

Tisane



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.

ti·sane ti-'zan, -'zän, n.

Etymology: Middle English from Middle French from Latin *ptisana*, from Greek *ptisanē*, literally, crushed barley, from *ptisein* to crush - *Date:* 14th century : an infusion (as of dried herbs) used as a beverage or for medicinal effects

From the Agitatrix

First of all, many many thanks to all who helped with herbal items (and just plain help) for my vigil and Laureling. You are all wonderful.

Second, a nice big VIVAT! and Thank you to the people of Concordia and to Mistress Eleri for holding the Herbal Event on June 25 in Cohoes NY. It was a lovely event, lots of good classes, meetings, food etc. It was wonderful. Thank you also to the many teachers who presented during the day.

Third, we have two meetings set up for Pennsic. EK herb Guild Meeting: August 19, 2005, 9 AM, AS 9 SCA-Herbalists Roundtable, August 19, 2005, AS 8. One is more focused on the kingdom guild activities, the other is just a round-table discussion. Please consider attending both!

Fourth: we decided that our guild gift for the

Please turn to page 3

HEADLINES

Herbal Obsession

When is an Herb?

News from Northern Lights

Pennsic Classes

To get on our mailing list, e-mail to 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](http://www.sca-herbalist.com) mailing list (go to www.yahoo.com/groups to sign up) or the East-specific EK-Herb (sign up from our website at www.eastkingdom.org/guilds/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 Horror of the Herbal Obsession —

How to Harness the Urge!

Yes, I have a problem....

OK, OK, so I have more than one! ;-) Let's focus here, okay? (LOL!)

I have Herbal Fixations. Not just one, but many...I'm a serial offender. Right about the time that the seasons change, I pick another herb to focus on, and then I HAVE to use that herb in everything! Soups, salads, drinks, teas, cheeses, pasta, salad dressings, flavor the vinegar to make the cheese, you name it, I'll try that herb on or in it! Just to see how it changes the taste and texture of a meal, and if it enhances the flavors already in the food....

And then, when I've explored that herb for a while, I choose another — and the fun begins again! What would that herb taste like...over here? What about over there? On an egg? In a boat? On a pork chop? In a moat?

It's fun! It's also a neat way to try different herbs, if you'd like to start investigating a new one that you haven't tried before!

This is how I begin my obsession:

1) I find an herb — or, an herb finds me! I usually pick one I don't know a lot about....this past winter/spring, it was dill. Now, it's mint!

2) I do a bit of research on the herb, to see where it comes from, a bit of the history, varieties, when it's best to harvest, what parts to harvest, a bit on how it's traditionally used.

3) Now that I've read about it...I'll experiment! For instance, if the literature says a particular herb is best on pork, I'll use it on chicken, beef, turkey, even buffalo! I'll cut off a bite-sized piece of whatever meat I'm eating, and sprinkle a bit of the herb in question on a bite, and compare it to the rest of the meal. Even in restaurants — I carry a bit in a clean plastic bag in a film canister in my purse. (Yeah, I know, one of these days....! ;-) I'll also pour myself a drink, but also pour a small drink in a smaller cup, add a bit of the herb, let it steep for a few minutes, then taste the difference. If I like the taste, I'll let it steep longer, even overnight, to see if it gets to be too much. (This was really fun to do with egg nog, and cassia cinnamon, Ceylon cinnamon, nutmeg, and mace around New Year's!)

4) If I can, I'll try different species of the same herb. With mint, there are so many varieties to try! I have catnip (well, what the feral cats let me have, since I'm apparently the local drug supplier) and white balsam on the porch (also known as "fuzzy mint" in our area). I have access to blue balsam, pineapple mint, spearmint, and peppermint as well. Sometimes I mix and match different proportions, just to see what a blend tastes like! I'll also try the herb in different preparations: a fresh sprig off the plant, dried, dried but powdered, soaked in a liquid (milk, water, vinegar) to reconstitute, etc.

