



Gulf Herb Society Coast Newsletter

June
2022

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

Rosemary for Remembrance DATES

• **June 28, 5:30 pm.** GCHS Meeting at MBG

• **July 26, 5:30 pm.** GCHS Meeting at MBG

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.
- A Membership form is at the end of the Newsletter. Mail to or drop off: c/o Kathy Lovitt, 109 Grand Blvd, Mobile, AL 36607. Make checks payable to GCHS \$25.00. Questions? Call Kathy Lovitt at 251-680-7979.

Did You KNOW

What Is Green Tea? thespruceeats.com

Green tea is a type of "true tea" made from the leaves of the tea plant. It's cultivated in China and Japan, where it is also the most popular. Green tea is gaining global acclaim, mostly due to its potential health benefits. There are different types of green tea, including dragonwell, gunpowder, matcha, and sencha. Though they vary in taste, green teas tend to have a mellow flavor. It's also used in tea-flavored food recipes and other drinks, such as smoothies.

Fast Facts - Origin: China, Japan, Temperature: 150–180°F, Caffeine: 12–75 mg per cup

What Is Green Tea? – Green tea is a type of tea made from the leaves of the tea plant (*Camellia sinensis*). It's an evergreen shrub that originated in the southwest forest region of China. Specifically, green tea comes from the Chinese tea plant (*Camellia sinensis sinensis*). It thrives in high elevations with cool temperatures and has a sweeter, softer taste than the other tea plant varietal (*Camellia sinensis assamica*), which is used primarily for black teas. Japan and China dominate green tea production.

All tea leaves are harvested by hand. With green tea, the leaves are preserved with heat immediately after harvest, whereas black tea leaves are left to oxidize before they're dried. In Japan, green tea is dried with steam, while Chinese green teas are processed with dry heat using an

ovenlike drum or woklike vessel. Most green tea is comprised of the tea leaves alone. Some Japanese types use only stems or combine them with the leaves.

There are several types of green tea available, varying in the way the tea is processed. The taste differs with the specific type, though it's generally softer and sweeter than black tea. Japanese green teas are notable for a strong vegetal flavor that's grassy and reminiscent of seaweed, with citrus notes. Chinese green teas tend to have a mellow vegetal flavor, a little more sweetness, and nutty, floral, woody, and vanilla notes.

Uses – Since it contains caffeine, it's best to drink green tea during the daytime. It's enjoyable before, during, or after a meal, and it may even help with digestion.

How to Drink Green Tea – Unlike black tea, green tea does not need cream, sugar, and other additives, which may even reduce its health benefits. A squeeze of lemon juice is a nice boost of flavor for some types of green tea.

Most green tea is brewed with simmering water between 150 F and 180 F. The brewing times vary by the type, though they're generally short. Steamed Japanese green teas require just 30 seconds, and others may go as long as four minutes. Brewing green tea too long will make it bitter. Always follow the recommendation for time and temperature provided with the specific tea you're brewing.

Caffeine Content in Green Tea – In general, green tea has less caffeine than most other teas and coffee. However, some types of green tea, such as matcha, can have more caffeine than black tea or even espresso. If you're sensitive to caffeine, try decaf green tea, brewing it weaker, or switching from tea bags to loose-leaf tea.

Buying and Storing – There are many green teas on the market, and they're easy to find at grocery stores, tea shops, and online. It's worth exploring different brands and types to find which you enjoy most. Spending a little more money on high-quality green tea is also a good idea if you want the best-tasting cup of tea.



Gunpowder Green Tea

Storing tea properly is important to preserving its flavor and extending its shelf life. Keep tea away from heat, humidity, direct light, and anything with a strong odor. It's often best to store green tea in a well-sealed, opaque container. Once a package is open, drink the tea within a few months.

Types of Green Tea – There are several different types of green tea, and each has its own flavor characteristics.

