



Gulf Herb Society Coast Newsletter

April
2021

Mailing Only: 109 Grand Blvd • Mobile, AL 36607 • www.gulfcoastherbsociety.org

Rosemary for Remembrance DATES

Meetings are done remotely via Zoom until further notice. We send out a meeting link every month.

- April 27, 5:30pm. GCHS Zoom Meeting
- May 25, 5:30pm. GCHS Zoom Meeting

See calendar page at the end of the newsletter for complete details.

Thymely NOTES

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

- Please **volunteer** in the herb garden whenever you can. Contact Pat Ivie peivie@comcast.net, 334-315-5874 for info.

Did You KNOW

Can You Use the Leaves of the Ginger Plant? gardenguides.com

The ginger plant is most famous for its flavorful root. But the ginger plant's leaves are edible as well. The ginger plant's leaves have the same flavor as its roots, but much less pungent. And they have high levels of antioxidants, which make them a nutritional and flavorful addition to dishes.

Finely Chop Them – Ginger leaves are edible, but they are tough to chew and digest whole. The best way to add them to any recipe is to cut them down to size. Use a sharp, herb-chopping knife to dice the ginger leaves into the smallest pieces possible. For the fullest flavor, chop ginger leaves just before you use them. Keep them in the refrigerator until then or dry them in a dehydrator.

The ginger plant is most famous for its flavorful root. The ginger plant's leaves have the same flavor as its roots, but much less pungent.

Eat Ginger Leaves Raw – Ginger leaves make a wonderful garnish. Their collective flavor is too pungent to have on their own, but they give couscous and tabbouleh a nice punch. Or try them with any mix of greens that could use a mild ginger punch. If you don't always have access to fresh ginger leaves, use them dried. They make a deliciously crisp garnish on savory meals.

Cook Ginger Leaves – Fresh ginger root can be too much of a punch for some dishes. Ginger leaves still impart the flavor you want without overpowering the other flavors in your recipe. Use 2 tbsp. of freshly chopped ginger leaves in stews or soups. Add them 15 to 20 minutes before you serve to retain their texture. Or, add them to stir fry dishes to take the flavor up a notch. Add them during the last five minutes of cooking to retain the texture of the leaves. Ginger leaves make a wonderful garnish. Or, add them to stir fry dishes to take the flavor up a notch.



Ginger Flowers

Use Ginger Leaves to Make Tea – Fresh and dried ginger leaves make a mild and delicious tea. Start with 1 to 2 g of tea per cup. You can add more tea as you get used to the flavor. Have ginger tea on its own or enjoy it with a wedge of lemon and a teaspoon of honey. Ginger tea also goes really well in a mix with other herbal teas.

What Is Sea Fennel: Tips On Growing Sea Fennel In The Garden gardeningknowhow.com

Sea fennel (*Crithmum maritimum*) is one of those classic plants that used to be popular but somehow fell out of favor. And like a lot of those plants, it's starting to make a comeback – especially in high-end restaurants. So what is sea fennel? Keep reading to learn more about how to grow sea fennel and sea fennel uses.

Sea Fennel Uses – At its roots, sea fennel was a favorite food foraged on the coasts of the Black Sea, the North Sea, and the Mediterranean. Also known as Samphire or Rock Samphire, it has a rich, salty taste and has a place in a lot of traditional European cooking.

Growing sea fennel opens up a lot of culinary opportunities. Sea fennel uses in cooking range from pickling to steaming to blanching. It is necessary to cook it briefly before eating, but a light blanching is all it takes to make an excellent side dish.

Because of their natural saltiness, sea fennel plants pair especially well with shellfish. They also freeze well – just lightly blanch them and freeze them overnight laid out in a single layer on a baking sheet. The next morning, seal them in a bag and return it to the freezer.

How to Grow Sea Fennel – Growing sea fennel in the garden is very easy. Although it's used to salty coastal soil, it will do well in any well-draining soil and has actually been cultivated in gardens in England for centuries.

Sow your sea fennel seeds indoors a few weeks before the average last frost. Transplant the seedlings outside after all chance of frost has passed.

Sea fennel plants can tolerate some shade, but they'll perform best in full sun. It's a good idea to dig a large hole and fill the bottom of it with gravel to make drainage easier. Allow the soil to dry out between waterings.

