

The Herbarian

OUR FATHERS OF OLD

by Rudyard Kipling

Excellent herbs had our fathers of old –
 Excellent herbs to ease their pain –
 Alexanders and Marigold,
 Eyebright, Orris, and Elecampane,
 Basil, Rocket, Valerian, Rue,
 (Almost singing themselves they run)
 Vervain, Dittany, Call-me-to-you –
 Cowslip Melilot, Rose of the Sun.
 Anything green that grew out of the mould
 Was an excellent herb to our fathers of old.

Wonderful tales had our fathers of old –
 Wonderful tales of the herbs and the stars –
 The Sun was Lord of the Marigold,
 Basil and Rocket belonged to Mars.
 Pat as a sum in division it goes –
 (Every plant had a star bespoke)–
 Who but Venus should govern the Rose?
 Who but Jupiter own the Oak?
 Simply and gravely the facts are told
 In the wonderful books of our fathers of old.

Wonderful little, when all is said,
 Wonderful little our fathers knew.
 Half their remedies cured you dead –
 Most of their teaching was quite untrue –
 ‘Look at the stars when a patient is ill,
 (Dirt has nothing to do with disease),
 Bleed and blister as much as you will,
 Blister and bleed him as oft as you please.’
 Whence enormous and manifold
 Errors were made by our fathers of old.

Yet when the sickness was sore in the land,
 And neither planet nor herb assuaged,
 They took their lives in their lancet-hand
 And, oh, what a wonderful war they waged!
 Yes, when the crosses were chalked on the door –
 Yes, when the terrible dead-cart rolled,
 Excellent courage our fathers bore –
 Excellent heart had our fathers of old.
 None too learned, but nobly bold,
 Into the fight went our fathers of old.

If it be certain, as Galen says,
 And sage Hippocrates holds as much –
 ‘That those afflicted by doubts and dismays
 Are mightily helped by a dead man’s touch,’
 Then, be good to us stars above!
 Then, be good to us, herbs below!
 We are afflicted by what we can prove;
 We are distracted by what we know –
 So – ah, so!
 Down from your Heaven or up from your mould,
 Send us the hearts of our fathers of old!

Rudyard Kipling

(1865-1936)

Rudyard Kipling was an English poet and author, perhaps best known for his fictional collection of stories, The Jungle Book.

Our Fathers of Old is a poem taken from Kipling’s Rewards and Fairies (1910). The tale is a historical fantasy, in which the main characters, Dan and Una, learn the history of the area in which they live through the magic of the fairy Puck. The fairy brings to life both real and fictional characters to tell their tales.

One such character is Nicholas Culpeper, featured in a chapter entitled ‘A Doctor of Medicine’.

Elecampane (*Inula helenium*)



Known as ‘horse-heal’ or ‘elfwort’ in some parts of Britain, Elecampane has a long history of traditional use. Gerard’s Herball recommended a tonic of the root for ‘shortness of breath’.

While new studies have shown that herbal extracts of Elecampane have been effective in fighting bacteria, including MRSA, it is typically used today in veterinary medicine.

HERB OF THE MONTH: PARSLEY

Parsley is gharstly.

(Ogden Nash)



Like all herbs, one's preference for one over another is a matter of taste. Sadly relegated to the level of a bit of garnish aside a steak, parsley is an overlooked and underused herb.

Rich in vitamins and minerals (two tablespoons yields 153% of your recommended dietary allowance of Vitamin K), parsley is a very healthy addition to any dish. Along with bay and thyme, parsley is one of the main components of a traditional *bouquet garni*. It takes center stage as an ingredient in a Spanish *salsa verde*, and is a common addition to many Mediterranean recipes.

Parsley brightens flavors; the mildly bitter taste stimulates the taste buds which in turn makes for a well-balanced flavor. It also helps with digestion, which makes for a well-balanced meal.

So, go ahead and eat your garnish. Ogden Nash didn't understand how good it is for you!

MONTHLY MEETING TOPIC: NATURAL HERBAL CLEANING

There are three important reasons to consider natural cleaning:

- *It is safer for the body- both yours and that of your family and pets.* Most commercial cleaners contain a list of chemical ingredients and can be toxic, irritate the skin or a hazard to inhale. By cleaning with natural ingredients, you reduce the risk of causing harm.

- *It is cost effective.* Creating your own cleaners is not only far less expensive than buying a pre-made chemical cleaner in the store, but it's simple to do. Natural household cleaners typically include vinegar and baking soda – if you do any work baking or cooking in the kitchen, then you'll have these two on hand already.

