

## REBECCA'S GOOD THYMES AND SAGE ADVICE AUTUMN 2013

"If the day and the night are such that you greet them with joy,  
and life emits a fragrance like flowers and sweet herbs-----that is your success." Thoreau

**Autumn**---once again---that time of year so filled with memory and also the energy and excitement of new activities. A time certainly to greet with joy! I'm usually so involved with travel and crafting and classes and clubs and decorating and gardening that life certainly emits a fragrance just like the flowers and herbs in my garden. I'm often asked which is my favorite herb and usually I reply "lemon verbena", but then I think of how often I used rosemary in my cooking, and lavender in sachets and pillows and posies.....

This is a good time of year to be making herb jellies and vinegars for your own use and to give as holiday gifts. Vinegars are the easiest to make and there are so many possibilities--so many herbs to use singly or in combination. You may use cider vinegar and that is very good with the more robust savory herbs such as rosemary and oregano, but those herbs are also delicious in a good red wine vinegar. Generally white wine vinegar is used for tarragon, or lemon verbena, basil, dill or chives. But really, try anything that appeals to you. Also, add garlic cloves. You may also wish to make an herb oil which is wonderful to have on hand for dipping sourdough bread. Use a good olive oil, say one cup. Add minced garlic cloves (I use a lot!), a tablespoon of chopped rosemary, juice of half a lemon, a dash of red pepper flakes. Let sit for a few days for flavors to develop. This is also quite good to toss bread cubes in, toast in oven for croutons.

As Columbus Day falls on the second Monday of October, you may wish to celebrate with an Italian dinner featuring an herbal pesto. The classic Italian pesto is made from fresh basil, garlic, cheese, olive oil and pine nuts. Of course using different herbs yields a sauce with its own unique flavor. Often today cooks are using flat-leaf parsley, or combinations of parsley with fresh basil, spinach, chives, thyme, even some mint. Always use extra virgin olive oil and freshly grated Parmesan or Romano cheese. You can substitute walnuts for the pine nuts. **CLASSIC PESTO SAUCE:** In food processor add 4 Cups fresh basil, 1/2 Cup olive oil, 1/3 Cup pine nuts, 2 garlic cloves, 1/4 Cup Parmesan and 1 teaspoon salt. Enjoy on pasta with a tomato salad.

Thinking ahead to the winter holidays, remember **rosemary** is the chief herb of Christmas. Of course it is also one of the most favorite herbs of cooks and I use it always in soups, spaghetti sauces, breads, roasted meats, herb vinegars and oils and once in a while in a dessert. Here are a few suggestions for rosemary:

For a delicious snack, combine walnuts, olive oil, rosemary, salt and cayenne and roast at 350 for 5-10 minutes. A hot tea made from rosemary leaves reduces congestion. Make a frittata with boiled sliced potatoes, Gorgonzola and rosemary. When growing rosemary in pots, use a mix with much coarse sand for drainage.

Use the woody stems of rosemary as skewers for shish kebobs. Make simple topiaries of rosemary by cutting long stems, insert in oasis and tie--these will last for a couple of weeks. And remember, brides include rosemary in their weddings as a symbol of happiness, loyalty and love. Also rosemary's affiliation with Christmas stems from the legend of Mary throwing her blue cape on a rosemary bush, turning the white flowers blue. Did you know Napoleon used a cologne made with rosemary? And Charlemagne loved it in his gardens.

For fall and winter programs see the schedule on the following page. Many should be happy to see that Herbal Christmas once again feature music and playing carols on chimes as I now have my own set! I have been asked many times to repeat this program so this is the year! I'm also repeating a favorite autumn program, Pumpkin Party but with an additional craft--making velvet lavender filled pumpkins--the type that are so expensive to purchase--you will love these! A new winter program for Valentine's Day is "Hanky Panky"--you'll be surprised by the history of handkerchiefs and receive beautiful vintage hanky as a sachet. We'll also make Valentine cards--always a fun activity.

**HAPPY AUTUMN! HAPPY HALLOWEEN! HAPPY THANKSGIVING! HAPPY CHRISTMAS!**

## FALL AND WINTER PROGRAMS

As always, an herbal lunch (often vegetarian, always 3 courses) is served after every workshop/program. Proceeds from programs go to charities in memory of my darling girl, Cynthia Jean who loved flowers (especially anything lavender or purple) and music, and kittens and Christmas and celebrating so I celebrate in her memory and in her honor.

Trips this year took us to several of our favorite California destinations as well as to the Southeast--Virginia, North & South Carolina, Georgia and across the Pond to Scotland. Expect some of those destinations to influence some menu items!

**PUMPKIN PARTY!** Decorate pumpkin with fresh & dried flowers (pumpkin is NOT cut so it will last for Thanksgiving! Make a velvet or satin lavender filled pumpkin--beautiful! Enjoy a lunch featuring---pumpkin! Receive a booklet of pumpkin recipes and information. Fee: \$60

**OCTOBER 25 FRIDAY 10:00AM -1:30 PM**

**OCTOBER 26 SATURDAY 10:00 AM-1:30 PM**

**WINTER WREATH** Make a beautiful fragrant wreath to use inside or outside. A combination of cedar, bay, redwood, rosemary, boxwood, cones and berries make a lovely holiday decoration. Also enjoy and herbal luncheon by the fireside after making your creation!

**DECEMBER 1 SUNDAY 10:30 AM-1:30 PM**

Fee: \$50

**DECEMBER 2 MONDAY 10:30 AM-1:30 PM**

**HERBAL CHRISTMAS** Holiday party, Christmas carols with chimes! Luncheon, Prizes

**DECEMBER 16 MONDAY 10:30-1:30 PM**

Fee: \$50

**HANKY PANKY** Valentine Party! Vintage Handkerchief program, make sachet with vintage hanky, make Valentine cards, enjoy Valentine tea luncheon.

**FEBRUARY 8 SATURDAY 10:30 AM-1:30 PM**

Fee: \$60

**PLEASE RESERVE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE--SPACE IS LIMITED IN EACH EVENT**

**YOUR CHECK IS YOUR RESERVATION MAIL TO:**

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