

Garden Club at Palm Coast

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Cooking with Herbs

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Preparing herbs for use:

Fresh herbs must be cleaned, rinsed and thoroughly dry before using.

Herbs can be preserved by drying or freezing for later use. Before preserving fresh herbs, make sure plants are free of insects and disease.

Drying method:

Woody stemmed herbs (basil, sage, tarragon, rosemary, thyme, oregano, etc.):

Cut enough stems to bundle and tie. Rinse herbs thoroughly and pat dry on paper towels. Lay out stems and bundle and remove lower foliage leaving 2 inches of bare stem. Gather stems and tie together with butchers twine or jute. Leave a long enough string to tie a loop at the end for hanging. Hang to dry in indirect lighted window or garage. Alternative method is place herbs in paper lunch bags, mark and allow to dry in warm dry room (garage or laundry room).

Soft stemmed or leafy herbs (parsley, dill, thyme, chives, rosemary, cilantro, etc.):

Rinse herbs thoroughly and pat dry on paper towels. Lay out evenly on dry paper towel. For chives, chop leaves before drying. Roll up herbs in paper towel and place in a warm, dry area such as the garage or laundry room. Let dry several weeks. When dry, unroll paper towel, remove leaves from stems and place leaves in clean glass or plastic containers with tight fitting lids. Mark each container accordingly.

Freezing method:

This works best on soft, leafy herbs such as basil, parsley, cilantro, etc. Rinse herbs thoroughly and pat dry on paper towels. Gather leaves in bundles and finely chop. Place in ice cube trays filling each cavity with a measured amount for each. Cover with water, mark each tray accordingly (measured amount and name) and freeze. Frozen cubes can be placed in ziploc freezer bags for large/multiple batches. Mark bag with name & measured amount per cube.

To use frozen herbs, remove cube(s) from tray and thaw in bowl or container. Strain through fine mesh strainer and pat dry with paper towel. Use the same as fresh herbs.

When using dry herbs versus fresh, remember dried herbs have concentrated flavor. It's a 2:1 ratio of fresh to dried herbs. For example, a recipe calls for 2 tsp fresh rosemary but you only have dried, you will need to use 1 tsp dried rosemary instead.

It is always best to crush dried herbs or chop fresh herbs when using in recipes. This releases the oils and flavors quickly.

Marinades

Dijon Herb Marinade

- 2 Tbls olive oil
- 2 Tbls Dijon mustard
- 1 Tbls water
- 1 ½ tsp red wine vinegar
- 2 Tbls finely chopped fresh rosemary
- 1 large shallot, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- ½ tsp dried oregano

Combine all ingredients in a small jar with tight fitting lid; cover and shake well. Use or refrigerate up to 5 days.

Use this marinade on beef, pork or poultry.

Feel free to substitute or add tarragon, thyme or chives to your marinade.

Citrus Marinade

- ½ cup orange or grapefruit juice
- 2 Tbls chopped fresh flat leaf parsley
- 2 Tbls lemon or lime juice
- 1 Tbls extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- ¼ tsp black pepper

Combine all ingredients in a small jar with tight fitting lid; cover and shake well. Use or refrigerate up to 5 days.

Use this marinade on fish, shellfish or chicken.

Dressing

Green Goddess Dressing

- ½ cup low fat cottage cheese
- ¼ cup lightly packed watercress or flat leaf parsley leaves
- 3 Tbls low fat or skim milk
- 2 Tbls lemon juice
- 1 Tbls snipped fresh dill
- 1 Tbls snipped fresh chives
- 1 Tbls mayonnaise
- 1 small garlic clove, minced
- ½ tsp anchovy paste

Combine all ingredients in blender and pulse until smooth. Thin with 1 or 2 Tbls water if needed. Transfer dressing to small bowl, cover and refrigerate for 1 hour to allow flavors to blend. Use or refrigerate up to 2 days.

Soup

Butternut Squash & Sage Soup

- 1 (2 ½ – 3 lb.) Butternut squash, peeled, seeded, and cut into 2 inch chunks
- 1 Tbls olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 large leek, (white and pale green parts only), sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 3 cups vegetable stock
- 1 ½ tsp dried sage leaves, crumbled
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- pinch cayenne

Put squash in steamer basket; set into large saucepan over 1 inch boiling water. Cover and cook until squash is tender but still holds its shape, about 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, heat oil in large saucepan over medium heat. Add onion, leek and garlic; cook, stirring until softened, about 5 minutes. Add squash and remaining ingredients; bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer, covered until squash is very soft, about 15 minutes. Remove saucepan from heat; let cool 5 minutes.

Puree soup, in batches if needed, in food processor or blender. Return soup to pot and reheat over medium heat.

Refreshment

Herbal Cranberry Punch (makes 6 servings)

- 2 ½ cups cranberry juice cocktail
- 2 ½ cups water
- 4 orange, apple or raspberry herbal tea bags
- 2-3 Tbls sugar (optional)

Combine cranberry juice and water in medium saucepan. Bring to boil over medium heat. Remove from heat; add tea bags. Cover & let steep at least 5 minutes. Remove tea bags and discard. Add sugar if desired.

For cold punch allow tea to cool, add fresh orange, lemon, lime or apple slices and 4-6 oz. of your favorite libation (vodka, rum, champagne, sparkling wine, etc.) and refrigerate.

Dessert

Sage Cake with Strawberries (makes 12 servings)

- 2/3 cup milk, divided
- 14 whole fresh sage leaves, divided
- 4 egg yolks
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 2 cups cake flour
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 Tbls baking powder
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ cup (1 stick) butter, softened

- Fresh strawberries, sliced

Preheat oven to 350° F. Grease & flour 9-inch cake pan.

Place milk in microwavable bowl. Tear 6 sage leaves in half; add to milk. Microwave on HIGH 2 minutes or until hot. Set aside to steep 15 minutes. Refrigerate mixture until cold. Strain through fine mesh strainer.

Combine 1/3 cup milk, egg yolks and vanilla in small bowl. Combine cake flour, sugar, baking powder & salt in medium bowl. Beat butter into flour mixture with electric mixer on low speed. Add remaining 1/3 cup milk until ingredients are moistened. Gradually beat in egg mixture into flour mixture on low speed. Increase speed to medium and beat 1 minute until light and fluffy.

Pour batter into prepared pan and arrange remainin sage leaves on top of batter. Bake 28-30 minutes or until cake is lightly golden. Cool on wire rack 10 minutes. Invert on to serving platter. Garnish with strawberries.