- *It is better for the environment.* As natural cleaners are non-toxic, any which is washed down the drain will not contaminate soil and water over time. You can create customized amounts of cleaner, and reuse containers and bottles, reducing the amount of waste heading to landfills.



Create your own cleaners, and remember that *cleaning naturally is never a chore!*

SUB ROSA

At over 1000 years old, what is thought to be the world's oldest living rose is located upon the apse wall of St. Mary's Cathedral, located in Hildesheim, Germany. It is thought that the rose – a wild dogrose (Rosa canina L.) was growing upon the spot where Louis the Pious found a long-lost reliquary. Historical records state that the diocese was founded in 815 AD by Bishop Altfrid. The cathedral was destroyed in 1945 by allied bombers, and the rosebush completely burned. Yet in a manner of weeks, the resilient rose had produced over twenty new shoots up through the rubble of the building as its deep roots were undisturbed by the attack. The rose blooms each year for about two weeks at the end of May.

LENDING LIBRARY REVIEW

There are two important volumes available in our library which tie in with this month's meeting topic of natural cleaning:

Organic Housekeeping, by Ellen Sandbeck (Scribner, 2006) is a highly-detailed work in which each room of the house is given its own chapter of study. From kitchens to bathrooms and spaces all around the home, the author's tips on reducing waste, organization, and removing chemical products from the home further instills the idea that natural cleaning saves both time and money.

The Naturally Clean Home, by Karyn Siegel-Maier (Storey, 2008) is an essential handbook for herbal cleaning. Included within its pages are numerous recipes to create cleaners with essential oils and common household items such as baking soda and vinegar. Straightforward and simple, the book demonstrates just how easy it is to convert any household to one which utilizes natural, healthy cleaners.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Looking Forward to May:

Continuing our study of the rose, we'll learn some of the folklore and legends which have arisen over time. Richa Jhaldiyal will share information on tarragon, the culinary herb of the month.

HERB DAY 2012: MAY 12th, 9-4

Herb Day is almost upon us! If you are available for a few hours Saturday, May 12th, OHEC would love to have your help with the plant sale and festivities. Volunteers who would like to help setting out the plants and prepping for the sale ought to be at the center by 8:30 AM. Typically, volunteers will be present for 2-4 hour shifts (morning or afternoon).

•Please save your grocery bags! We'll reuse them at our plant sale for customers. If you have extra, bring

them the day of the sale, or drop them off at the center during business hours.

•**Samples!** Feel free to create an herbal-inspired food for sampling at the center. Rose-flavored delicacies are most welcome!

Field Trip Opportunities

Field trips are open to both Herb Society members and to the general public. Additional fees and a minimum participation enrollment may be required.

June 9 (10a-2p)

Mockingbird Meadows Herb and Honey Farm. Enjoy a tour of the gardens and grounds, recently designated a United Plant Savers Botanical Sanctuary and sample infused honeys. Lunch is included. Fee: \$20 herb society member, \$30 resident, \$40 non-resident.

July 21 (9a-11a)

Jorgensen Farms. Included is a tour of the farm (which has been certified organic since 2002), and lunch. Fee: \$20 herb society member, \$30 resident, \$40 non-resident.

August 4 (10a-2p)

Chadwick Arboretum & Learning Gardens. Located on the campus of the Ohio State University, the gardens serve as an educational environment for residents of central Ohio. A guided tour is included. Fee: \$10 herb society member, \$15 resident, \$20 non-resident.

The Gahanna Herb Society now has a virtual home!

<http://rosemaryiasis.net>

Submissions Accepted!

Would you like to write an article for an upcoming newsletter on your favorite herbal topic, or an experience you've recently had in the garden? E-mail it to dionyza@gmail.com.

Calendar

All meetings begin at 6:30

April 14 -

Plant Identification at the Geroux Gardens (10 AM)

May 5 -

National Herb Day

May 8 -

Herb Society Meeting
Herb of the Month: Tarragon

May 12 -

HERB DAY / Plant Sale

June 12-

Herb Society Meeting
Herb of the Month: Mint

June 15-17 -

Creekside Blues & Jazz Festival

Making Scents

Information from Judith Fitzimmon's Aromatherapy through the Seasons

Clary Sage

Clary Sage is relaxing and uplifting, good for new times and newly found energy, and great for giving you an alive, vibrant feeling after the long dreary months of winter.

Warning: cedar should not be used in any form during pregnancy. It should never be taken internally.

Calming Clary Simmering Potpourri

- 5 drops Clary Sage
- Lemond rinds
- Apple peels
- 16 oz. water

Mix the rinds and peels into the water in a potpourri pot or saucepan. Add the Clary Sage and warm.