

Herbs Make Scents

THE HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA
VOLUME XLVI, NUMBER 7



SOUTH TEXAS UNIT
JULY 2023

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July 2023 Calendar

- July 8, Sat. 9:00 am -12 noon** **Garden Workday Kolter Elementary** at 9710 Runnymede Dr. Houston, TX 77096.
- July 11, Tue.** **No Day Meeting**
- July 13, Thurs. 6:30 pm** **Westbury Garden Workday** at 12581 Dunlap Street, Houston, TX 77035.
- July 26, Thur. 7:00 pm** **Lagniappe – Something Extra Evening Meeting** (presented via Zoom
Note: Date and Time Change <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82842562835>) *“Harriet Tubman – Nurse, Herbalist and Spy”*
presented by **Adrian Melissinos, PhD, RN.** Watch your email for further information.
- Full Moon Madness** (Members Only presented via Zoom) Next events in Sept., Dec.

August 2023 Calendar

- Aug 8, Tue.** **No Day Meeting**
- Aug 10, Thurs. 6:30 pm** **Westbury Garden Workday** at 12581 Dunlap Street, Houston, TX 77035.
- Aug 12, Sat. 9:00 am- 12 noon** **Garden Workday Kolter Elementary** at 9710 Runnymede Dr. Houston, TX 77096.
- Aug 16, Wed. 6:30 pm** **Evening Meeting (Members Only)** *“Herb Fair 2023 Kickoff”* presented by **Catherine O’Brien, Herb Fair Chair,** at Cherie Flores Pavilion, 1500 Hermann Dr. Houston, TX 77004. Doors open at 6:30 pm, with potluck meal.

Newsletter deadline: the 25th of every month is strictly enforced. August editor is Linda Alderman)

Happy Birthday!



July birthday flower: Larkspur

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------|----|-----------------|
| 1 | Nita Rowe | 17 | Joyce Taylor |
| 7 | Suzanne Wessels | 22 | Mary Starr |
| 10 | Gloria Hunter | 24 | Laura Mullen |
| 10 | Mary Nurre | 28 | Jeanie Dunnihoo |
| 15 | Sally Luna | | |



Chairman's Corner



Hello HSA-STU community, my name is **Dena (Yanowski) Gaydos** and I have been elected as our Unit's new Chair. I am honored and excited for all the potential the next two years has in store for our group. I want to graciously thank our most recent Chair, **Julie Fordes**, who helped us adopt so many new practices and traditions. I am looking forward to growing as a leader and herbie through my time in this position.

New to the board, we welcome:
Tricia Bradbury as Secretary

Thank you for your continued dedication:
Karen Cottingham as Vice Chair
Maria Treviño as Treasurer

As the new Unit Chair I am looking forward to continuing down the path previous chairs have passionately paved. Our *50th Annual Fall Herb Fair* is right around the corner, and I plan to call upon each and every one of us to share treasures and talents. I have so much to learn and am looking forward to your support and participation.

Dena
Unit Chair



The HERB SOCIETY of AMERICA

Mentha x gracilis
'Madalene Hill'

Doublemint



Doublemint is unusual because it has both peppermint (menthol) and spearmint (carvone) essential oils, providing a subtle and more complex minty flavor. This goes against the genetic rule stating that this is impossible.

It is named for Madalene Hill, a grower from Texas, who began growing this culinary mint in the 1950's and worked to increase cultivation and use of this culinary mint. She and husband Jim owned Hilltop Herb Farm in Texas.

Originally known as red-stemmed apple mint, doublemint has stems which become a vibrant red in cooler growing seasons.

The leaves of doublemint are opposite and glossy green. It grows to 24 to 30 inches tall.

As all mints, the plants spread through underground runners. Control the spread by growing in a pot or limited area.

Grows best in full sun with moist, well-drained soil, though it will tolerate some shade. Fertilize sparingly for the best flavor.

This mint is popular in Vietnamese cooking as well as in fruit salads, with peas, teas, pies and other desserts.



