

Tisane



ti·sane ti-'zan, -'zän, *n.*
Etymology: Middle English, from Middle French, from Latin *ptisana*, from Greek *ptisanē*, literally, crushed barley, from *ptissein* : to crush – Date: 14th century : an infusion (as of dried herbs) used as a beverage or for medicinal effects

To get on our mailing list, e-mail to newbrg@aol.com or drop an old-fashioned note to the return address on page four. Once our mailing list is set up, sample issues will be available for a stamp or S.M.S.E. (Yes, that is subject to change, too!)

If you are on line, join us on the sca-herbalist mailing list on onelist (go to www.egroups.com/subscribe/sca-herbalist to sign up).

Do you have a favorite herb, gardening tip, historical tidbit, or recipe? Maybe a book you think the world should share? That's perfect for this newsletter — send it to the Chronicler!



The quarterly newsletter of the Herbalists and Apothecaries' Guild of the East Kingdom

Volume 2, Issue 1

March, 2001

Mission Statement:

The goal of the Eastern Kingdom Herbalists and Apothecaries' Guild is to encourage study, teaching and practice of medieval herb uses, as well as study of medieval apothecary and pharmacy practice, in the East Kingdom. The Guild should serve as a conduit for herbalists and apothecaries in the kingdom to communicate with and learn from each other, and to disseminate knowledge about medieval herbalism and pharmacy to others.

The Chronicler Writes:

To bring everyone up to date —

If you haven't already heard, our Guild is now official, having been chartered by Queen Isabella and King Andreas at Twelfth Night in Nordenhal. See page 2 for some details.

At the time when this newsletter was being prepared, two herb-related events were on the calendar. On March 3 there was an EKU in Iron Bog, and on March 10 Hrim Schola was held in Frosted Hills. Both events featured an "herb track" of classes.

Spring War Camp in Owl's Roste will include an herbal exchange table and possible Guild meeting. And, of course, planning goes forward for Herb Fair in Coill Tuar in June (see page 3.)

The Committee on Rankings is, we hope, thinking hard. They hope to be ready to present a report at the Guild meeting at Herb Faire.

Speaking of planning, the Agitator has expressed a desire for the Guild to donate beverages for Pennsic — anyone interested in helping with this, contact her at jenne@tulgey.browser.net.

An effort is underway to set up a guild website, to be linked to www.eastkingdom.org. Related to this, we may be moving our East-specific discussions from the sca-herbalist listserv at yahoo.com (where we have deeply confused some listees from other parts of the Known World) to an eastkingdom.org address. You are welcome to join us at sca-herbalist now; details about the possible EK list will be forthcoming, if all goes well.

Finally, the Chronicler would like to express deep gratitude to those who have contributed to the postage fund, and to Raven, who has volunteered to help with the mailing.

A drink for a cold icky day...

For those of you who like chai...

8 cups water	1 tsp whole cloves
4 plain tea bags	1 whole nutmeg, smashed
4 cinnamon sticks (canela makes it spicier)	1" piece of ginger, sliced but not peeled
1 tsp peppercorns	6 cups milk
1 tbsp whole cardamom pods, smashed	1/2 cup sugar

Boil water in saucepan, take off heat. Put everything in, then cover and let sit until the water is only lukewarm. Strain well!!

Put the spice tea into a big pitcher, add milk (you can adjust to quantity to your taste), then add sugar and stir. Then pour individual servings into mugs and warm in microwave or pour the whole pitcherfull back into the saucepan and warm gently. The second warming helps it not become bitter.

posted to sca-herbalist by Madrun, in 15 degree, 2 inches of snow-covered Glædenfeld

We're Official!

At the East Kingdom Twelfth Night festivities, held in the Shire of Nordenhal on January 13, Their Majesties announced the granting of a charter to the East Kingdom Herbalists and Apothecaries Guild. One of the conditions of this charter (which was printed in a previous issue of this newsletter) is that the Guild present an annual gift to the Crown. The first such gift was presented by Johanna le Mercer and Richildis of Nordenhal, and consisted of bottles of Fighter Massage Oil and embroidered sweete bagges, filled with a mixture taken from "Ram's Little Dodoen," a period source. Both were concocted by our illustrious Agitator, Jadwiga Zajaczkowa (the sachets were stitched by Johanna).

Seeds Slips Cuttings

Plants grow from some small part of themselves into something usable. The same is true of our Guild. Here is another "small part" of those proposed Guild projects — a list of websites and other sources of interest to herbalists. Please add your own bits of information (by mail, listserv, or e-mail), and we'll share it, here and on sca-herbalist.

