

## REBECCA'S GOOD THYMES & SAGE ADVICE AUTUMN 2012

**"For man, autumn is a time of harvest, of gathering together.  
For nature, it is a time of sowing, of scattering abroad."**

Edwin Way Teale

*September arrives signaling the beginning of the traditional harvest season. For me, it's time to harvest and decorate with pumpkins, Indian corn and sunflowers--what fun! Of course, we California gardeners know that autumn is the best time to plant. Perennials, bushes, trees, winter and spring annuals all benefit from fall planting which allows the root systems to grow over the winter insuring a vigorous spring growth.*

*It's important to remember to add compost to your soil when planting. This promotes good drainage, especially important if you are planting natives and drought tolerant plants such as lavenders, rosemary and sages. These plants also benefit from being planted on mounds which further aid drainage. Remember to adequately water newly plants until the winter rains begin.*

*In September the harvest moon (full moon closest to the autumnal equinox) extends the farmer's working day into the night. Growing up in rural Illinois, I knew the harvest season involved long days! For me now, it's a time to reflect on the summer past--to celebrate the successes of the garden and to plant!*

*Michaelmas Day, September 29th, falls near the time of the autumn equinox, signaling the true beginning of autumn. It is an ancient festival honoring St. Michael and all the angels. A medieval legend says that Michael expelled Lucifer from heaven and he fell into a blackberry patch--therefore no blackberries should be eaten after the 29th! (Actually, good advice as the berries would be of poor quality by then.) I was surprised and excited to find a blackberry patch on our property 3 years ago. Somewhat hidden in our bottom pasture and obviously planted by some kind birds, it now produces a bounty. Of course, the berries are best enjoyed when eaten fresh off the vines but the surplus provides for jam and pies. If you have blackberries (or find them at the market) try this unusual recipe:*

### **BLACKBERRY BROWNIES**

*Beat 3 eggs with 3/4 Cup white sugar. Melt 1/2 Cup and 2 Tablespoons butter with 6 oz semi-sweet chocolate in top of double boiler. Add to egg mixture. Stir in 1 Cup white flour (or 1/2 Cup white & 1/2 Cup whole wheat) and beat until blended. Stir in 1 & 1/2 Cups blackberries and 2/3 Cup dark chocolate chips. Pour into greased and floured 16 inch pan and bake at 350 for 20 to 25 minutes.*

*Michaelmas Daisies*, also known as *asters*, are the flower associated with Michaelmas as they are at their peak then. This hardy perennial blooms in autumn when other flowers in the garden are fading. They are often purple, but can be pink, white, or blue.

Ornamental sages also provide lots of color in the autumn garden and the red blooms of the pineapple sage and purple of the Mexican sage attract hummingbirds to the garden. There are hundreds of varieties of sage, providing a range of colors-blue, purple, red, yellow and pink. Most bloom throughout the summer and autumn, some continuing into winter. They attract hummingbirds to the garden and many are quite drought tolerant. Some however, prefer summer watering such as pineapple sage and fruit sage which has a delightful fruity fragrance, soft bright green leaf (much larger than a pineapple sage leaf) and wonderful pink blossom. I found my plant a few years ago at the DVC plant sale. Amistad salvia is 1 of 29 superstar plants in Sunset's new Western Garden Collection. It has a great purple bloom-available at Orchard Supply.

### **Herb of the Year 2012 is the Rose!**

Yes, the rose is indeed an herb. A special program will be offered to celebrate this most esteemed flower and herb. See program details.

*"We can complain because the rose bush has thorns, or rejoice because it has flowers."*  
Abraham Lincoln

Roses have been used in cooking since antiquity, especially in Middle Eastern cuisine. By the Elizabethan age (16th century) in Europe, almost all cookbooks contained recipes using roses. If you want to use roses in some of your cooking, an easy way to start is by simply adding petals to a salad, or garnishing a dessert. Pick your most fragrant rose as it will have the most flavor, and most importantly, do not use roses that have been treated with insecticide or systemics.

### **Rose Petal Salad**

Arrange red lettuce leaves on plate and sprinkle with fragrant rose petals (a variety of colors is pretty) and add halved strawberries and orange slices. Drizzle on a dressing made of 2 Tablespoons rose vinegar, 2 Tablespoons safflower oil and 1 Tablespoon minced tarragon.

Rose Vinegar: Place 2 Cups fragrant red rose petals & 3 sprigs tarragon in 2 Cups distilled white vinegar. Leave for 3 weeks, strain, put in sterilized jar.

Once again, I will be spending September in Ireland but hope to celebrate the harvest season with many of you later in the autumn.

**Happy Gardening, Rebecca**

## AUTUMN WINTER WORKSHOPS

*My schedule does not allow for me to offer Herbal Christmas this year so I hope you will be able to attend one of the other events! UPDATE!!!! I MAY DO THIS DEC 16 OR 17. LET ME KNOW IF YOU ARE INTERESTED. FEE: \$40*

*As always, lunch is served after each workshop, and the proceeds will go to charities in memory of my beloved daughter, Cynthia Jean. Last year's contributions went to Fisher House (to aid wounded veterans), local school music programs and Shepherd's Gate.*

**OCTOBER 27 SATURDAY 10:30 AM TO 1:30 PM** *fee: \$50*

**OCTOBER 29 MONDAY 10:30 AM TO 1:30 PM** *fee: \$50*

### AUTUMN HERBAL WREATH

*Make an herbal wreath and add autumn accents such as preserved oak leaves, wheat, and dried fruit. This may be hung or used as a table centerpiece. Learn about "magical and dangerous plants!" and receive "Garden Witchery & Wreaths" booklet.*

**NOVEMBER 3 SATURDAY 10:30 TO 1:30 PM** *fee: \$65*

### ROSES JUBILEE!

*We'll celebrate the Rose, Herb of 2012 by making an herbal wreath adorned with deep blue Hidcote lavender and pink and ivory freeze-dried roses and ivory ribbon. Guests will receive a rose and lemon verbena sachet and my 10 page booklet on roses which covers history, lore and legends, cultivation, properties and many recipes. Of course roses will be used in the luncheon!*

**DECEMBER 2 SUNDAY 10:30-1:30 PM** *fee: \$50*

### WINTER WREATH

*Time once again to "deck the halls"! Make a large fresh evergreen wreath of cedar, redwood, bay and magnolia, sip hot cider and enjoy the company of kindred spirits.*

*Please reserve as early as possible as this enables to have time to gather materials and prepare. If classes are not filled, they will be cancelled.*

*Your check is your reservation. Please mail to*

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