*Join Us for a Special
Lagniappe Program in July
"Harriet Tubman - Nurse,
Herbalist, and Spy"*



Presented Virtually by
Adrian Melissinos, PhD, RN
July 26, 2023 at 7:00pm

Kolter Elementary Garden



Come out **July 8** from 9 am to noon, and join Angela Roth and the Kolter Garden volunteers.

Enjoy the garden, share some herbs, pull weeds, provide advice, and harvest whatever is available.

Questions? Contact Angela at chrisangelaroth@sbcglobal.net

Members

Remember to grow, harvest, and save herbs. We will use them to make preparations for Herb Fair 2023

- | | | | |
|------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------|
| Basil | Dill Weed | Parsley | Sage |
| Bay Leaf | Lemon Balm | Passionflower | Spearmint |
| Blue Pea | Lemon Verbena | Peppermint | Stevia |
| Calendula flower | Lemongrass | Red-stemmed apple mint | Thyme |
| Chamomile flower | Mexican Mint Marigold | Rose petals | |
| Comfrey | Oregano | Roselle | |

Store dried herbs in plastic freezer bags.
Remember to label the bags!



HSA-STU Westbury Community Garden

Westbury Community Garden

**Workdays Thurs. July 13 & Aug. 10
6:30pm**

A Few Tips on Harvesting and Drying our Bounty

Julie Fordes

Our holy basil and butterfly pea love this heat!

I harvested holy basil a couple of times already this summer and have gotten to know this plant a lot better! Let me share a couple of my favorite things about this plant. First, structurally, it is just like “regular” basil. It behaves and grows just like any other basil, so I know where to trim it and where the seeds will be. Oh, and seeds there will be! This is a **very** seedy plant; sometimes it seems there are more seeds than leaves. Below is a picture of the harvest after the seeds are pinched off.

There are many options for drying herbs. Here is the holy basil drying on the bed in what used to be my guest bedroom right under the ceiling fan. After a day or so, I turn the herbs over so they will dry evenly. Another option is a drying rack. My family gave me this mesh drying rack for Christmas. It is also in the same bedroom hanging from the ceiling. (See below) You can see it has loads of space for herbs.



From the top down you can see comfrey, holy basil, bee balm (isn't it beautiful) and blue pea. The rack and many other options are available on Amazon (of course). You can make your own racks from materials you may have around. The big idea when constructing them is to maximize air flow around the herbs.

We need more volunteers to help keeping the garden watered and the plants harvested!

We are having official workdays at the garden about once a month during the summer for major work, but it will take more than that to keep the garden going. Up to now, **Debbie Lancaster** and I have done the majority of the watering and harvesting. More help is needed to keep the garden going.

In order to involve more people, I thought we could **try an online signup sheet** for watering and harvesting. **Virginia Camerlo** has created a signup sheet for watering and harvesting using SignUp Genius. Members will have access to the sheet and be able to sign up for a spot when their schedule allows. We will hide a watering key somewhere so whoever signs up can water. We are not quite ready with the signup sheet now, but we will get it out to you as soon as we can.

To read more about holy basil and its benefits, go to:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4296439/>



STU Members Visit Washington, DC for Northeast and Mid-Atlantic District Meeting

Susan Wood

Four South Texas Unit members and one guest participated in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic District trip to Washington DC to visit the National Herb Garden and National Cathedral Garden May 16 and 17, 2023. All members of The Herb Society of America were invited to join the festivities. There are six districts within The Society of which STU is a member of South Central. Any HSA member can participate in other district events by checking our national website for details. www.herbsociety.org Click on member log-in to access district and unit newsletters for many items of interest. See what's up around the country – we are doing great things!



Jeff O'Brien at the National Herb Garden

Jeff and Catherine O'Brien, Steven and Linda Van Heeckeren and yours truly accepted the invitation. Our hotel was the beautiful Georgetown Inn in a very charming, walkable neighborhood only one third mile from Dumbarton Oaks. I enjoyed walking there to tour the museum early Tuesday before the kickoff of our scheduled events. Dumbarton Oaks is now a Harvard University research institute, library, museum, and garden. The gardens were designed by Beatrix Farrand whose drawings and early garden photographs on their website are well worth your time to explore at: www.doaks.org

Our adventure began Tuesday afternoon at the National Cathedral for guided docent led tours of the beautiful gardens – see photos. Only a mile away from the Inn, we were back in time to freshen up for the opening reception to gather with about 50 attendees. There was ample opportunity to enjoy long time friends and make new friends during the cocktail hour and herbal dinner.