5) I take notes on what I've done! Someone else may benefit from my obsession, so I scribble down observations. You never know...every person's taste is different, so a taste I don't care for may tickle another's taste buds. That's why I try to go across a season....what I may not like in the spring I may crave in the heat of summer!

6) I have fun!

And I love some herbs! I once had an "all rosemary" meal, even though I know most cooks suggest not doing that so you don't get tired of the taste — but I wanted to try it! I enjoyed it, but I wouldn't do it a lot! So sometimes it's just fun to try breaking

the rules....you've heard of cinnamon sugar and rose sugar, why not try a chive sugar? Or a rosemary-flavored honey? Herbed ice cream? Yeah, I know. some of those sound really weird....but we found by accident that grapes that have just been rinsed in tap water and covered with honey and put in the fridge for a week taste *great* on ice cream, because the grapes start to ferment! (But we throw out the mixture if we have leftovers past 10 days, because bacteria may start to grow.) So there are other combinations out there that work! Gotta go try some!

Have fun! And be safe — if you're not sure that your mixture is still safe to eat, toss it out and make another. I let a lot of herbs steep in vinegar for months at a crack if they're dried herbs when they go into the vinegar, but if the herbs are fresh (like for a salad dressing mix I'll use in a few hours), I throw out what I don't use right after the meal.

Oh, and I just learned that cooking rosemary with white fish is a wonderfully yummy prospect — thank you, Jadwiga!

If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at <Silveroak@juno.com>. Enjoy!

— Carowyn Silveroak



From the *Ægitatrix*

Continued from page 1

Pennsic Royal baskets would be little baggies of strewing herbs (dried). If you have a contribution to make for this, get it to me (Jennifer Heise, 1103 W. Walnut Street, Allentown PA 18102) before Southern Region War Camp and we'll mix them all together and parcel them out.

Third: if someone wants to pursue the Rankings issue, please contact me. Right now the Rankings question seems to have run out of steam and unless someone does want to run with it, I'll let it lay.

Have a wonderful summer!

-- Metressa Jadwiga, the exhausted.

When is a “herb”?

Browsing through the *Herbal PDR* is a serendipitous experience. Among other things, this useful book includes an “identification” section with pictures of plants, and I saw several I hadn’t thought of as “herbs” although I grow them in my garden, weed them *out* of my garden, or pass patches of them on my way to work in the morning. Who knew?

Here are three to add to your collection:

Columbine (*aquilegia vulgaris*): also known as Culverwort, Capon’s Feather, Culver Key, Herba Leonis, dove’s foot, blue starry, and granny’s nightcap, this garden flower grows wild in many places. New York sources tend to concentrate on a yellow-and-orange variety, but traditionally Columbine blooms in white, pink, blue, violet, mauve, and combinations of these colors. For medical applications, the stems and leaves are gathered and dried in flowering season; the seeds and the whole plant are also often gathered in flowering season and dried.

Columbine contains trace levels of cyanogenic glycosides but there are no reported cases of poisoning although Mrs. Grieve notes that it is unfortunately easy to overdose children with it.. The traditional use is internal, for scurvy and jaundice. In homeopathic medicine, it is used to treat menopausal vomiting, dysmenorrhea, and *globus hystericus* – otherwise known as a lump in the throat.

Hildegard of Bingen used columbine extensively and mentioned it in her *Physica Sacia* (1097). Popular in German folk medicine, “it relieves palpitations, and prevents loss of consciousness; the fresh juice is helpful in clearing up ulcers and boils.” (Bianchini)

Culpeper recommends it for sore mouths and throats and says that in Spain columbine root is considered a specific against “the stone.”



Duckweed (*Lemna minor*): that green stuff that covers any body of water in the summer also has traditional uses. The whole fresh plant is used internally to treat inflammation of the upper respiratory tract; and externally for gout and rheumatism. In Chinese medicine, it treats measles, edema, joint pain, dysuria, acne, erysipelas and epilepsy. In homeopathic practice: chronic colds. There are no known hazards.

