

# 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*

## HEADLINES

Device and ranking proposals  
redux

Sweet Cicely

### 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.

## Report from the Agitatrix:

Greetings! It's been a hectic number of months!

The recovery of the rankings discussion document has sparked new and excited conversation on the EK-Herbs list, and we need to revisit the whole rankings discussion to see what people want out of it.

I believe that ideas for the Guild Badge heraldry have coalesced into three forms:

*A gold mortar & pestle with a green sprig of rosemary,*  
or

*A gold mortar & pestle with a green sage leaf.*  
or

*A gold mortar & pestle with a green branch (exact variety to be left to the artist).*

All of these would be 'fieldless' meaning they

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To get on our mailing list, e-mail to [joanne@jafath.com](mailto:joanne@jafath.com) or drop an old-fashioned note to the return address on the mailer. If you are on line, join us on the sca-herbalist mailing list (go to [www.yahogroups.com/subscribe/sca-herbalist](http://www.yahogroups.com/subscribe/sca-herbalist) to sign up) or the East-specific EK-Herb (sign up from [www.eastkingdom.org/herb](http://www.eastkingdom.org/herb)).

While you're on line, take a look at our website at [www.eastkingdom.org/herb](http://www.eastkingdom.org/herb)

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

## The rankings discussion, continued

Shortly after the December 2003 issue of *Tisane* went in the mail, Annys Wolf of Wharram Percy was able to find the records of the most recent meeting of the CHORL (Committee to Hash Out Rating Levels). This is much more authoritative than the previously published summary, so we are reproducing it here.

We could not decide about how many levels to have: 3, 4, or 5.

If 3 levels we had Sprout, Cultivator and Sage

If 4 levels we had Sprout, Yeoman, Cultivator and Sage

If 5 levels we had sprout, Yeoman, Cultivator, Sage and Distinguished Master.

**Sprout:** novice, looking to learn, but may not know what they want to study. Learn about the guild structure and the different areas of study and complete an easy test in front of a panel or some alternative.

**Yeoman:** apprentice, has chosen path(s) of learning, has begun to learn and produce according to area of study, trying to do work and able to demonstrate some amount of knowledge. To advance to Yeoman, must attain a level of competency in knowledge or products.

**Cultivator:** journeyman, show ability to continue learning and "producing". Show how knowledge has improved

**Sage:** proven expertise, willing to take on students directly and the populace at large, demonstrate knowledge with paper worthy of publication

**Distinguished Master:** attained mastery of expertise, creates new innovations, teaches, is known in the SCA for herbal work, shouldn't be easy to attain, but shouldn't be impossible either.

### **The areas of study we had were:**

Cooking/Food: Herbs used in cooking

Brewing/Vinting: herbs used in wine beer or cooking

Dyeing with herbs

Gardening/Growing herbs

Period Medical Herbalism or Apothecary Practice

Comparative Herbology (European, Arabic, Indian, Japanese, Native American, etc.)

Scents/Perfumes

Ointments, Poultices, remedies, etc.

Herbal Cosmetics

Wildcrafting

Allied Arts: Illustrating, toolmaking, etc.



*This resurfacing of the rankings discussion has led to the suggestion of a variety of alternative titles for the ranks/experience levels:*

## Alternative titles for the Rankings

Novice, Apprentice, Journeyman, Master

Tiro minor, Tiro major, Optifex, Magister

Interest, Working Knowledge, Competence, Period Competence, Expert

Sprout, Yeoman, Cultivator, Sage

We need feedback on which versions members would prefer, and on which version of the proposed badge is preferred. We will be having meetings in a number of forums: Arts & Sciences Champions in Owl's Reste, Landsknecht in Eisental, Northern War Camp in Glen Linn, Pennsic and possibly others. If you have feedback and can't make it to one of those meetings, please share it online on the EK herbs list, or contact me at 610-432-2546, or write to me at Jennifer Heise, 1103 W. Walnut Street, Allentown, PA 18102, or email me at jahb@lehigh.edu.

-- Jadwiga Zajackowa

Discussion on EK-Herbs also covered the mechanics of the proposal, for instance:

## The Mechanics of the System

Part of our problem with terminology is that we're confusing *levels of expertise* with *levels of ranking*. Here is a possible system. It avoids some difficulties but not all.

We are undecided whether we want three, four, or five levels, so I'm giving them all. I've posited three Levels of Experience: *Knowledge*, *Competence*, and *Mastery*. Except for Novice, "ranking" here would mean "competence." It would go like this:

### Five levels

Any ranking: Novice

Ranking in four areas (one may be knowledge): Yeoman

Ranking in eight areas (two may be knowledge): Cultivator

Ranking in all areas, of which one must be mastery (two may be knowledge): Sage

Ranking in all areas, of which three must be masteries: Master

### Four levels

Any ranking: Novice

Ranking in four areas (one may be knowledge): Yeoman

Ranking in eight areas (two may be knowledge): Cultivator

Ranking in all areas, of which one must be mastery (two may be knowledge): Sage

### Three levels

Any ranking: Novice

Ranking in six areas (two may be knowledge): Yeoman

Ranking in all areas, of which one must be mastery (two may be knowledge): Sage

The main objection here is probably that it values breadth of experience over intensity.

