



The Connecticut Herbal Thymes

Connecticut Herb Association www.ctherb.org Spring Equinox 2022

CHA Upcoming Events 2022

Earth Day Picnic

Sat. April 23, 2022, 12:30 pm

Join CHA for a picnic at Nevers Park South Windsor CT celebrating Earth Day. As always, plant and seed swap or any other items, bring to share. It will be a usual potluck. If anyone has major dietary restriction be sure to bring food for your needs. There will be a grill available to cook any meats that some might bring. There are many beautiful trails for walking through out the park.

Ellington Farmers Market

May 28, 2022, 9am to noon

Visit the CHA Table at the Ellington Farmers Market. We will be having an informational table. If anyone would like to spend some-time at the table it would be greatly appreciated. We will have a membership drive, and free give aways. We also hope to have some herb plants to sell. There will be room on the table for anyone to put promotional material for their business.

Tea Party and Garden Tour

June 4, 2022 12:30 pm

Cathy Sherwood East Haddam CT Join us for a Tea Party Luncheon Potluck. Visit her home and gardens

September date TBA

Guest Speaker

more info coming soon



October date TBA

Michele Maclure Willimantic CT Annual Harvest Potluck

More to come, check website and Facebook for new events.

Any questions contact:

Terri, Robin, Michele or Gayle



Welcome to the Spring Edition of the CHA Newsletter

Well, Spring is on it's way!

Winter weather has been relatively mild. We had a few measurable storms but not too bad. As I'm writing today Feb 24th we are expecting another storm, but the sun rays have been getting stronger and it will melt fast. I'm seeing so many of my early plants poking their little heads out of the earth. My Daffodils are up 3-4 inches. I'm sure my Tulips are not far behind. I'm getting ready to start my peas, beans, and lettuce seeds so hopefully to plant mid march. Sugar snap peas are my favorite.



On the Covid issue, many changes are happening. Mask mandates are lessening in public and in schools. I still urge everyone to make the best decisions for yourself and family as to your personal health decisions. CHA study group will continue to be on zoom for now. In person at out-door events or public events is up to each individuals choice, mask or not.

Check out our events planned for this year. Look on our calendar events in the newsletter and always check our web page ctherb.com and Facebook.

Any special notices will also come in e-mails.

Happy Spring Planting

Green Blessing, Gayle Nogas

April is Membership/Renewal Time!

Membership brings you:

Friendship and comradery with other herbalists and herb-lovers

- Educational, informational, field trips, get togethers, fun events, and more.
- Our quarterly newsletter
- Discounts at member-owned businesses
- Access to the CHA Scholarship Fund (see below)

Renew and get a friend to join, the more the merrier! Let's see if we can double membership in 2022.

\$15.00 student, \$25.00 for individual, \$35.00 for family.

We always appreciate a little extra to add to our scholarship fund. As a CHA member, you have the advantage of utilizing the CHA SCHOLARSHIP FUND to help offset the cost of taking herbal related classes, workshops, Herb Symposium, herbal conference or CHA events. To apply for a scholarship, contact any of the board members for an application. Board members and their email addresses are listed on every bulletin.

Enclosed is a membership form for new members, or for renewing, please up date your membership with any changes, email, address, phone numbers and bio, so the members directory and mailing list can be updated.

The 2022 membership form can be found at the following link:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ojW4rIxeHVSElapqiGrWrQJpvJXanoOZtksUCmBsUas/edit?usp=sharing>

Make checks payable to CT Herb Association, Send to Gayle Nogas / CHA

35 Dale Road Enfield CT 06082

Submitted by, Lynn Murdock

EDIBLE SPRING SPRUCE TIPS

Spring has sprung! This is one of the best times of year to forage as there are so many options and there is little else coming up through the gardens and fields around us (with the notable exceptions of rhubarb and asparagus of course)! One of the easiest things to forage are spruce tips (the soft new



growth of the tree). There are many options to eat them including this pickled spruce tips recipe.

Spruce tips taste like a cross between rosemary and hops (the bitter taste you find in India Pale Ales/IPAs) although some will find the flavor that comes from the resin inside the tips to be harsh. You can soften their flavor by picking the smallest tips, soaking them in water for a few hours or transforming them into quick pickles where they take on a caper-like taste.

You can pick them from any type of spruce tree you'd like. The blue spruce varieties tend to be stronger in flavor, so I'd recommend you start with tender green tips.

