling the intake of alcohol and unhealthy food choices can do a great deal to help with these symptoms. There are herbs, many that are in your herb gardens, you should know about that can also alleviate many symptoms.



Ginkgo Biloba - one of the best-known herb for improving memory is ginkgo biloba

that has been shown to improve blood circulation in the brain. Studies in Germany and France during the last 10 years demonstrated that ginkgo helped elderly people feel more alert, attentive and less moody after taking ginkgo for 1 to 2 months. Ginkgo improved the reaction time of these people and it also contains antioxidants that neutralize dangerous free radicals. Ginkgo Biloba is not habit forming and has no known side-effects, is good for

long term treatment and is fast-acting. James A. Duke, Ph.D., in his book *The Green Pharmacy*, recommends Ginkgo be taken in standardized extract or capsules, 60-240 milligrams a day. He cautions that large amounts may cause diarrhea, irritability and restlessness.



Gotu kola, a native to Asia and Europe, has long been used to improve memory and to extend longevity in

India. Herbalists today recommend it to overcome depression and increase longevity, heart and nerve health, and specifically for all brain and memory stimulation formulas. Gotu kola is taken to relieve mental burn-out and aging memory impairments.



Hawthorn - with strong antioxidants, hawthorn cleans out brain toxins and strengthens blood vessels and tissues.

Hawthorn facilitates oxygen and nutrient transport to the brain. It regulates and strengthens the heart by blood pressure and cholesterol reduction,

which provides a feeling of well-being.



Ginseng along with rosemary act as energy boosters and help in the treatment of depression, a main cause of memory loss. Ginseng has stimulating tonic effects

on the brain, especially the memory, and ginseng energizes and regenerates after illness or exhaustion.



Green tea is rich in antioxidants that help cleanse the body of free radicals that damage the cells of the body. Free

radicals speed up the development of heart diseases and cancer.

For example, in 1994 the Journal of the National Cancer Institute published the results of an epidemiological study indicating that drinking green tea reduced the risk of esophageal cancer in Chinese men and women by nearly sixty percent. University of Purdue researchers recently concluded that a compound in green tea inhibits the growth of cancer cells. There is also research indicating that drinking green tea lowers total cholesterol levels, as well as improving the ratio of good (HDL) cholesterol to bad (LDL) cholesterol.

Why don't other Chinese teas have similar health-giving properties? Green, oolong, and black teas all come from

the leaves of the Camellia sinensis plant. What sets green tea apart is the way it is processed. Green tea leaves are steamed, which prevents the EGCG compound from being oxidized. By contrast, black and oolong tea leaves are made from fermented leaves, which results in the EGCG being converted into other compounds that are not nearly as effective in preventing and fighting various diseases.

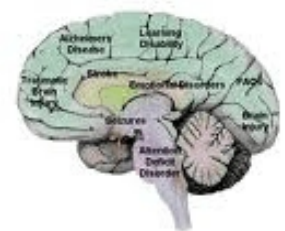
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Rosemary - popular in culinary dishes, rosemary can improve brain function and enhance memory and concentration.

Rosemary tea can increase blood circulation to your brain which has been shown to increase memory almost immediately. Rosemary has strong antioxidant properties and is a toning agent to relieve stress, tension and digestive problems. It has been investigated as an agent to reduce the effects of Alzheimer's disease.

Disease is regarded by most Americans as very complicated topics that only doctors and research scientists can understand. A few minutes at a bookstore, a few minutes on the internet or membership in herbal societies can provide a wealth of



information not readily available a generation ago. It is common knowledge that more research is needed to valid folk-cures. It becomes necessary for each of us to become more informed about how to maintain a healthy active life.

Who uses traditional medicine?

- In some Asian and African countries, 80% of the population depend on traditional medicine for primary health care.
- In many developed countries, 70% to 80% of the population has used some form of alternative or complementary medicine (e.g. acupuncture).
- Herbal treatments are the most popular form of traditional medicine, and are highly lucrative in the international marketplace. Annual revenues in Western Europe reached US\$ 5 billion in 2003-2004. In China sales of products totaled US\$ 14 billion in 2005. Herbal medicine revenue in Brazil was US\$ 160 million in 2007.

Don't forget! It is up to each of us to

- support and integrate traditional medicine into national health systems in combination with national policy and regulation for products, practices and providers to ensure safety and quality
- ensure the use of safe, effective and quality products and practices, based on available evidence
- acknowledge traditional medicine as part of primary health care, to increase access to care and preserve knowledge and resources
- ensure patient safety by upgrading the skills and knowledge of traditional medicine providers.

