



Gulf Coast Herb Society Newsletter

May
2016

P. O. Box 81817 • Mobile, AL 36689 • www.gulfcoastherbsociety.org

Rosemary for Remembrance DATES

Regular Meetings are held at the Mobile Botanical Gardens.

- **May 24, 5:30pm:** Regular Meeting at MBG on Historical Bed by its nurturers
- **June 25th:** Tomato Tango at Cathedral Square Farmers Market 7:30am-Noon
- **June 28, 5:30pm:** End of the Year Party at MBG
- **July No Meeting:** End of the Year Break

WE HAVE A NEW WEB SITE!

Check out www.gulfcoastherbsociety.org to see news, announcements, photos and our **HERB DAY Event** (September 17th) Info!

Thymely NOTES

[Click Here to find us on Facebook!](#) Read herb tips, recipes, and see pictures from our latest events.

- We'll be featuring a **Tip Time** where we share our knowledge with our newer members. Please have a gardening tip in mind to share.
- Please **volunteer** in the herb garden Saturdays after the monthly meetings.

Did You KNOW

Basil Plant Turning Yellow: How To Treat Yellow Leaves On Basil Plants
(gardeningknowhow.com)

Gardener Versatile and easy to grow, basil is an attractive culinary herb valued for its aromatic leaves, which are used either dry or fresh. Although basil is usually grown as an annual, it is suitable for growing year round in USDA plant hardiness zones 10 and above. Although the herb is relatively trouble-free, it is susceptible to certain pests and diseases that can cause yellowish leaves on basil plants.

What Causes Basil Leaves to Turn Yellow?

There are a number of reasons for a basil plant turning yellow, and determining the reason isn't always easy.

Improper watering – Root rot, a result of too much water, is one of the most common reasons for yellow leaves on basil plants. Water basil only when the top

1 to 2 inches of soil is dry, and remember that slightly dry soil is healthier than soggy soil. As a general rule, one deep watering every seven to 10 days is adequate. If you grow basil in a container, be sure the pot has at least one drainage hole.

Fungal disease – Although several fungal diseases can cause yellow leaves on basil plants, downy mildew is one of the most common. Downy mildew is a fast-spreading fungus recognized by yellowish basil leaves and a fuzzy, gray or brown growth. If you catch the problem early, you may be able to stop the spread by clipping affected growth. However, badly affected plants should be removed and disposed of carefully.



Basil Yellowing by Richard Cooney

Growing conditions – Chilly temperatures are another reason for yellowish basil leaves. Basil prefers daytime temps above 70 F. (21 C.). Nighttime temperatures should be above 50 F. (10 C.) Lack of sun is yet another common cause of yellowish basil leaves. Basil prefers bright sunlight for six to eight hours per day. Basil grown indoors will likely need artificial light during the winter, ideally for 10 to 12 hours per day.

Aphids – Aphids are tiny pests that suck the juice from tender foliage, thus causing yellow leaves on basil plants. Look for aphids on the undersides of leaves and on the joints of stems and leaves. Aphids are easy to control with insecticidal soap, but be careful not to apply the soap when the sun is directly on the leaves or on hot days, as the soap can scorch the plant.

Root knot nematodes – These small, soil-dwelling pests can cause yellowish basil leaves and small galls on the roots. The best recourse is to harvest the plant

and use the healthy leaves. Next time, plant resistant varieties in soil not affected by nematodes.

Lack of nutrients – Basil is a hardy plant that does well in poor soil, but it still requires nutrients in order to thrive. Fertilize basil regularly to prevent yellowish basil leaves, using an all-purpose balanced fertilizer.

Vietnamese Balm (*herbspice.guide*)

Native to temperate eastern and central Asia, Vietnamese balm, or rau kinh gio'i, is a bushy plant with gentle green, serrated leaves and lavender flower spikes. It somewhat resembles lemon balm in aroma, but the plants are unrelated. It is cultivated in



Vietnamese Balm by Richard Cooney

Germany more than in other regions of Europe, and also in those parts of the US where there are large Vietnamese population centers. Stray plants also grow wild in parts of Europe and North America.

About taste – Vietnamese balm has a clear, lemon aroma with floral undertones; the flavor is reminiscent of lemon balm, but is more concentrated, considerably like lemongrass. If none is on the market, lemon balm and lemongrass can be mixed instead.

Parts used – Fresh leaves and young sprigs.

Buying & Preserving – Vietnamese balm is grown mostly by nurseries that supply herbs to Southeast-Asian restaurants, and is sold by Asian markets, however it's not yet widely available in Europe or North America. Leaves keep for 3–4 days in a plastic bag in the fridge vegetable crisper.

Herb Gardening – Vietnamese balm is a perennial, usually grown as an annual. It can be grown from seed outside when the frosts are over, and is more likely to become invasive in heat, moist conditions. Sprigs from an Asian market can be encouraged to root by standing them in water. Cuttings taken in fall will root and survive if stored in a warm place. Harvest leaves from spring to early fall.

CULINARY USES

Vietnamese balm has been used as a culinary and medicinal plant. Vietnamese balm is used to flavor vegetable, egg, and fish dishes, insoups, and with

noodles and rice. It is usually added to the platter of fresh herbs that accompanies many Vietnamese meals. In Thailand, it's most often cooked and served as a vegetable.