The tips refer to new growth – this is a spring ingredient only. When the tips look and feel like the rest of the tree the season has passed you by.

When you pick a tip, it will not grow back. You are best to pick 1 or 2 from each branch or pick in areas that are shaded by other branches and least likely to grow and pick a small amount from a number of trees rather than a large amount from a single tree.

You want to pick from a tree that is far enough from a road to avoid the tree absorbing runoff from local traffic.

Some people have a strong allergic reaction to spruce. You may want to test yourself with a small sample first.

Other things you can do/cook with them including:

Brewing beer (spruce beer is its own category of beer). The tips offset hops and create a bitter profile that many love.

Eat them raw. This is especially true for the smallest tips which are very tender and mild in taste.

Infuse liquids by letting them soak (this is most common in water, vinegar or meat brines) to add a bitterness. They would be equally pleasant in something sweet like maple syrup or honey. Just submerge the tips and taste after a few hours and remove once you are happy with the flavor (for the sweet stuff you may want to wait a few weeks while the others should take a few hours on the counter).

Use in any recipe that calls for rosemary. Especially good with game and/or red meat and the flavors will pair well with the char flavor of a BBQ. They could also work to enhance the flavor of gravlax or bacon.

They are often chopped small and added to shortbread or muffins.

Chickweed (*Stellaria media*) is a common plant that comes up in late winter or early spring.

It is an annual plant that readily self-sows, coming back year after year.

Chickweed will often grow in large patches, which is part of why it is considered a weed. It has small leaves and grows in somewhat of a tangled mat, with small, white, star shaped flowers with five petals, each one with two lobes.

A single line of fine hairs runs down the stem, which is a great way to positively identify chickweed.

Harvesting chickweed is easy with scissors. Just take a clump in your hand and give it a haircut! It will continue to grow even after being cut several times.

Edible uses for Chickweed

Chickweed is a highly nutritious edible green that can be eaten raw. Combine it with miner's lettuce, dandelion greens, and maybe some purple dead nettle or wild violets for a tasty wild weed salad. Chickweed is also great for adding into smoothies or turning into a tasty chickweed pesto.

Medicinal uses for Chickweed

Chickweed is also an amazing medicinal plant. Chickweed is a nutritious plant that is high in vitamin C, vitamin B complex, iron, calcium, magnesium, and zinc. It contains saponins, which makes it cooling and soothing for the skin. It is best used fresh rather than dried for this purpose.

Use chickweed for making into an herbal salve to use on rashes, bug bites, or otherwise dry or itchy skin.

Chickweed is extremely gentle and a great herb for children. It's one of the herbs used in herbal diaper rash salve.

Chickweed Look-alikes

One important chickweed look-alike to know about, and that is **Scarlet Pimpernel** (*Anagallis arvensis*).

Scarlet Pimpernel is toxic and needs to be avoided.

While it has reddish orange flowers which are different than chickweed's white flowers, its leaves and overall plant structure is very similar to chickweed.

Scarlet pimpernel does not have the single line of hairs down the stem that chickweed has. If you are not sure it it's chickweed, wait until the plant flowers to make a confident positive identification.

Chickweed Pesto

Author Colleen @ Grow Forage Cook Ferment

Ingredients

1/2 cup walnuts, cashews, or pine nuts,

2-3 cloves garlic minced

3 cups chickweed loosely packed, 1 Tbsp lemon juice

1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil, 1/2 tsp salt 1/4 tsp black

pepper, 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Instructions

Place all ingredients into a food processor or blender and process until smooth. If it's too thick, slowly drizzle in a bit more olive oil. Keep refrigerated use within 3-4

days, or freeze. Nutrition: Calories:94kcal, Carbohydrates:1.4g, Protein:2.5g Fat:9.4g, Saturated

Fat:1.5g, Cholesterol:3mg,



Submitted by Terri Cusson

Three Spring Beauties

Spring is only a few short weeks away (I promise), and once again there will be the inevitable confuse over Purple Deadnettle (*Lamium purpureum*), Creeping Charlie (*Glechoma hederacea*) & Henbit (*Lamium amplexicaule*). All three grow under similar conditions. All three are in the mint family. All three produce swaths of pink to purple flowers. All three can sometimes be found in the same patch. All are edible and medicinal, and all three are blooming at about the same time depending on your zone.