*Paneling would go like this:* Someone shows up and says "I taught a class on soaps at suchandsuch an event, and here's the handout." or "I tried making soap and here's a sample." Everyone around the table looks it over, asks questions (probably gets into an in-depth discussion about soapmaking) and finally says, "You've showed you are competent at soapmaking." or "Gee, you're on the right track, but you missed this and this, so we think you rank as having knowledge and we hope you'll be back next time with more detailed work." The first would qualify as "competence", the second as "knowledge" for purposes of ranking. And if it's their first try, they are considered a Novice either way, because they made the attempt.

—Johanna le Mercer



## Experience, Paneling and Ranking

To encourage exploration of the many aspects of herbs and herbalism, the East Kingdom Herbalist and Apothecary's Guild (EKH&AG) has defined eleven areas of study. One proposal for ranking begins with the ability of members to demonstrate their "experience" level within individual areas of study\*:

*"Knowledge"* -- holder has basic understanding of the subject

*"Competence"* -- a higher ability has been demonstrated, with broader or more in-depth work.

*"Mastery"* -- individual has shown advanced ability, perhaps through a masterwork or published research.

Experience levels would be determined by a Paneling of Senior Guild Members, and may include discussion ("verbal" documentation); formal, written research; a physical project; etc. Progression through the experience levels is not required. For example: an individual may achieve "Mastery" at a first Paneling in a particular area of study, while the same individual may decide to never seek a level above "Knowledge" in another area.

Upon determination of experience level via the Paneling, the candidate becomes eligible for a named ranking within the guild (e.g., Novice, Yeoman, Journeyman, Sage, etc.).

*Note: A possible addition is "Period Competence." Athena's Thimble is working to clarify this level, and it may be a worthwhile, albeit future, consideration for EKH&AG*

In service, Hedewigis.

## Some Thoughts on Nomenclature of Guild Ranks

Recently, the Guild has been giving a lot of thought to the matter of guild ranks. This brief article will not deal with the number or nature of these ranks, but in online discussions I and others have addressed the naming of ranks and how we should proceed in that area.

Proposals for three and for four ranks have been presented. The three-rank system is the one most familiar to us, and the names of the ranks are standard: apprentice, journeyman, and master. One would think that this would be a no-brainer, but some folk apparently have the fear that to use "master" (and to a lesser degree, "apprentice") would be an infringement of the rights of peers. To this I repeat my frequent exhortation to "think with your persona's mind". No medieval person would think this a usurpation. Indeed, in period we often see such uses, even including the use of "king" as in "King of Arms" and "King of Minstrels". In fact, the East used to have a Court Poet whose title was "Rex Minstrellorum" or "King of Minstrels", and no one lost any sleep over that. We have the office of "Knight Marshall" and "Earl Marshall", for which one need be neither a knight nor an earl. Moreover, the SCA's Governing Documents specifically allow the use of "master" in other contexts such as "master of <jobname>" where <jobname> might be "arts" or "lists" or whatnot.

If it is felt that alternate names must, nevertheless, be chosen, I urge the Guild to avoid such cutesy-poo suggestions as "sprout", "cultivator", and "sage". As I said in a previous post: "...Why invent new names for ranks like 'cultivator' and 'sage'? (Yes, I get the pun. Let's move on.) We're supposedly re-creating a medieval institution here. Why make up names, when we can use the guild ranks that a real medieval guild would have used?"

In other words, the guild exists to further the practice of an aspect of medieval culture, but let's also consider that \*the act of designing of a guild\* is \*itself\* the practice of an aspect of medieval culture, and so it behooves us to do so in as medieval a way as we can.

As regards a possible four-rank system, I had this to say: "Traditionally, there were (are) three ranks in a guild, and they are almost universally called Apprentice, Journeyman, and Master. Four are proposed for our guild, and I may have a solution to that. Some guilds had a board of officers called 'syndics [\*]' (as in 'syndicate'), so we might have a level above the masters, called syndics, and considered honorary officers of the guild. So the translation from the currently proposed systems would look like this:

Level 1: SPROUT/NOVICE --> APPRENTICE

Level 2: YEOMAN --> JOURNEYMAN

Level 3: CULTIVATOR/SAGE --> MASTER

Level 4: SAGE/MASTER ---> SYNDIC

The actual officers of the guild should be as follows [which generally follows period usage]. (I'm not advocating that we \*need\* all of these): The head/president/chair: Master (Mistress) or Chief Warden Vice president(s): (Senior and Junior) Warden Secretary: Registrar Treasurer: Treasurer

[\*] You know that picture inside the cover of a box of Dutch Masters cigars? It's called 'Syndics of the Cloth Hall', that is, the board of directors or trustees of the Guild of Clothworkers.