L to R: Bishops garden at National Cathedral, Susan pruning a Bay topiary, View of the columns at the National Herb Garden



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After dinner we enjoyed a panel discussion with the three past curators, Holly Shimizu, Jim Adams and Janet Walker, and current curator, Chrissy Moore, of our National Herb Garden. The challenges and rewards of our 43-year public garden were revealed with many hilarious anecdotes.

Wednesday began with cool, clear weather as we made our way to The National Arboretum to see and work in our beloved herb garden. Chrissy and our garden intern, Erin Holden, led groups through the two-and one-half acre site within the 451 acres of the arboretum. Before our catered box lunches and pelargonium giveaways (from Joyce Brobst), we tended the garden in various capacities from light pruning to heavy digging – thanks, Jeff! See photos. After lunch Holly gave me a personalized tour of the incredible National Bonsai and Penjing Museum also located at the arboretum. Penjing is the Chinese version of the traditional Japanese horticultural art of training woody plants and trees in containers. Some specimens on display are over 200 years old! Imagine the stories they could tell. www.usna.usda.gov for both gardens.



Armillary donated by STU

Following a wonderful day of exchanging ideas and enjoying camaraderie with other members of The Herb Society of America, we bid adieu to the capital. I enjoyed every minute of the trip as I hadn't visited our National Herb Garden since the grand opening in 1980 and an annual meeting in 1985. It has grown into a mature, respected, educational garden of which we can all be very proud! Note: STU members **Maurice and Susan McAshan** donated \$20,000 to dedicate the knot garden in honor of Jim and Madalene Hill. That area is currently under renovation. Our unit also donated an armillary which stands there today – see photo. The Herb Society of America needed all members to join in the monumental fund-raising campaign of 1970's to raise over \$400,000 for which the USDA matched \$200,000 to create the National Herb Garden. All areas of the arboretum are open free to the public. Please visit next time you are in the area. The garden would love to see you!



Photo courtesy of the National Herb Garden



**IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN!
NOTICE TO SUBMIT YOUR VOLUNTEER HOURS NOW**

Carolyn Kosclskey, Membership Chair

Deadline: July 15, 2023

It's time to submit your volunteer hours from July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023. Collecting volunteer hours is an important job for each unit! We are required by HSA to submit a sum of our member's hours each year with our annual report in August. **Last year our grand total was 6,603.5 with less than half of our membership reporting so we need to increase that number this year.**

Volunteer hours can take on many forms. Examples include, but are not limited to the following:

Attendance at all live and virtual business meeting

Attendance at Full Moon Ramble events;

Participation in preparing for Unit Events such as the New Member Orientation/Potluck, Herb Day and Herb Fair. This also includes time spent preparing and crafting articles sold at Herb Fair;

Gardening at the Westbury Community Garden or a school garden;

Education, such as preparing and presenting for a group, or writing a book review or article for the newsletter including submitting recipes and photographs;

Administrative work, such as fulfilling a board position or appointed position.

No need to itemize your hours, just send your total volunteer hours to stxu.membership@gmail.com. Remember these hours can be in whole hours or half hours as needed (2 ½ hours = 2.5 hours).

Thanks herbies!

Carolyn



Scholarship Committee

Catherine O'Brien, Committee Chair

The Scholarship Committee has recommended that two \$1000 scholarships be awarded this year to **Namraj Jaishi** and **Gustavo Ledesma**. Namraj is a graduate student at Tarleton State University in

Stephenville. He is conducting aquaponic research on the use of a crustacean, *Hyalella azteca*, to consume fish waste products and plant remains to maintain an efficient filtration system, provide aeration for plant roots, and increase lettuce yield. In addition to lettuce, they are growing high-value crops like tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, basil, and nasturtium.