Dead nettle gets its common name from the fact that it doesn't sting, unlike Stinging Nettle which grows at the same time and in similar conditions. Dead nettle germinates in the fall, over winters as small seedlings that mature in early spring. You can easily spot them in fair sized swaths of purple blooms in April. Upright stems grow along its horizontal stems (stolon's) and produce a showy pinkish purple bloom that dies back as soon as the temperature gets warmer. Dead nettle shamefully is over looked as an edible. Although it is a mint it has no mint taste but is mildly sweet tasting and can be added to salads soups and smoothies for its Vit C and flavonoids. The leaves are anti-inflammatory, anti-bacterial and anti-fungal. It can be used as an astringent a diuretic and diaphoretic.

Creeping Charlie, *Glechoma hederacea* is the bane of many a gardener's existence. You might know it by some of its other common names, Creeping Jenny, Gil- on- the Ground, or my favorite, Ground Ivy. It too creates masses of plant material, blooming in early spring but unlike Dead Nettle it continues to grow all season. This makes it an excellent shady ground cover if you can control it. It reproduces by roots along its horizontal stems at each node as well as by seeds. It can be a bear to get rid of if its growing where you don't want. Which is usually where it grows the best, out competing your favorite plants. But as bad a reputation it has for being a garden bully it is also a valuable edible and medicinal plant. It contains Vit C and minerals and can be used in soups, stew or tea blends. Although it smells slightly minty it has a slightly bitter taste with no hint of mint and has been used as a bitter flavor in beer making. It's also used for treating tinnitus (ringing in the ear). It has been used to treat lung issues like asthma and inflammatory issues such as arthritis and other joint issue. It is not however, recommended for pregnant women as it contains pulegone which can harm a growing fetus.

Henbit, *Lamium amplexicaule* is another winter growing mint. It germinates in the fall and survives thru the winter to take off in the spring blooming and setting seeds only to die back when the warm weather comes. The name henbit comes from it being a favorite fodder for chickens. As a fresh edible you have to catch it early as it gets tougher as it grows. There is no minty smell or taste here either. It has been described as slightly sweet

and mildly peppery tasting. You can eat it raw or cook as a pot herb and is said to go well with eggs. Throw it in a smoothie or add it to a tea blend. Like the others in this group, it has been used to treat joint inflammation, fevers and to induce sweating.



I encourage you to learn to identify these three valuable early spring treasures as both food and medicine. They were considered valuable plants and were introduced here from Europe as food and medicine. Do yourself a favor and research these early spring beauties. Make some room for them in your garden or find them where they have escaped in to the wild.



Flora Paws Holistic and Herbal Pet Care

By: Maureen Ericson, M. H. She has done great things for animal care.

Contact her at 860) 690-1428 Newington, CT,

www.wyseguide.com/peanut-butter-dog-biscuits/

Ingredients for all natural dog treats

1 1/2 cups old-fashioned rolled oats

1/2 cup peanut butter, 3 tbsp ground flaxseed

1 large ripe banana, cut into 1-inch pieces

2 tbsp oat flour

Instructions: Preheat oven to 350°F.

Pulse the oats in a food processor until they begin to break down, 6 pulses. Add the peanut butter, ground flaxseed, and banana. Pulse the food processor until the mixture is evenly combined and resembles a cookie dough, 20-30 pulses. Sprinkle the countertop with oat flour and roll the dough out evenly to approximately 1/4

thick. Use a cookie or biscuit cutter to cut out the treats.

Set them on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Bake in a preheated oven until they have dried out slightly. The edges will feel dry to the touch and the treat will be rigid, 10-12 minutes. Remove from oven and cool for 5 minutes. Store the treats in an airtight container on the counter for one week or in the freezer for up to one month.

Follow Kalab on www.wyseguide.com for great gardening tips

The CHA Medical Herbalism Study Group



Our study group meets the first Tuesday of the Month at 6:00 pm. During this covid time we are doing Zoom only. Normally we meet in person in Vernon CT Study group is open to all members. If you are interested in joining the group please contact Terri Cusson 860-870-1681 or terri_cusson@gmail.com to get on the invitation list.

Why Do Seeds Fail?

Poor or No Germination

*Planted too deep or too shallow: Improper planting depth is probably the most common reason why seeds fail. A general rule of thumb is to cover seeds twice the thickness of the seeds when planting in pots, flats, cells etc., and three to four times the thickness of the seeds when planting outside in the garden. Very fine seeds only need to be scratched into the soil surface and firmed in.