This plant is known to Culpeper as Ducksmeat and he says it is useful against St. Anthony’s fire and against gout. “The fresh Herb applied to the Forehead, easeth the Pains of the Head-ach coming of heat.”

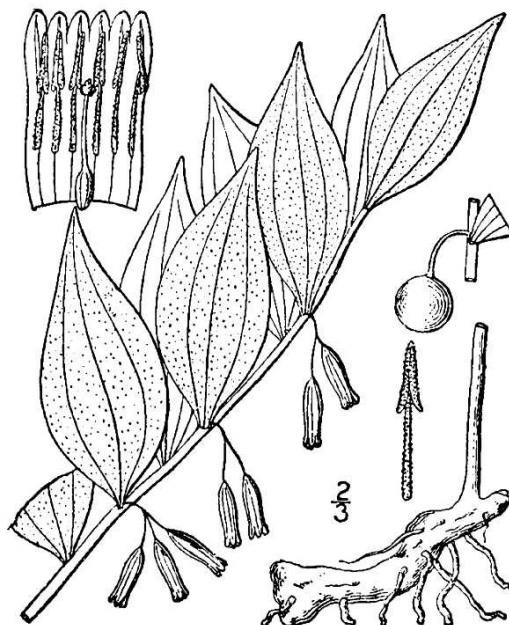
Solomon’s Seal (*polygonatum multiflorum*), not to be confused with False Solomon’s seal, or *Smilacina racemosa*, was a favorite of Dioscorides: the dried rhizome and roots are the important part of the plant, which is also known as Drop berry, lady’s seals, sealroot, sealwort, and St. Mary’s seal. They are used externally for bruises, ulcers or boils, hemorrhoids, edema, and hematoma, with no known health hazards. Internal uses are obsolete.

Galen warned against its internal use, but Gerard thought Galen was over-reacting and that it was good for broken bones. Gerard mentioned its use in contemporary cosmetics, noting that it would fade bruises caused by “women’s wilfulness, in stumbling upon their hasty husbands fists, or such like.”

And Mrs. Grieve gives a long list of possible uses, curing everything from erysipelas to piles and black eyes, including the roots being used as a foodstuff. All agree, however, that the berries are toxic.

Bibliography

www.botanical.com, (*A Modern Herbal* online)
<http://info.med.yale.edu/library/historical/culpeper/culpeper.htm> (Culpeper on line, Yale University)
Bianchini, Francesco and Francesco Corbetta, *Health Plants of the World*, New York 1975.
PDR for Herbal Medicine



News FROM Northern Lights

On the 26th of March, 2005 Artisans of the East gathered in the North for the fourteenth time to show the winter works of their hands and compete for the accolade of winning the Pentathlon. Forty entrants entered 89 individual items across 38 categories.

The following category winners are of interest to EKHAG:

Cooking - Baroness Ardenia ARuadh - Simple bage cheese in several flavors and forms

Herbalism - Baroness Ardenia ARuadh - Herb-infused sugars

Meads - Dorio of "Whispering" Oaks - Mead with a hint of strawberry

Wines - Kythe Szubielka - Maple Hard Cider

Cordials - Tiernan Shepard - Apricot Cardamom Cordial

Other Performances - Jadwiga Zajaczkowa - Academic lecture on sage

NORTHERN LIGHTS XV (15) is coming. There is a web site at www.northernlights.trmilne.com. In addition contact information for more information about Master Henry MacQueen's Challenge for NL 15 can be found at Master Henry's site www.thescholarsgarret.com/northernshores/henry.html

And now ... Pennsic!

The class schedule for “Penssic University” is online at http://www.penssicwar.org/penn34/AANDS/class_sched.html

Coming Events

Great Northeastern War XIX

July 15 - July 17

Southern Region War Camp

July 22-24

Pennsic XXXIV

August 5-21



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