Harvest young leaves and stems throughout spring and summer by handpicking or cutting with scissors – similar to the harvesting of most common herb plants.

What Is Well-Drained Soil? bhg.com

I'd like to know what is meant by "well-drained soil."

Almost every gardening book and magazine article you read says you need well-drained soil. What is it? Well-drained soil is a soil where water infiltrates at a medium rate -- somewhere between running off and draining as though someone pulled a plug. The best soil is about half air space and half solid mineral, with 2-5 percent organic matter. Under ideal growing conditions, about half of the air space will be filled with water. If the soil is too wet, plant roots fail to get the oxygen they need. If the soil has too much air space and drains too quickly, plant roots dry out.

Here's a simple test to find out how well your soil drains. Dig a hole that is 12-18 inches across and 12-18 inches deep. Fill the hole with water. If water drains from the hole in 10 minutes or less, you have fast drainage. If the water takes an hour or more to drain, you have poorly drained soil. Improve soil drainage by building raised beds or by adding organic matter to existing soil in the form of well-rotted manure, compost, or peat moss.

Making Herbs Bigger Through Pinching And Harvesting gardeningknowhow.com

When you have an herb garden, you probably have one thing in mind: you want to have a garden filled with large, bushy plants that you can use in the kitchen and around the house. Your herb plants, on the other hand, have something else in mind. They want to grow as fast as possible and produce flowers and then seeds.

So how does a gardener overcome the basic urges of an herb plant in order to fulfill their own ideas of bigger herb plants? The secret lies in frequent pinching and harvesting.

Pinching and Harvesting Herb Plants – Pinching is the act of removing an upper portion of a stem on an herb plant in order to encourage new leaf growth from the lower dormant leaf buds. If you look at an herb plant, you'll see that right in the crotch, where a leaf meets the stem, there is a small knob. This is a dormant leaf bud. As long as there is growth above it, the lower leaf buds will not grow. But, if the stem above a leaf bud is removed, the plant signals to the dormant leaf buds closest to the missing stem to grow. Since a plant normally produces these dormant leaf buds in pairs, when you take one stem off, two leaf buds will start to produce two new stems. Basically, you will get two stems where one was before.

If you do this enough times, in no time at all, your herb plants will be big and lush. Making herb plants bigger through this practice can be done either by deliberate pinching or harvesting.

Harvesting is rather easy, as it is the point of growing herbs in the first place. All you do is simply harvest the herbs when you need them, and Mother Nature will take care of the rest. Don't worry about hurting the plants when you harvest. They will grow back stronger and better.

Deliberate pinching should be done when the plant is small or during times when you may not be harvesting much. All you need to do is remove a small top portion of each stem every week or so.

You do this with a pinching action on the top of the stem. This removes the top part of the stem cleanly and those dormant leaf buds will then start to grow.

Pinching and harvesting do not damage your herb plants. Your herb plants will grow back bigger and healthier if you take the time to regularly pinch and harvest them.

Myrtle's MUSINGS

- **Market in the Park- Spring.** Cathedral Square. 300 Conti St. April 24 to July 17. Saturdays: 7:30am to noon. Buy locally-grown, locally-produced and homemade items at Market in the Park!
- **Mobile Botanical Gardens MarketPlace.** Fridays noon - 2pm, Saturdays 9am - noon. Weather dependent. Our MarketPlace plant retail venue is located at the end of our parking lot. Masks are required - Thank you!
- **Gulf Coast Herb Society Dues.** Dues are \$15.00 for the remainder of the administrative year.
- It is the season to do lots of air layering of Camellias, Azaleas, and roses (among other plants.)

The task of air layering is difficult with only two hands. After fumbling the last two years with plastic wrap, electrical tape, and tin foil while attempting to air layer camellias, I came across an advertisement for root balls.

There are three sizes; 2", 3 1/2", and 4". They also come in black, green, and clear.

I am experimenting with the small and medium sizes. I am using the small for roses and azaleas, the medium for the camellias. The medium I am using is long fibered sphagnum moss, potting soil, and coir. Coir is shredded coconut shells - a sustainable resource that will replace unsustainable peat moss.