Books

Carowyn Silveroak recommends *Making Great Cheese* by Barbara Ciletti (Lark Books, 1999, ISBN 1-57990-109-3. Not period, but practical.

Websites

Dioscorides *De Material Media* is now online. It is a German translation, but you can use Babelfish or another online translator to read it. (Thanks to Steffan ap Kennydd for this one.)

Dioscorides: <http://members.fortunecity.com/dioskurides>

babelfish: <http://babelfish.altavista.com/translate.dyn>

Planning . . .

*The next issue of Tisane will not go in the mail until after our June event in New Windsor.
So we need to tell you this stuff now, so you can prepare for that day.*

Plan a display

What herb-related topic have you been learning? Let others learn, too — exhibit an educational display at the Herb Fair. Think “junior high science fair” for a model: How about the history and uses of one of your favorite plants? How about a portable garden, with appropriate tags? ... the steps involved in making soap ... dying processes ... drawings and/or photographs of that medieval garden you’ve been dreaming about?

It needs to be visual (if you wrote a book, supply some pictures to go with it) but it needs words, too (not necessarily documentation, but enough to let people know what they’re looking at.)

Commentary cards will be available, and awards will be made, although it’s not clear yet on what basis. (People’s choice? Autocrat’s choice? Agitator’s choice? All three?)

Plan to travel

Although we probably won’t have merchants on-site, we are planning a car pool “field trip” to Swissette Herb Farm in nearby Salisbury Mills. Their site is charming (although parking is limited) and their plants an excellent value. If nothing else, it’s a chance to see things growing that you may have always wondered about.

Plan to teach or learn

There will be classes, of course. We’re not sure, this early, precisely what they will be, but you can help by either (a) volunteering to teach a class, or (b) letting the autocrat know what classes you’d like to see. If not at this event, maybe we can find someone to teach it later — once we know you want it.

Plan to meet and talk

Meet those people you only know as names on the Internet. Help guide the future of the Guild by attending one of our two planned guild meetings in 2001. Be there when the Committee on Ranking Programs tries to please everyone —

Or just socialize over the herb tea and the spice cakes.

Plan to swap or sell

Either for your own benefit or for the *Tisane* postage fund, bring your extra seeds, seedlings, books, and herbal products to sell or exchange. Please identify yours and suggest a price — the flea market overseer thanks you!

On behalf of the East Kingdom Herbalists and Apothecaries Guild, The Shire of Coill Tuar presents a day of classes and other activities centering on medieval and renaissance herbal practice.

Whether your interest is in gardening, medical, cosmetic, culinary, or aromatic uses for herbs and minerals, there will be something there for you.

An assortment of classes, field trip to local herb farm, generous day board (feel free to bring your own favorite herbed food to share), Sale and Exchange Table, educational displays and competition, Guild meeting.

Directions

From New Jersey and Points South: Go north on Route 9W. Almost five miles north of the Bear Mountain Bridge Circle, just past Coloni Funeral Home (on your left) and the Windsor Motel (on your right) there will be an off-ramp with a small sign marked “Historic Newburgh & Waterfront.” Take this road and the church will be on your left within a tenth of a mile.

From all other places: Take your best route to Interstate 84 (This may involve the New York State Thruway, Interstate 87) and go south at the exit for Newburgh (Route 9W). Continue through Newburgh to New Windsor. From Broadway it is about 1.7 miles south to the traffic light at Union Avenue. Turn left at the traffic light. Ignore the small road that immediately branches to the left: keep on the road marked “Old 9W.” After the stop sign, continue across and around a slight curve — the church will be on your right.

Herbal Baths by Fionna

So you have an important meeting in the morning and you've been preparing for it for weeks, kids sick and cranky, keeping you up all night, maybe life has just handed you more stress than you can deal with. Do yourself a favor and take some time for you. Lock the bathroom door, turn on some soothing music, light a few candles and take a wonderful herbal bath.

Baths have been enjoyed for their pleasure and benefit for centuries. Bath houses abounded in ancient Rome and Greece. In today's break-neck world a hot herbal bath is probably more necessary than they were in ancient Rome or Greece.

Maybe not particularly medieval, but this article (from the website www.herbsandspice.com, printed here with the permission of the copyright holder) can give you some ideas about how to use the herbs you are planning to grow this summer!

Now tossing a handful of fragrant herbs and flowers into your tub, and bathing with them floating on top of the water may seem — ahhhh, SO romantic! Maybe, but that method isn't very practical. Who wants to finish a relaxing, romantic or soothing bath and spend 20 minutes picking pieces of herb off of their wet skin! Talk about ruining a mood! Instead, you can tie the herbs up in some cheesecloth

or in a muslin bag and hang them from the spout while the water is running, this is much neater, and certainly won't wreck your mental peace and quiet.