- Bi Luo Chun: A Chinese favorite, this tea has a sweet, vegetal taste.
- Dragonwell: A Chinese tea that's popular in the U.S., it has a mild, sweet, chestnut flavor.
- Genmaicha: A Japanese tea blend with puffed rice, this type has a sweet, roasted, vegetal taste.
- Gunpowder: A Chinese tea that compresses dried leaves into pellets, it often has a light, grassy flavor.
- Gyokuro: A Japanese shade-grown green tea, it perfectly displays the taste of umami.
- Hōjicha: A roasted Japanese tea of leaves and stems, this type is low in caffeine and has a woody flavor that appeals to coffee drinkers.
- Jasmine: A favorite among flavored tea blends, the soft sweetness of jasmine flowers adds a delicate flavor to green tea.
- Kukicha: A steamed tea made from Japanese tea stems, it has a sweet and vegetal flavor with little caffeine.
- Matcha: A Japanese powdered tea, this type has a bittersweet flavor.
- Sencha: A popular green tea in Japan, it has a vegetal and grassy flavor.

What Is the Best Soil pH for Growing Herbs?

howtoculinaryherbgarden.com

Soil pH is crucial for a plant's survival. If your soil doesn't have a proper balance of acidity and alkalinity, your plants won't be able to get the nutrients they need to flourish.

Strangely enough, the ideal level of soil acidity varies from plant to plant. That is, some plants do better in more acidic soils, while others thrive in a more alkaline environment.

If the soil is too acidic or alkaline, plants may still grow, they just may not grow as tall or produce as many leaves, fruit, and flowers.

In this article, we'll be looking at the best soil pH for growing your herbs and how you can adjust the acidity level of your soil to suit the types of herbs you'd like to grow.

What Is pH and How Does It Affect Plant Growth?

Soil pH refers to the level of acidity in the soil. pH is measured on a scale from 0 to 14 with a value of 7 being

neutral. Values less than 7 are on the acidic side of the equation and values greater than 7 are considered more alkaline.

Factors that can directly influence the acidity of soil include:

- High levels of rainfall which carries away minerals such as calcium, magnesium, potassium, and sodium. The more rain the soil receives, the more acidic it usually is.
- Decomposing organic matter. Decomposition releases carbon dioxide into the soil which creates more acid.

Plants get most of their essential nutrients from the soil. The pH value will determine how easily a plant can take in those nutrients.

Before a nutrient can be used by plants it must be dissolved in the soil solution. Most minerals and nutrients are more soluble or available in acid soils than in neutral or slightly alkaline soils.

What is the Best pH Range for Herbs? – Most of the herbs that you use in your kitchen will grow best in a pH that is slightly below neutral – with a pH level between 6.0 and 7.5.

Each plant has a soil pH level that it best thrives in; certain herbs like their soil a bit more acidic. For example, Bay (*Laurus nobilis*) prefers pH levels around 6.2, while Fennel (*Foeniculum dulce*) prefers a soil pH that's around 6.5.

Below is a table with the preferred pH level for most culinary herbs.

Herbs' Preferred pH:

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| • Basil 5.5 – 6.5 | • Parsley 5.0 – 7.0 |
| • Bay 6.2 – 6.8 | • Peppermint 6.0 – 7.5 |
| • Chives 6.0 – 7.0 | • Rosemary 5.0 – 6.0 |
| • Dill 5.8 to 6.5 | • Sage 5.5 – 6.5 |
| • Garlic 5.5 – 7.5 | • Spearmint 5.5 – 7.5 |
| • Hops 6.0 – 7.5 | • Stevia 6.7 – 7.2 |
| • Marjoram 6.0 – 8.0 | • Thyme 5.5 – 7.0 |
| • Oregano 5.8 to 6.2 | |

How Do I Test My Soil's pH? – Testing the pH level of your soil is super easy and quick as long as you have the right tools. A soil pH tester like the one shown below can be used to quickly test the pH level and moisture level of your soil.

With the help of such a tool, you'll be able to accurately adjust your soil to the actual pH level you want. It also eliminates the guesswork that may lead to overly acidic or alkaline soil.

FAQs

Do any herbs thrive in acidic soil? – Most herbs like their soil in the slightly acidic side. But there are a few which can thrive with an even lower pH value. A few examples are: Basil, Garlic, Oregano, Rosemary, Thyme

How do I adjust the pH of my soil? – If the acidity level is too high, you can add limestone or wood ashes to raise the pH. And if it's too alkaline, you can add sulfur to increase its acidity.