I find the only difficult part of using these root balls is the opening at the top. According to the instruction and the YouTube videos I have found, the top and bottom are kept open for rain to run through. I can't help but think that is a big "no-no" for the camellias. So further experimentation is 1) keeping the top and bottom open and 2) taping both ends to keep out rain.

Does this work with our larger herbs? I am air layering our large, overgrown rosemary and a smaller lemon verbena.

I will be checking the smaller root balls placed on azaleas herbs, and roses in six weeks to see if we have root growth. Camellias are checked at 3 months or more.

I will keep you updated on the results of my experiments!

-Barb Comstock



“DILL”-ICIOUS Fettuccine with Shittake Mushrooms & Basil ~ eatingwell.com Servings: 4

- | | |
|--|---|
| • 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil | • 1/4 teaspoon salt, or to taste |
| • 3 cloves garlic, minced | • Freshly ground pepper, to taste |
| • 2 ounces shiitake mushrooms, stemmed and sliced (1 1/2 cups) | • 8 ounces whole-wheat fettuccine, or spaghetti |
| • 2 teaspoons freshly grated lemon zest | • 1/2 cup chopped fresh basil, divided |
| • 2 tablespoons lemon juice, juice | • 1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese, (1 ounce) |

1. Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil for cooking pasta. Heat oil in large nonstick skillet over low heat.
2. Add garlic and cook, stirring, until fragrant but not browned, about 1 minute. Add mushrooms and increase heat to medium-high; cook, stirring occasionally, until tender and lightly browned, 4 to 5 minutes.
3. Stir in lemon zest, lemon juice, salt and pepper. Remove from the heat.
4. Meanwhile, cook pasta, stirring occasionally, until just tender, 9 to 11 minutes or according to package directions.
5. Drain, reserving 1/2 cup cooking liquid. Add the pasta, the reserved cooking liquid, Parmesan and 1/4 cup basil to the mushrooms in the skillet; toss to coat well.
6. Serve immediately, garnished with remaining basil.

GCHS Officers 2020 - 2021

**President ~ Annie Daniels • President-Elect ~ Beth Poates • Recording Secretary ~ Martha Adams
Treasurer ~ Kathy Lovitt • Historian ~ Jennifer Williams • Ways & Means ~ Kathy Lovitt**

Parliamentarian ~ Martha Fuller • Weeders & Planters ~ Sybil Burnett & Nita Crandall • Newsletter Editor ~ Ojuana Cooney

GULF COAST HERB SOCIETY Calendar of Activities – 2020 - 2021

April 27 - 5:30pm: GCHS Zoom Meeting.

May 25 - 5:30pm: GCHS Zoom Meeting.

HERB DAY Postponed. Date to be determined.

NOTE: The above listed plans may change, or additional events and meetings may be added, so please check back frequently

MOBILE BOTANICAL GARDENS Calendar for 2020 – 2021

EVENTS/ SOCIAL (for more info [CLICK HERE!](#))

- **Mobile Botanical Gardens MarketPlace.** Fridays noon - 2pm. Saturdays 9am - noon. Weather dependent. Our MarketPlace plant retail venue is located at the end of our parking lot. Masks are required - Thank you!
- **Artful Garden Giftshop.** Open Wednesday - Friday 10am - 1pm & Saturday 10am - 3pm.
- **Georgia Roussos Boxed Lunches** Take it to go or eat in the Gardens! Pickup at Mobile Botanical Gardens between 11:30 and 12:30 on your selected menu day. Georgia Roussos Catering provides boxed lunches with desserts that may be purchased online and picked up curbside at the Gardens on Wednesdays and Fridays. Take it home or find a quiet spot at the Gardens to eat outside. We also have the Botanical Center set up with tables set far apart. Click [HERE](#) for more info.
- **Museums for All.** As a part of the national program, Museums for All, we are proud to offer reduced admission to those receiving SNAP benefits.

CLASSES (for more info [CLICK HERE!](#))

PRESENTATIONS (for more info [CLICK HERE!](#))

GCHS Food Team Duties

- Make sure kitchen tables and counters are clean
- No food left in fridge
- Pick any trash off floor
- Clean spills from floor
- Take out garbage & place new - bags in cans bags are on to fridge
- If table and chairs are to be put up we will let you know - if not they can be left out
- Make sure all doors are locked
- Thermostats must be left as you found them

The Plain Garden Planting Cycle