*Poor drainage and poor root-zone aeration: All seedlings, even before they emerge from the soil, require oxygen for growth. They also need to get rid of carbon dioxide as they respire. If the sowing medium is too wet, gases cannot move through the soil. Roots cannot grow and may rot. Make sure the soil has adequate drainage to ensure proper growth and development of the root system.

*Light requirement: Some seeds require the complete absence of light; others require light; most are insensitive to light exposure. Light/no light requirement doesn't depend on light intensity-even weak light exposure can stimulate or prevent growth.

*Hard seed coats: Some herbs delay germination by means of a hard seed coat that prevents water and gas diffusion. This virtually imprisons the embryo preventing it from breaking through the seed coat. Scarification or scratching is necessary to weaken or puncture the seed coat. This will allow water and gases to diffuse so that the embryo can break through the coating.

*Improper storage: Most seeds require cool, dry storage conditions. Excess humidity or high temperatures can destroy seeds in a few days. It's crucial to know in what condition the seeds need to be kept in order to achieve optimum germination.

Good Germination but Seedlings Fail to Grow

*Drying out: This is a very common reason for failure. In fact, it is likely the most common explanation for seedling failure. Once seeds have germinated and the seedlings are growing, they cannot tolerate drying out. It takes only fifteen minutes on a hot summer day for a seed flat to dry out. Watering is crucial! Seedlings must be monitored on a regular basis to ensure they are receiving adequate amounts of water in order to survive.

*Post-emergent damping-off: This is a very serious problem when the correct germinating conditions are not provided. Damping-off is a fungus that attacks the stems, constricting water and nutrient transport to the leaves, causing the eventual toppling over of the seedlings. It occurs in patches and can destroy seedlings overnight. Some causes of this fungus are poor ventilation, poor soil aeration and overly crowded seedlings.

*Poor light: Before seedlings emerge, light requirements are generally less. Moderate exposure to sunlight or room light is sufficient for light-requiring seeds. After germination begins, seedlings require increasing light intensity. Spindly seedlings are an indication that the light intensity is not strong enough. These seedlings should be moved to a brighter window.

Success With Seeding; from Richters Free Lecture Series



Spotlight on an Herbalist Sarah Preston

As I was writing the newsletter for CHA I wanted to put a little poem in. I had a piece of paper with this little poem about a small brown seed that had been tucked away for years, I had no idea where I got it from. When I started to put *author unknown*, I decided to Google it and see what comes up. To my surprise Sarah Preston's blog from 2008 came up in the search. I first met Sarah several years ago at a NEHA (North East Herbal Association) Retreat. Some of you will remember meeting her there.

This is what Sarah wrote in her 2008 blog: "Many years ago, I was at a Reclaiming camp in West Virginia with 100 other people, one of whom was a lovely young woman named Magnolia. As part of one of the evening rituals, Magnolia was inspired to write a song which I have been singing in my garden ever since. I lost touch with Magnolia, but I still teach the song quite often"

Here is Sarah's bio:

"My name is Sarah Preston, and I'm what's known as a community herbalist, energy worker, Reiki Master/Teacher and gardener. I've been making herbal body-care products and remedies for more than 25 years. My brick & mortar shop, Radiance, is in the heart of downtown Lancaster, PA, right across the brick walkway

from the historic Central Market. In addition to all of my herbal concoctions, Radiance carries a wide range of items to support your wellness, both physical and spiritual. You'll find many Fair Trade and handmade items crafted by local artisans and artists from around the world, organic clothing, and wearable art.

All of the herbs in my garden are lovingly tended with guidance from plant and spirit allies, using organic methods, and are harvested by hand. Other herbs are wildcrafted with integrity or sourced from like-minded growers.

Herbs from the Labyrinth, LLC is a woman-owned herbal products business in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Visit my web site at www.herbsfromthelabyrinth.com."

So, If anyone is planning to travel to Pennsylvania take time out to visit Sarah's shop, I will plan on a trip soon. G. Nogas

* Small Brown Seed *
* Dark Damp earth *
* Hungry for the Light of Fire *
* Driven by a Deep Desire *
* Summon the Will Crack the Shell *
* Grow Grow Grow *
* Author Magnolia, (permission from Sarah Preston) *



Connecticut Herb Association
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Stamp



For the Love of Herbs



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Please up-date your membership of any changes email, address, phone numbers and bio, so the member directory and mailing list can be updated.

Make checks payable to Connecticut Herb Association
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