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Give your noses a present

Last week I mentioned medicinal uses of cranberries — many of our garden flowers were first grown close to our homes because of their therapeutic value rather than their beauty. Farida asked about the uses of achillea or yarrow.

According to mythology, Achilles staunched the wounds of his soldiers with yarrow leaves — hence the name achillea. Other common names for this plant are soldiers woundwort, staunchweed and Knight's milfoil.

A tea, made from leaves and flowers, is a stimulating tonic and treats stomach ailments. It is used extra-strength to wash external wounds and chapped skin. Herbalists recommend those allergic to ragweed should avoid using achillea.

Aromatherapy is the study of how the fragrance of plants affects us. The following ease stress and help us relax: anise, bergamot, chamomile, cedarwood, lavender, marjoram, rose and violet.

To stimulate the mind and be happy try basil, clove, eucalyptus, peppermint,



Let's
Get
Growing

Marjorie
Mason Hogue

rosemary or vanilla.
One of my fondest childhood memories was being allowed to stir the bowl of dried rose petals Grandma kept on the table beside her chair. She collected petals all summer to scent the house in winter.

To make your own potpourri, save the ingredients during the summer and then assemble them in late fall — for some people it is an art like the blending of fine wine.

Even if you simply purchase a bag of potpourri and empty it into a decorative bowl, you can still make it uniquely yours by adding spices and bits of plants from your garden or window sill.
Try allspice berries, cloves,

cinnamon powder or sticks, cedar shavings, spruce or pine needles, rose hips, the velvet red berries of staghorn sumac (if the birds have left any), hawthorn berries, tiny hemlock or spruce cones, citrus peels and leaves of scented geraniums or fresh herbs.

Gardeners are easy people to please on your Christmas list. Sharon recommends the books *The Country Garden* by John Brooks and *Best Plants for Your Garden* by Susan Berry and Steve Bradley. A gift certificate to a favourite nursery, garden centre or book store is also certain to please.

This is the last 'Let's Get Growing' column until Jan. 2. Some of you may wonder why I haven't answered your questions yet. I try to keep the columns as timely as possible and your concerns will best fit into columns in the new year. So stay tuned. Best wishes for a happy holiday season with family and friends.

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