Gustavo is an undergraduate at West Texas A&M University in Canyon, TX. He is majoring in botany and has a plan to be an entrepreneur using the natural holistic approach to medicinal plants. He is interested in plants that support healing instead of suppressing the symptoms.

A thank you goes to **Janice Stuff** and **Sara Diaz** for serving on the committee and to **Maria Treviño** for handling the paperwork.



Herb Fair Update from Catherine O'Brien

Lawdy, lawdy. Summer has definitely arrived.

During the heat of summer, you can continue to plant basil, garlic chives, rosemary, pole snap beans, long beans, lima beans, cucumbers, okra, Southern peas, squash, and sweet potatoes. Holy basil, blue pea, and bee balm are being harvested from the Westbury Garden. You can harvest basil for Linda Alderman's herbal vinegars, and red-stemmed applemint, lemon balm, lemon verbena, and Mexican mint marigold for **Julie Fordes'** herbal tea blends. Or you can sit in the shade, drink herbal tea, and watch butterflies. Some native plants that will encourage butterflies to come into your garden include butterfly weed, parsley, dill, fennel, citrus trees, passionflower vine, asters, hummingbird bush, coral honeysuckle, gayfeather, gaillardias, lantana, Mexican mint marigold, purple coneflower, salvias, sunflowers, Turk's cap, verbenas, and zinnias.

Summer is also a good time to stay indoors and make crafts for the Herb Fair, look for seashells on the beach, or collect some books to add to our book sale. **Laura Boston** is adding craft books to the gardening, landscaping, children's books and herb books that we sold last year. **Mary Sacilowski** wants to serve herbal teas from the kitchen to entice customers to buy the herbal teas we sell at Herb Fair. If you come across any teapots that we can use to serve teas, grab them. **Virginia Camerlo** is seeking volunteers willing to pitch articles to the *Houston Chronicle*, *Lazy Gardener* and other local publications in late Aug/Sept time frame. Please contact Virginia if you'd like to share publicity ideas or join the publicity team.

The **Speakers Bureau** is always looking for "herbies" to give talks and spread the word about what we do. **Donna Wheeler** needs wide-mouth pint glass jars for dried bean soup mix. She will also need the following dried herbs: parsley, summer savory, sweet basil, cayenne pepper, chervil, thyme, sage, cracked coriander seeds. (Harvesting, Drying and Storage-stu.org) Dried herbs will also be shared with **Dena Yanowski Gaydos** to make blends.

Donna also wants to make a few fairy gardens to sell. If anyone has low rounded large pots or "mini" terra cotta pots, and miniatures (e.g. snails or tiny seashells that look like snails, turtles, frogs, birds, petite bird nests, butterflies, table/chairs, bench... You get the idea. She wants to keep the gardens natural looking so rocks, twigs, wood fence, and small cut rounds would be perfect.

And enjoy the lazy days of summer.

Dried Bean Mix



Fairy Garden





Julie Fordes

Making products for sale at Herb Fair and Herb Day are intertwined with harvesting herbs from our gardens and making them into teas, spice blends and other products. We use what we grow, and we grow what we need. This is an important part of what we do to fulfill our mission. Did you know that last year at Herb Fair, our herbal tea sales alone were over \$900?

Sometimes what we need doesn't grow in the garden. This is the case with citrus peel. We use dried lemons, oranges and other citrus in some of our tea blends.

The HOT days of summer are the perfect time to get some lemons and prepare them for tea blends. Here is a repost of a great video on how to prepare lemons for tea.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=peiKI_F6GJ0

While you are drying your lemons, try this idea for oranges. Here are some examples of using dried orange slices for decorative garlands, perfect for the holiday season. These would "sell like hotcakes" at Herb Fair.



These need to be done in a dehydrator, but once dry will store well. Here is a website that discusses how to get great looking dried orange slices.