It takes about six months to adjust your soil's pH level, so give it time and be patient. Ideally, soil amendments are performed in the fall, so they have time to work before the planting season.

Make sure to use a soil pH tester to monitor the soil's pH level as you adjust it. This will prevent over-adjusting the soil.

When making soil amendments, avoid overfertilizing. This can cause your herbs to grow too quickly and they won't have time to develop the essential oils which give them their delightful aroma and flavor profiles.

Summary – If you want better results from your outdoor garden during your next growing season, be sure to test your soil and verify that its pH level is suitable for the herbs you want to grow.

Also, make sure that there's proper soil drainage and that sufficient sunlight (at least six hours) reaches the site you intend to use for your herb garden.

Myrtle's MUSINGS

- I am looking forward to about a three week visit starting July 11th from my 27-year-old son Carl, who has spent most of the last five years in Central Asia. (Peace Corps fresh out of college, Fulbright Scholarship and college researcher) He is coming to Mobile via Ecuador where he is exploring dual citizenship. From here he visits his

mother in DC before going to Estonia to begin a two-year Masters degree in International Relations, with an emphasis on Russia and Central Asia, at the University of Tartu with tuition waived, starting August 29th.
-Larry Liles

- Reminder **Dues are Due** in July \$25.00.
- A picture of my small "Happy" harvest a couple weeks ago.



-Nicole Owler

“DILL”-ICIOUS Masala Chai Tea ~ thekitchn.com

One 8-ounce serving

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3/4 cup water2 to 4 whole green cardamom pods, smashed• 1 to 2 thin slices fresh ginger• 1 1-inch cinnamon stick• 1 piece star anise3/4 cup milk | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 1/2 teaspoons loose black tea leaves• Sweetener, to taste (I prefer honey or maple syrup) | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. In a small saucepan, combine the water, cardamom, ginger, cinnamon stick and star anise.2. Bring the mixture to a boil then lower the heat and simmer for a few minutes until the mixture is fragrant.3. Add the milk and tea leaves, and simmer for another minute then turn off the heat and let steep for 2 minutes.4. Pour into a cup through a fine mesh sieve.5. Discard the leaves and spices.6. Add sweetener, to taste. |
|---|--|--|

GCHS Officers 2021 – 2022

President ~ Beth Poates • President-Elect ~ Vacant • Recording Secretary ~ Larry Liles