Steffan ap Kennydd



# Sweet Cicely

## *Myrrhis odorata*

“It is so harmless you cannot use it amiss,” says Culpeper, who recommends Sweet Cicely as a salad herb, as a root vegetable, as a preservative from plague, to aid digestion, and to heal ulcers.

Gardeners are of two minds about its harmlessness, because it self-seeds tremendously and the adult plant has an undefeatable rhizome/taproot. But, say others, if you pull up the seedlings in the spring, you can eat them or pot them up and give them away – just don’t let them grow up.

Cicely is a perennial that likes semi-shade, has fern-like foliage, and grows 15 to 30 inches high. The whole plant is sweet to the taste, with a vaguely anise tang. The seeds must winter over to sprout, which is why the seedlings only need to be grubbed up once, in the spring. (They can be sprouted by freezing them first.)

Mrs. Grieve gives a whole list of aliases for this one: British Myrrh, Great Chervil, Smooth Cicely, Sweet Bracken, Sweet Chervil, Sweet-fern, Sweet-Cut, Sweet-humloc, Sweets, The Roman Plant, Shepherd’s Needle, Smoother Cicely, Cow Chervil.

She lists the uses as “Aromatic, Stomachic, carminative and expectorant. Useful in coughs and flatulence ... The fresh root may be eaten freely or used in infusion with brandy or water. A valuable tonic for girls from 15 to 18 years of age. The roots are antiseptic, and a decoction is used for the bites of vipers and mad dogs.”



There is also an “American Sweet Cicely,” *Ozmorrhiza longistylis*, which has similar properties.

The *Herbal PDR* agrees with Culpeper that “no health hazards or side effects are known.” It lists as “unproven uses” the use of the root to treat asthma and urinary complaints and, as a salve, to relieve the pains of gout.

### **Sources:**

Grieve, *A Modern Herbal* [www.botanical.com](http://www.botanical.com).

*The Culinary Herb FAQ*,

[www.ibiblio.org/herbmed/faqs](http://www.ibiblio.org/herbmed/faqs)

Culpeper on line,

<http://info.med.yale.edu/library/historical/culpeper/culpeper.htm>

*PDR for Herbal Medicines, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*. Montvale, Medical Economics Company, 2000.

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could be displayed on any color background we wanted to use.

*Tisane* is also running perilously low on articles, and also on funding-- Contribute, contribute, contribute!

We are going to do something unusual this year: I am planning on collecting a Tithe directly to the Queen early on in the Summer Reign; then we will be doing a selection of sachets/sleep pillows/sweet bagges in 17 sets, for the Royal gifts to other kingdoms this year. If you are interested, please contact me or the EK-Herbs list while we figure out what recipes to use and any special patterns.

Meetings already planned include EK A&S Champions in Owl's Reste, Landsknecht in Eisental, Northern War Camp in Glenn Linn, Southern War Camp in Eisental, and Pennsic. Others may occur as the mood occurs! If you are interested in holding an EKHAG meeting in your event, please do so. If you'd like some suggestions on what to discuss, please contact me!

Shameless Plug for someone else's list: There is a new email list that some may be interested in: Medieval Gardening on the yahoogroups service. (There's also the SCA-Herbalist list on yahoogroups for interkingdom herbal discussion)

As always feel free to sign on to EK-Herbs to discuss kingdom-specific information, events, activities, etc.: To subscribe, send an e-mail to [ek-herbs-subscribe@eastkingdom.org](mailto:ek-herbs-subscribe@eastkingdom.org) and follow the instructions in the confirmation e-mail you receive.

Remember to check out the Guild webpage at <http://www.eastkingdom.org/guilds/herb/>

Have a wonderful, growing season.

In service, -- Jadwiga Zajaczkowa, Agitatrix, EK Herbalists & Apothecaries Guild

## CALENDAR

**Coronation:** April 3, Settmour Swamp: Guild meeting

**Emmaus Fair,** April 17, Eisental: Guild Prize and Panelling

*There will be a prize for the best herbal display at Emmaus Fair. This is a bribe, ladies and gentlemen.*

**Landsknecht,** June 19: Guild Meeting and classes

**Northern Region War Camp:** Guild meeting and classes (tentative)

**Southern Region War Camp,** July 24: Guild Meeting and classes

Jo Anne Fatherly  
249R Powell Avenue  
Newburgh, New York 12550