<https://www.ellaclaireinspired.com/dried-orange-slices/>

Just last week, The Herb Society of America, our national affiliate, offered a **Tea Blending webinar**. I wasn't able to attend, but plan to do so when they move it to the archives. It would be wonderful to have more ideas and techniques for crafting tea blends. It will be the 50th anniversary of Herb Fair and I would like to create an extra special tea blend for the occasion. If you have ideas of what that would be like, please share them.

As always, keep harvesting and drying the herbs on our list and bring them to me, either at meetings or drop them off at the house.



MAKING MIDSUMMER MARVELOUS THIS YEAR



Modeling their marvelous midsummer crowns are Olympia Martinez, Susan Miller, Angela Roth, Elizabeth Grandich, Mary Nurre, a young guest, Nicole Buegers, Virginia Camerlo, Tricia Bradbury, and Maria-Cristina Solis.

Photos courtesy of Karen Cottingham



Photo credit: Karen Cottingham

*Introducing our
newest member,
Lorena Jaramillo,
wearing her lovely
Midsummer crown.*

*She's jumping right
in with genuine STU
spirit!*

Welcome, Lorena!



AT-HOME RECIPES

July 2023

Carolyn Kosclskey

Trivia: This herb comes in at least three varieties and follows ‘apple,’ ‘spear’ and ‘pepper.’

Last month’s trivia told us that the key herb in Mediterranean cooking was basil, also known as the king of herbs. This month’s recipe section is devoted to a presentation from member Benée Curtis about pesto, but not necessarily all using basil. Many of you may have enjoyed this presentation given at the day meeting at Cherie Flores Pavilion on May 9. Many thanks to Benée for allowing this paper to be shared to a wider audience through the newsletter.

And more...if you enjoyed the Herb Day recipes in the June recipe section, you will also enjoy the August recipe section that will feature part 2 with more recipes. Look forward to member Catherine O’Brien’s Fire Cider recipe, an Imbolc Honey Cake recipe from keynote speaker John Forti, plus a fermentation recipe from Let’s Go Wild speaker Houstonian Scotty Sheridan. Gentle reminder that past issues of newsletters with recipes are archived at <http://www.herbsociety-stu.org/newsletters.html>.

PESTO! – BEYOND BASIL

Benée Curtis

Many cultures have herb pastes or sauces in their cuisine. There’s Italian pesto, French pistou, Argentinean chimichurri, Mexican mole, North African chermoula and Yemeni zhough to name a few. Each of these oil-based herb concoctions has some ingredient unique to it, whether it’s the inclusion of peppers or chocolate or a certain herb.

There was a time when most of us would have assumed that if we saw “pesto” in a recipe, the recipe was referring to “basil pesto.” That would have been a good assumption since traditionally, pesto refers to pesto alla Genovese, an uncooked paste of fresh basil, garlic, olive oil, nuts and cheese. Today, though, pesto has been influenced by cultures and cuisines from around the world and refers to an uncooked paste of fresh herbs, garlic, olive oil, nuts and cheese.

The word pesto is derived from the past tense of the Italian word pestare (“to pound, crush or grind”), in reference to the sauce’s crushed herbs and garlic. Traditionally, pesto was mashed with a wooden pestle in a marble mortar. Today, in the interest of time, pesto is more often made in a food processor.

For best flavoring, pesto should always be added to a dish at the end of cooking as a seasoning and not cooked which would reduce the color and diminishes the flavor. There are always exceptions, but often it is stirred into or on the dish at the table as a condiment.



Making pesto isn't a science. The proportions are flexible. Vary recipes to suit your particular taste, or to accommodate the particular dish the pesto will accompany. For instance, some dishes call for a creamier paste, so the addition of more oil or cheese would be in order.

More or less of one ingredient or another does not affect the pesto, but makes it uniquely yours. Besides, few traditional cooks in Italy would think of weighing or measuring the ingredients.

Though there are variations, the basic ingredients and techniques are the same - a clove or more of garlic pounded with a serious pinch of salt, a bunch of fresh herbs (as much as you can tightly clasp in your two hands together), a small handful of nuts (what fits in the hollow of your cupped palm) and about twice that amount of grated cheese. The amount of oil is whatever is enough to make a not-too-thick and not-too-thin paste.