However, the best way is to make a strong infusion or decoction of the herbs you've selected and add **that** to the bath water. For an infusion, pour boiling water over ½ cup of the dried herbs and steep for 10-20 minutes, strain and add the liquid to the bath water. A decoction uses the same proportions of herbs and water, but the herbs are added to cold water and brought to a boil. This method is used for roots, large stems or woody pieces.

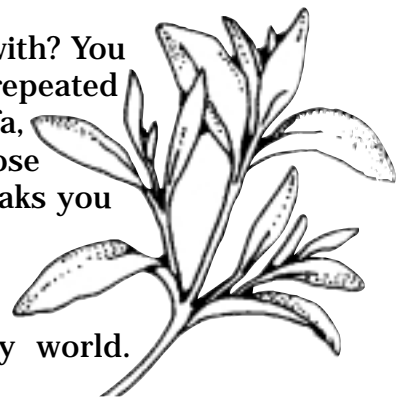
The temperature of the bath water is an important factor, and some attention should be paid to it. Warm water (temps around 98 degrees) soothes and relaxes, while cool water (temps around 80 degrees) stimulates. Be wary of very hot baths (temps around 104 degrees), this can dehydrate, dry the skin, and exhaust you. That high a temperature can also be harmful if you have high blood pressure, diabetes or are pregnant.

Herbs for Stiff Muscles and Aching Joints

A combination of sage and strawberry leaves, or sage and mugwort can be quite soothing. Also try a combination of agrimony, chamomile and mugwort (equal parts).

Herbs for a Tonic Bath

Have more day left to deal with than you have energy to do it with? You might need this type of bath which yields the most benefit if repeated each evening for several evenings in a row. Try comfrey, alfalfa, parsley and orange peel in equal parts. Or equal parts of rose petals, orange blossoms and lavender. After several evening soaks you just might end the day with a little energy surplus.



Herbs to Relieve Tension

We have SO much stress and tension in our modern day world.

Researchers have found that stress and tension can manifest themselves in all kinds of sickness and disease. Try a combination of your choice of any of the following to soothe the mind and body: Catnip, chamomile comfrey, hyssop, jasmine flowers, lemon balm, lavender flowers, linden flower, passionflower blossoms, roses, slippery elm bark, valerian roots and violets. You can use equal parts of the herbs, or vary the proportions to suit your own needs.

Herbs for a Stimulating Bath

A combination of any of these herbs can provide a wonderful lift at the end of a hectic day: Basil, bay leaves, fennel, marjoram, rosemary, sage, savory, thyme (sounds like an Italian meal), mint, nettle, pine needles, lavender, lemon verbena, calendula or vetiver root.

Herbs for Achy Feet

Almost all of us have had tired, achy feet at least once in our lives. Here are some herbs that make a marvelous foot bath, soak for 30 minutes or so, then talk someone into a foot massage — heaven on earth! Try agrimony, burdock, lavender flowers, mustard seeds, sage, witch hazel and wormwood.

There are many other herbs that can be used. For instance, try adding a some eucalyptus leaves, fennel and horehound when you have a cold. Lovely fragrances can be obtained with angelica root, bay leaves, cloves, jasmine and lavender flowers, lovage root, mint, orange leaves, flowers and peel, patchouli, pennyroyal, rose petals, rosemary or sandalwood. Be creative, come up with your own favorite combinations! You'll find that an herbal bath, instead of a luxury, may well become a necessity.

Reference: Material in part is from Rodale's Illustrated Encyclopedia of Herbs



Help Wanted

If anyone would like to write an article on Old Roses for the June issue , I'd love to have it. I even have some material you can use — contact the Chronicler at jafath@aol.com or write to the address on the mailing panel. In fact, I'd love to have articles, short or long, on almost any related subject. List of possible topics on request . . .

2001 Guild Calendar

January 13	Twelfth Night (charter granted)	Nordenhal	Kingston, New York
March 3	EKU (herb track classes)	Iron Bog	Palmyra, New Jersey
March 10	Hrim Schola (herb track classes)	Frosted Hills	Millbrook, New York
May 19	Spring War Camp (herbal exchange table, Guild meeting?)	Owl's Roste	York, Pennsylvania
June 9	Herb Fair (classes, activities, Guild meeting)	Coill Tuar	New Windsor, New York

Tisane

c/o Jo Anne Fatherly
249 Powell Avenue
Newburgh, NY 12550