Fresh leaves – Vietnamese balm has been used as a culinary and medicinal plant for many years in Southeast Asia, but as yet is little known to Western cooks.

FLAVOR COMBINATIONS

Good with star fruit, eggplant, cucumber, lettuce, scallions, mushrooms, fish, seafood. Combines well with Asian basils, galangal, chili, cilantro, garlic, perilla, mint, tama

Small Perennials for an Herb Garden

(*homeguides.sfgate.com*)

Various kinds of containers can be used to grow herbs. Small perennials fit well in an herb garden, especially if the garden is in an area with limited growing space. The small plants also can grow well in containers if the herb garden is on a patio or balcony. Many of the plants in an herb garden are edible and used in cooking while others offer intense aromas.

Aromatic Varieties – Aromatic plants are used in potpourris and sachets, and those plants are common in herb gardens. One peppermint-lemon scented perennial is "Blue Fortune" hyssop (Agastache "Blue Fortune"), which grows best in full to partial sun exposure and is hardy in U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) plant hardiness zones 5 through 9. Its 18-inch tall spikes have small, lavender-blue, tubular-shaped blossoms during summer. Another aromatic perennial is "Provence" French lavender (Lavandula x intermedia "Provence"), which produces fragrant, purple flower spikes in summer and has gray-green leaves. This evergreen shrub reaches 24 inches tall and wide, and it is hardy in USDA zones 5 through 9. It requires a location that receives full sun exposure.

Culinary Plants – Small, culinary herbs are often available as perennials. These plants are used to season food and grow well in home herb gardens. "Elfin" thyme (Thymus serpyllum "Elfin"), for example, produces tiny, evergreen leaves in a clump 1 to 2 inches tall and 4 to 8 inches wide. Its purple blossoms appear throughout summer. The plant is hardy in USDA zones 4 through 8 and needs a location with full sun. This perennial tolerates light foot traffic, and so it grows well between stepping stones. "Kent Beauty" oregano (Origanum

rotundifolium "Kent Beauty"), another culinary perennial, is hardy in USDA zones 7 through 10 in full sun or partial sun. Producing cascading stems 6 inches tall and stretching 24 inches long, the plant has gray-green leaves and tiny, pink flowers that bloom during summer.

Ground Covers – Ground-cover herbs often are grown for their leaves' appearance and fill gaps in herb gardens. Purple sage (*Salvia officinalis* "Purpurescens"), which is hardy in USDA zones 6 through 9, has dusky purple leaves and violet-blue flower spikes in summer. The plant reaches 8 to 16 inches tall and spreads 10 to 12 inches wide. The ground cover "Walker's Low" catmint (*Nepeta x faassenii* "Walker's Low") produces lavender-blue blossoms above aromatic gray-green leaves in summer. It is hardy in USDA zones 4 through 9. This drought-tolerant plant reaching 24 to 30 inches tall and spreading 36 inches wide attracts butterflies and hummingbirds from spring through fall.

Salt-Tolerant Varieties – Several low-growing perennials tolerate salty conditions and strong winds, making them suitable for seacoasts. One such perennial is lavender cotton (*Santolina chamaecyparissus*), an evergreen shrub that produces a fragrant, dense mound of grayish-silver leaves. It grows 18 inches tall, spreads 36 inches wide and is hardy in USDA zones 7 through 9. During summer, this shrub sends up small, bright-yellow flowers. Also an evergreen plant, "Roman Beauty" rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis* "Roman Beauty") grows slowly and features arching stems covered with gray-green leaves that emit a pinelike scent when disturbed. This rosemary is hardy in USDA zones 8 through 10

and reaches 12 to 24 inches tall and wide. Its blue blossoms appear in late spring.

Myrtle's MUSINGS

- Old Dauphin Way had the biggest and best Plant Swap they have ever had in April. We had around 50 people in attendance and swapped over 350 plants. Great selections with many different varieties. As you garden this spring, pot up those extra plants and save them for the fall plant swap October 29th.

-Joan Hoffman

-  **Tomato Tango** is one of our major fundraising events where we sell fresh tomato sandwiches in Cathedral Square during Market on the Square. The sandwiches are accompanied by homemade herb spreads and refreshments. If you want to donate your time or food items, contact Gulf Coast Herb Society member **Kathy Lovitt** at kathy.atinycottage@gmail.com.

The event is made possible every year by Todd, owner of Cafe 219 downtown. The city will not let us make sandwiches in Cathedral Square, so Todd has graciously offered up his kitchen for us to prepare sandwiches. If you volunteer for Tomato Tango on June 25th, please show him the Gulf Coast Herb Society's appreciation.

- Dues are \$15 for a single person, \$25 for couples - due by the end of our calendar year, which is August. Please pay Lettie McDaniel at the next meeting.

"DILL"-ICIOUS Steamed Green Beans with Lemon-Mint Dressing

~ MyRecipes.com

Serves 4 (serving size: about 1 cup)

- 1 pound green beans, trimmed
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh mint leaves
- 1 1/2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon minced shallots
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1. Steam green beans 4 minutes or until crisp-tender; drain.
2. Combine mint and remaining ingredients in a large bowl, and stir with a whisk.
3. Add green beans to bowl, and toss to coat.

GCHS Officers 2015-16

Jody Conrad ~ President • Mary Beth Allison ~ President-Elect • Joy Nyeste ~ Recording Secretary
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