Normally, fresh herbs should be rinsed, not 'washed,' as this will release too many of their essential oils. If your herbs are purchased, and would feel better 'washing' them, then do not hold them under running water. Just gently swish them around in a cold sink or bowl of water. Pluck off all the leaves (tender stems are okay) and gently pat dry or spin dry them in a salad spinner. Lay them out on a kitchen towel to dry before using them. Fresh spinach or flat-leaf Italian (not curly) parsley is often added to temper more intense herbs. Flat-leaf parsley has a distinct flavor of its own, so be careful not to over-compensate and minimize the flavor of the other herb you are using.

Crushing the garlic with the salt first releases the oils better, dissolves the salt and gives the texture necessary for a good paste and is a standard procedure in Italian, French and Spanish cooking methods.

Toasting the nuts adds a more complex, less sharp flavor. Toast the nuts by placing them on a baking sheet and baking them in a 325°F oven for about 8 to 10 minutes. Watch them closely because you want them to be just slightly brown. Allow the nuts to completely cool before using them.

Grate the cheese and loosely tear the herb leaves before adding them. When using a food processor, over processing can heat the blend and cause the herbs to start to discolor. Any hard cheese can be used: Parmesan, Parmesan-Reggiano, Asiago, Pecorino. In the versions of pesto that date back to the time of Virgil, pecorino (sheep's milk) cheese and not Parmesan was used. Parmesan is considered a 'modern' ingredient to this classic paste as is the addition or substitution of pistachios, almonds or walnuts for the pine nuts.

Using butter is sacrilegious. Besides, if you were to use butter, you would not be making be pesto, but herb butter with cheese.

To store pesto, cover the surface with plastic wrap. The surface can also be covered with a thin layer of oil. Either way, you can expect a small amount of discoloration. This doesn't affect the taste. The intent of the wrap or oil is to keep the blend separated from the air.

Immediately refrigerate the pesto. It can be stored in the fridge for several weeks, and after that should be frozen. Pesto can be frozen for as long as a year.



From: <http://www.epicureantable.com/articles/apistpest.htm>

The Epicurean Table, www.epicureantable.com © 2003-2006, Patricia Conant, columnist and food writer

Pappas, Lou Seibert. 1994. *Pesto: Fresh Herb Sauces and Spreads*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books

Rankin, Dorothy. 2004. *Very Pesto*. Berkeley: Celestial Arts.

Marzullo O'Connell, Rick. 1991. *365 Easy Italian Recipes*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

You have a recipe for my basic starter pesto. This is the recipe I have used for years. Then I tried Basil Lemon pesto. The cookbook author says she could eat it with a spoon. I think I agree.

BASIL *Ocimum basilicum*, Lamiaceae (Annual)

Flourishes in our hot summer sun, but keep the flowers pinched back or it will set seed and die before the growing season is over. Let the flowers bloom and set seed in the fall and you will have many new plants the next spring. If you have several varieties they will cross pollinate and you will not get the true plant the next year. There are several varieties Lemon, Cinnamon, Anise, Purple Ruffles and Lettuce Leaf Basil. Plant seeds in the early spring (March).

Classic Basil Pesto

Makes 6 servings

2 cups packed fresh basil leaves
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
2 garlic cloves, minced
1/2 cup grated pecorino or Romano cheese
1/2 cup pine nuts, lightly toasted 3/4 tsp. salt, if needed
1 1/4 cups extra-virgin olive oil

Place basil, garlic and cooled nuts in a food processor and process 15 seconds. With machine on, pour oil through feed tube in a steady stream until almost 1 cup of oil has been used. With machine still running, add cheeses. Add as much of the remaining oil as is needed to reach the thickness desired. Taste and season with salt, if needed.

Adapted from 365 Easy Italian Recipes by Rick Marzullo O'Connell

Basil Lemon Pesto

Makes about 1 cup pesto

2 cups loosely packed fresh basil leaves
1/4 cup pine nuts, lightly toasted
2 garlic cloves, minced
1/4 cup grated Asiago cheese
1 tsp. minced lemon zest
1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil (or more)
2 tsp. freshly squeezed lemon juice
salt and freshly ground black pepper

Place all ingredients except oil in food processor and process 15 seconds. With machine running, slowly add the oil in a steady stream. Taste and season with salt and pepper if desired.

