

Herbs have a number of everyday uses

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By Grace C. Lockwood

Herbs not only provide us with food and medicinal value, they include some of the loveliest aromatic plants for the ornamental garden.

Herbs, correctly pronounced with the "h", are technically classified in HORTUS III as garden plants employed in a secondary way for flavorings, seasonings, garnishes and for domestic remedies. However, many garden plants not thought of as herbs actually are because of their use in the past. Scented geraniums, old fashioned roses, carnations, pinks, lavender and primroses are all considered to be herbs, used for tonics and skin toners.

Pinks (single carnations) and lavender are traditional edging plants for sunny flower borders and rose beds. Primroses make a fine edging for moist, shady spots but they will disappear during the summer months if it is too dry.

Two fine herbs grown for their leaves as edging plants and groundcovers are *Asperulus odorata*, sweet woodruff and *Alchemilla mollis*, lady's mantle.

Sweet woodruff is traditionally used to flavor Germany's famous May Wine, drunk on May Day. It can also be dried and used to scent



drawers and closets with the sweet smell of new mown hay.

Lady's mantle is grown for its handsome leaves which are pleated, scalloped at the edges and a blue-green color. In the spring it bears masses of frothy lime green flowers. Both grow up to a foot tall and appreciate some afternoon shade in hot areas.

A lovely edging plant for sunny herb, flower and rock gardens are the creeping thymes. There are several kinds to choose from. Scented thymes include lavender, lemon, oregano, nutmeg, caraway, and a "coconut" scented one. Silver needle thyme has aromatic silvery needle-like leaves and the woolly thyme has soft, felty grey leaves. The thymes need a sunny dry spot, especially in the winter or they will succumb to the damp.

Silver, blue and grey-leaved plants are used as a foil against green foliage or bright colors. They can heighten the depth of flower colors, soften color contrasts by separating them and provide a unifying effect. Among the well-known silver foliage plants are the artemisia or wormwood.

As their common name suggests, they were used as a purge for internal parasites. The most infamous of these is *Artemisia absinthum*, the ingredient for the notorious drink called absinthe. Popular around the turn of the century, it could cause severe health effects and was quite addictive.

An excellent border plant is *Artemisia schmidtiana*, Silver Mound artemisia. It forms neat 8" tall by 16" wide globes of finely cut silver leaves. *Artemisia ludoviciana*, Silver King wormwood, and *Artemisia pontica*, Roman wormwood, are both aggressive plants, spreading by underground runners. They do make pretty groundcovers on hot dry banks, especially the Roman wormwood with its frosted feathery leaves. Both grow about 18" tall. Southernwood, *Artemisia abrotanum*, has a spicy, bitter fragrance and can be dried and used as a moth repellent in closets and woolen drawers.

Achillea or yarrow are tall grey to silver-leaved plants with white, red or yellow flat-topped clusters of flowers. The common yarrow found growing along roadsides was once used to staunch the flow of blood from wounds and known as soldier's woundwort. The cultivated varieties are less invasive and include the gold flowering "Coronation Gold", "Gold Plate" and my favorite, "Moonshine", with silver ferny foliage and lemon yellow flowers. They grow about 4' tall and bloom from summer to early fall. A red variety, "Cerise Queen", blooms in the spring and occasionally again in the fall. The woolly yarrow, *Achillea tomentosa*, is a tiny 6" plant with deep yellow flowers, perfect for the rock garden.

Both artemisia and yarrow need full sun and prefer a dry location. Artemisias can be propagated by rooted cuttings and yarrows are easily dug up and divided.

Herbs were indispensable in the medieval garden and still deserve a place in every garden for their history, beauty and low care maintenance.

For further information regarding this column or other questions concerning gardening, contact Grace at 873-7019.

HALTON HURRICANES SPRING TRYOUTS 'AAA' MINOR HOCKEY
 Players sign up at arena Only Cost is \$7.00 per tryout

April 4 Sunday - Carlisle Arena, Carlisle			April 7 Wednesday - Alcott Arena, Georgetown		
Team	Year of birth	Time	Minor Atom	1983	7:00 PM to 8:00 PM
Minor Novice	1985	9:00 AM to 10:00 AM	Midget (all)	1976 & 1977	8:00 PM to 10:00 PM
Novice	1984	10:00 AM to 11:00 AM	- Erin Arena, Erin		
Minor Atom	1983	11:00 AM to 12:00 AM	Atom	1982	7:00 PM to 8:00 PM
Atom	1982	3:30 PM to 4:30 PM	Peewee	1980	8:00 PM to 9:00 PM
Bantam	1978	4:30 PM to 6:00 PM	Minor Bantam	1979	9:00 PM to 10:00 PM
April 6 Sunday - Alcott Arena, Georgetown			April 8 Thursday - Alcott Arena, Georgetown		
Minor Bantam	1979	7:00 PM to 8:30 PM	Minor Novice	1985	7:00 PM to 8:00 PM
Peewee	1980	8:30 PM to 10:00 PM	Minor Peewee	1981	8:00 PM to 9:00 PM
- Erin Arena, Erin			Midget (all)	1976 & 1977	9:00 PM to 10:00 PM
Novice	1984	7:00 PM to 8:00 PM			
Minor Peewee	1981	8:00 PM to 9:00 PM			
Bantam	1978	9:00 PM to 10:00 PM			

Check out the 'Hurricane Storm Brewing' for 1993-94
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Halton area activities

April 2- Wildlife film adventures: Ontario and Quebec

Witness the changing seasons in Canada's two largest provinces: Ontario and Quebec. The Royal Botanical Garden Centre in Burlington invites you and your family to experience spring, summer, fall and winter in these two great provinces. The film begins at 8:00 pm. Admission: adults, \$7.00, students and children, \$3.50. For additional information please contact (416) 527-1158.

April 2-4 Kaleidoscope

Enjoy local art at its finest. The Burlington Cultural Centre brings to you the showing and sale of local artists' work; painting, pottery, photography, sculpture, rughooking and weaving. Open Friday 10:00 am to 10:00 pm, Saturday 10:00 am to 5:00 pm and Sunday 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm. Free

Admission. For more information contact (416) 632-7796.

April 2-17- Girls in the Gang

The members of the notorious Boyd gang have taken over the Sheridan College Theatre in Oakville. They are capturing the hearts and minds of the public and all the headlines. Open Wednesday to Saturday 8:00 pm to 10:30 pm. A special public matinee will be held on Saturday April 10 at 2:00 pm, a special high school matinee will be held on Friday April 16 at 12:00 pm. Admission: adults Wednesday - Thursday \$13.00 Friday - Saturday \$15.00. Students alumni and seniors \$9.00. For more information contact the Sheridan College Box Office at (416) 815-4049 or (416) 845-8430.

April 4-Historically speaking

The Oakville Museum presents an afternoon of history and memories about Oakville's past. Share this event with local historians and groups. There will be a book signing and slide show. Open from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm. Admission: adults \$2.00, seniors and students \$1.00 children \$0.50 and families \$5.00. For additional information contact (416) 845-3541.

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