Treasurer ~ Vacant • Historian ~ Vacant • Ways & Means ~ Vacant

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

GULF COAST HERB SOCIETY Calendar of Activities 2021 – 2022

June 28th, 5:30pm: GCHS Meeting at the Mobile Botanical Gardens

July 26th, 5:30pm: GCHS Meeting at the Mobile Botanical Gardens

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 2021 – 2022

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

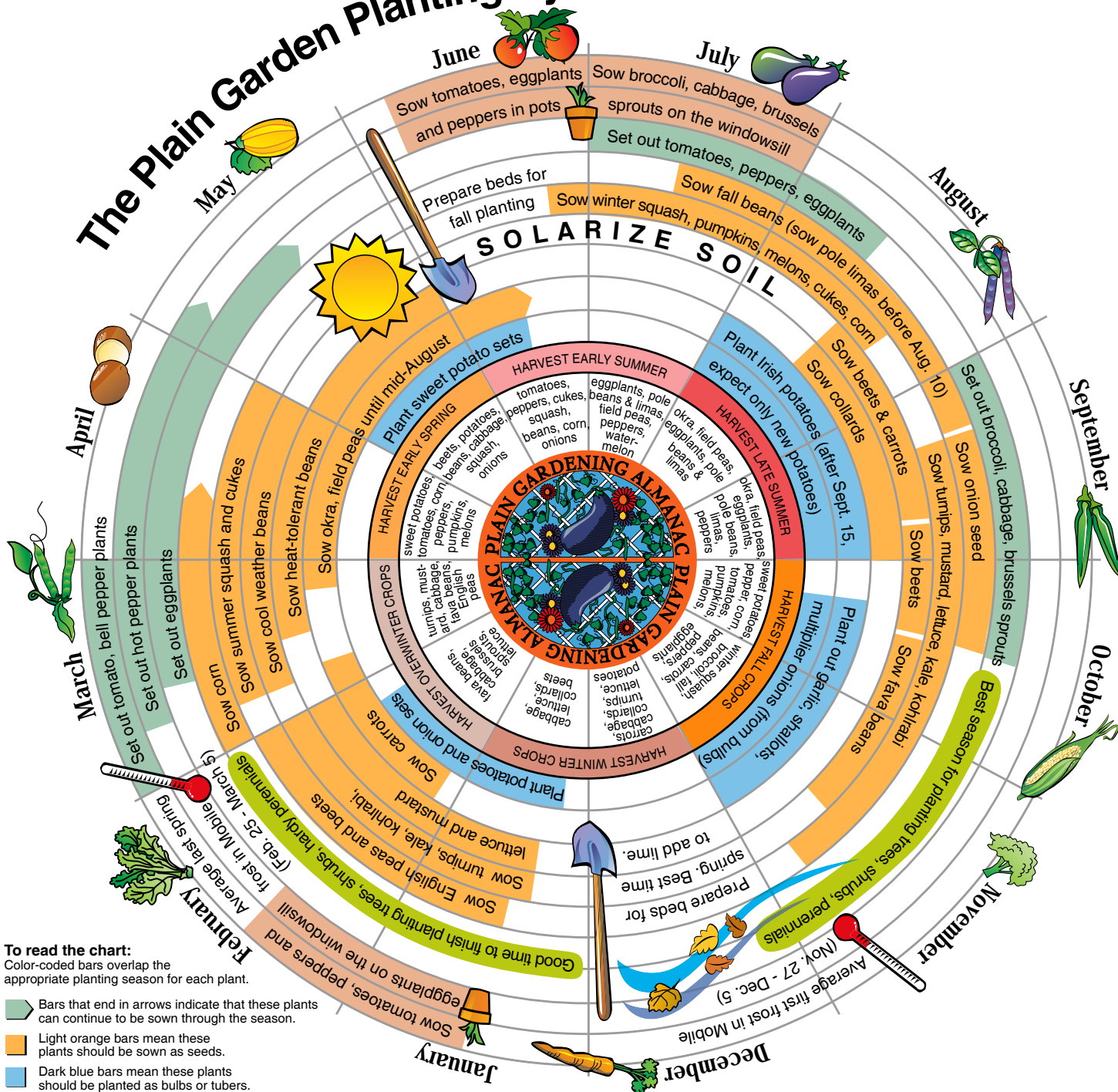
CLASSES (for more info [CLICK HERE!](#)).

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



To read the chart:
 Color-coded bars overlap the appropriate planting season for each plant.

- Bars that end in arrows indicate that these plants can continue to be sown through the season.
- Light orange bars mean these plants should be sown as seeds.
- Dark blue bars mean these plants should be planted as bulbs or tubers.
- Green bars mean these plants should be 6-inch-high transplants when put in the garden.
- Brown bars indicate that these plants should be sown in pots in a cold frame or inside the house.



GULF COAST HERB SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM

New Member? Y N

Name: _____ Phone _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Email _____ (to receive our Newsletter and updates)

Committees I am interested in: _____ Herb Garden _____ Membership _____ Herb Day

Yearly dues are \$25 and payable in August.

**Please make check payable to GCHS
mail % Kathy Lovitt, 109 Grand Blvd. Mobile, AL 36607
Or bring your check or cash to one of our meetings**

Date _____ Amount \$ _____ Paid by Cash _____ or Check # _____

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS

Welcome to the Gulf Coast Herb Society! We meet at the Mobile Botanical Gardens from 5:30 to 7:00pm the fourth Tuesday of the month, unless otherwise announced in our newsletter, emails and Facebook.

Refreshments are served at each meeting, it's optional to bring something to share.
Meetings start at 5:30p.m., program will follow, work days in Herb Garden TBA

QUESTIONS?

Check out our website www.gulfcoastherbsociety.org Like us on Facebook!