From Very Pesto by Dorothy Rankin



Dill

Delicious on sandwiches.

Yummy on fish.

DILL *Anethum graveolens*, Apiaceae (Annual)

Cool weather annual which should be planted in the fall (October - December). Dill is also another plant that is grown both for the seed and the leaf, and recipes will specify dill seed when calling for the seed or dill weed or dill when calling for the leaf.

Dill Pesto

Makes about 3/4 cup pesto

- 1 cup packed fresh dill leaves
- 1/4 cup pistachios, lightly toasted
- 1/2 cup Italian flat-leaf parsley
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/2 cup packed spinach
- 1/4 cup (or more) extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- Salt (if desired)

Combine herbs, garlic and nuts in food processor and process for 15 seconds. Add cheese and process for another 15 seconds. With machine running, add oil in a steady stream until desired consistency. Taste and adjust flavor with salt, if desired.

Adapted from Pesto: Fresh Herb Sauces and Spreads by Lou Seibert Pappas

Arugula Mint

Delicious on beans, pasta salad, rice salad, meats, in vinaigrette

MINTS *Mentha* species Lamiaceae (Perennial)

There are many varieties of mint, but Spearmint is the most often used; it is the mint used for the famous mint julep and the mint jelly for lamb. Peppermint, Red-stemme Applemint and Orange Mint are also very popular. All of the mints are invasive and they cross easily, so don't plant different varieties near each other. They can be grown from seed, cutting, or root division. Seeds are risky though because many varieties do not come true from seed. Plants require regular watering. Plant them in sun or shade.

Arugula Mint Pesto

Makes 1 1/2 cups pesto

- 1/2 cup firmly packed arugula
- 1/4 cup pistachios, lightly toasted
- 1/3 cup firmly packed parsley leaves
- 1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan or 1/2 cup firmly packed basil leaves Romano cheese
- 1/2 cup firmly packed spearmint leaves
- 1/2 to 2/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, minced



Combine herbs and garlic in food processor and process for 15 seconds. Add nuts and cheese and process for another 15 seconds. With machine running, add oil in a steady stream until desired consistency. Taste and adjust flavor with salt and pepper, if desired. Store in a tightly covered jar, refrigerated for a week or freeze for up to one year.

Adapted from a recipe from Madalene Hill and Gwen Barclay

Oregano

Frittata recipe – wonderful for a quick dinner – like crustless quiche
Stir into pasta sauce - Tasty on sandwiches

OREGANO *Origanum vulgare*, Lamiaceae (Perennial)

There are many species of oregano, causing much confusion, but it is best to find one whose flavor appeals to you; a local favorite is *O. majoricum* which looks like Sweet Marjoram but has the oregano flavor. It is safer to grow oregano from cutting or nursery plant because the seed does not always breed true. It is winter hardy in Houston, but do not prune too hard in the fall. Grow it in full sun or partial shade. Other good varieties for this area are *O. onites* and *O. heracleoticum*. Watch out for *O. vulgare* - it can be very invasive.

Oregano Pesto

Makes about 3/4 cup pesto

1/3 cup packed fresh oregano leaves
2 garlic cloves, minced
3/4 cup packed fresh flat-leaf parsley
3 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
3/4 cup fresh spinach leaves
2 Tbsp freshly grated Parmesan cheese
2 Tbsp. cashew pieces, lightly toasted

Combine herbs, spinach, garlic and nuts in food processor and process for 15 seconds. Add cheese and process for another 15 seconds. With machine running, add oil in a steady stream until desired consistency. Taste and adjust flavor with salt, if desired.

Adapted from Pesto: Fresh Herb Sauces and Spreads by Lou Seibert Pappas

Caper, Raisin, Lemon

A new favorite. Delicious on beans. Wonderful in a dressing.

