

HERBS

GROWING

HARVESTING

USING

PRESERVING

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Master Gardener Presentation

HARVESTING

When possible collect your herbs for the day in the morning while they are still damp.

Wash and either wrap in paper towels or stand in a container of water and refrigerate.

Herbs grow at an alarming rate and need to be “pinched back”. So, don’t use them sparingly

USING

Add a sprig of mint when cooking peas. It does not change the flavor, only enhances.

A perfect stuffing seasoning is a mixture of parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme. (Yes, just like the song.) Also, mix with olive and use for basting.

Try a bit of oregano and basil in an omelet. About ¼ t. per egg.

If foods require a long cooking time, like stews, add the herbs near the end of the cooking time.

PRESERVING

Drying

Herbs can be collected, tied into bundles and hung upside down to dry. They tend to lose some of their color, and mold is a problem.

My favorite method is to microwave.

Wash and dry the herbs. Remove the stems and place the leaves on a paper towel. Microwave one minute. Check for dryness. Some thicker leaves may take a bit longer. The leaves retain much more color and can be left whole or crushed. Caution, the aroma of some herbs is very potent. It might be wise to move the microwave to the patio.

Vinegars

Place 1 cup of thoroughly dried herbs and 1 quart of white vinegar in a glass container. Crush the herbs with a wooden spoon. Cover with a non-metallic lid. If a metallic lid must be used, cover the container with plastic wrap first. Set the container in a sunny spot. Shake the container every few days. The vinegar will be ready to bottle in 2 to 3 weeks.

Strain the vinegar through a coffee filter and pour into a bottle. Wine bottles are ideal. Place some sprigs of the herb in the bottle and seal with a cork. Make a pretty label and you have created a unique gift.

RECIPES

Pesto

No Italian kitchen is complete without pesto.

Collect about 2 cups of fresh basil leaves and rough cut. Place 1/3 cup olive oil and 3 cloves of garlic in a blender. At medium speed, start adding the basil a bit at a time. Keep adding basil until a past forms. Add ¼ cup romano cheese. (A ¼ cup of pine nuts is optional). All of the amounts are approximate. You are making pesto, not rocket fuel. The pesto can be frozen in ice cube trays for future use.

Pesto can be used instead of mayo on sandwiches, spread on Italian bread, stirred into pasta or mixed with sour cream for a veggie dip.

Boursin

8 oz, whipped cream cheese

1T. lemon juice

1-2 cloves garlic, finely minced

½ t. worchestershire sauce

½ t. dry mustard

1 T. fresh parsley, finely chopped

1 T. fresh chives, finely chopped

1 t. fresh basil, finely chopped

1 t. fresh oregano, finely chopped

1 t. fresh sage, finely chopped

1 t. fresh thyme, finely chopped

1 t. fresh rosemary, finely chopped

1 t. fresh marjoram, finely chopped

Thoroughly mix all ingredients. Refrigerate.

Serve with crackers or fresh vegetables