PARSLEY *Petroselinium crispum*, Apiaceae (Biennial)

Curly parsley is readily available in grocery stores, so most herb gardeners grow the more flavorful Italian Flat Leaf variety (*P. crispum* var. 'Neapolitanum'). Being a biennial, it flowers the second and dies, but if you keep the flower stalk cut back, you might keep it for another year. It is best to plant a new plant each fall for a constant supply. To plant from seed, either soak seeds in warm water for several hours or freeze them in ice cube tray and plant the cube.



Caper, Raisin and Lemon Pesto

Makes 1/2 cup pesto

- 1/4 cup brined capers
- 1 Tbsp. chopped shallot
- 1 lemon 3 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/4 cup packed fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves
- 1/4 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 2 Tbs. golden raisins
- 1/4 c grated Parmesan cheese

Rinse capers well, completely cover in cold water and soak for 30 minutes to remove excess salt. Drain capers well. Completely zest the lemon. Halve the lemon and squeeze 4 tsp. juice. In a food processor combine all ingredients except oil. Process for about 15 seconds. With machine running, add oil in a stream and puree until smooth. Season with salt if needed.

Adapted from Epicurious.com (Gourmet magazine, January 1998)

Sage

Try this in a grilled cheese or make a special mango sage quesadilla. Very good in baked chicken.

SAGE *Salvia officinalis*, Lamiaceae (Perennial)

Perhaps sage should not be included in this list because it is difficult to grow in our humidity. It can be looking beautiful one day, and die the next day. A hybrid variety called Silver sage or *Salvia Newe Ya-ar* (*Salvia officinalis* x *fruticosa*) is resistant to our harsh summers, but may be difficult to find in most nurseries. If it does make it through the summer for you, you will be delighted with fresh sage for the holidays, and beautiful blue flowers in early spring. It will take the hardest freeze that we get.

Sage Pesto

Makes about 3/4 cup pesto

- 1/2 cup packed fresh sage leaves
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/2 cup Italian flat-leaf parsley
- 1/4 cup pine nuts, lightly toasted
- 2/3 cup packed spinach
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/3 c packed fresh basil leaves
- 1/4 cup (or more) extra-virgin olive oil

Place herbs, garlic and cooled nuts in a food processor. Process until coarsely minced. Add cheese and process a few seconds more. With machine running, pour oil in a steady stream. Add as much additional oil as is needed to reach the thickness desired.

Adapted from *Pesto: Fresh Herb Sauces and Spreads* by Lou Seibert Pappas

NOTE: A good rule of thumb is to plant annuals from seed and perennials from nursery plants if you are planning to harvest for the kitchen that season. Annuals grow very quickly, so will have plenty of



herb material the first year. The perennials are slow growing and it will usually be a year before you have enough plant for any serious harvesting.

Cilantro Jalapeno

CORIANDER/CILANTRO *Coriandrum sativum*, Apiaceae (Annual)

The seed of this plant is the spice, coriander, and the leaf is the herb, cilantro. This is a cool weather annual, so plant the seeds in the fall (October - December). The seeds will germinate early, during the winter, but the plant will tolerate a light freeze. If you let it go to seed in the garden, you will have cilantro everywhere the next year.

Cilantro Pesto

Makes about 1 cup pesto

2 cups packed fresh cilantro leaves
1/2 cup pecans, lightly toasted
2 garlic cloves, minced
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
1/2 of a small jalapeno, seeded
1 cup extra-virgin olive oil
3/4 tsp. salt, if needed

Place all but cheese and oil in a food processor and process 15 seconds. With machine on, pour oil through feed tube in a steady stream most of oil has been used. With machine still running, add cheese. Add as much of the remaining oil as is needed to reach the thickness desired. Taste and season with salt, if needed.

Uses for Pesto

- on sandwiches over mayonnaise - basil, dill, oregano, sage
- lasagna - meat or meatless – add to the ricotta mixture
- quesadillas – slivers of fresh fruit like apples or mangoes with pesto and cheese
- a bit of a marmalade or chunky jam with pesto and cheese
- Caper-Raisin-Lemon, Sage and Cilantro all good like this

Answer: Mint.

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