

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

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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.

From the Chronicler

Where will the 2008 "Herbal Event" be held? We've had them in southern Pennsylvania, in the Hudson Valley, in New Jersey, and in upper New York State. Who's next? Maybe somewhere in New England?

Most of these have been mini-EKU-type events. But we could have an event featuring a weedwalk and wildcrafting. We could have one that focusses on messy projects such as dying. We could have one that features an Herb Quest! The limit is your imagination (and the willingness of your local group to serve as sponsor, of course.)

And there would be wonderfully seasoned food . . .

Not to mention what our Mission Statement calls "a conduit for herbalists and apothecaries in the Kingdom to communicate with, and learn from, each other."

Think about it.

Johanna, Chronicler

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 subscribe/sca-herbalist 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!

thyme

Thymus vulgaris, thymus serpyllum

wild thyme, garden thyme, creeping thyme, silver thyme, lemon thyme, running thyme, mother of thyme, caraway thyme, herbe baronne

Thyme doesn't have the multitude of alternate folk names of many herbs. In fact, most of the names listed above are not aliases but names of variants. But it has a multitude of uses, among them as an insect repellent (fresh or when burned for fumigation), a culinary seasoning (*bouquet garni*, anyone?) an antiseptic (oil of thyme was still in use as a disinfectant during World War I), a cough syrup, against colic, a meat preservative, as a vermifuge, and as a febrifuge. It is an emmenagogue, carminative, and stimulant.

The main active ingredient is thymol, usually marketed as part of Oil of Thyme, distilled from the fresh leaves and flowering tops.

Historically, thyme was used for fumigation by the Romans, who also used it to flavor cheese and to scent bath water. Culpeper recommends thyme for whooping cough, sciatica and gout. Gerard mentions sciatica and leprosy and falling sickness.

Thyme is one of the few herbs which are stronger in scent and flavor after they have been dried.

Pregnant women should not use the herb, tincture, or essential oil, and excessive use of the undiluted essential oil is toxic. Otherwise, the *PDR for Herbal Medicine* rates thyme as "food safe" with "no health hazards or side effects."



SOURCES

www.botanical.com, (*A Modern Herbal* online)

<http://info.med.yale.edu/library/historical/culpeper/culpeper.htm> (Culpeper on line, Yale University)

PDR for Herbal Medicine

Gernot Katzer's Spice Pages, www.uni-graz.at/~katzer/eng/Thym_vul.htm

Historical Gardens On The Web And Elsewhere

In the interests of avoiding reinvention of the wheel, please let me draw your attention to a web site: <http://www.scu.edu/stclaregarden/ethno/layout.cfm> This site contains information about the St. Clare's Garden constructed at Santa Clara University in California. It contains plants known to have been cultivated in Central Italy in the 13th century. It is based in part upon Albert the Great's description of a pleasure garden in his *De vegetabilibus et plantis* (1260) (see below).

There is also a list of the plants they used, found at:

<http://www.scu.edu/stclaregarden/sustainable/upload/Alphabetical/Complete/Plant/List/rev.pdf>

The best collection of Medieval garden lists I have ever found is in the appendix to *Medieval Gardens*, by John Harvey, ISBN 0917304691. This is a wonderful book, and I do recommend checking for it in your local libraries. For an abstract of a journal article about plant remains found in the drains of a 15th C Paisley Abbey in Scotland, see:

<http://www.springerlink.com/content/j7v7113510560888/>

... or you could just use Lady Katja Orlova's list:

<http://www.katjaorlova.com/HerbalismPaperPlantsGarden.html>

*from Marian of Edwinstowe, Carolingia
(who is working on a database of historically cited plants).*

Most of the herbalists I know are fictional

by Johanna le Mercer

It's probably safe to say that everyone here has heard of China Bayles and Brother Cadfael. These fictional detective/herbalists have a wide following. But what about Katherine Swinbrooke, Isaac of Girona, and Susanna, Lady Appleton? Most of these practitioners are medieval or renaissance, but a few modern novels have herbalist characters. If reading about herbalists-apothecaries/detectives is your thing, why not try one of these?

Kathy Lynn Emerson:

In Tudor England, Susanna Appleton got started by writing an herbal. To be exact, she wrote a "cautionary herbal" warning people which plants were toxic. It didn't occur to her that she was writing a textbook on poisons . . .

Face Down in the Marrow Bone Pie	1997	Face Down Before Rebel Hooves	2001
Face Down Upon An Herbal	1998	Face Down Across the Western Sea	2003
Face Down Among the Winchester Geese	1999	Face Down Below the Banqueting House	2005
Face Down Beneath the Eleanor Cross	2000	Face Down Beside St. Anne's Well	2006
Face Down Under the Wych Elm	2000		

C. L. Grace

Katherine Swinbrooke is an apothecary practising in Canterbury in late 15th-century England.

C.L. Grace is another of the many pseudonyms of P.C. Doherty.

A Shrine Of Murders	1993	The Merchant Of Death	1995
The Eye Of God	1994	The Book Of Shadows	1996

Caroline Roe

Isaac of Girona, a blind Jewish physician in pre-Inquisition Spain, has his daughter as an apprentice and assistant. His relationship with the Christian community is particularly interesting.

Remedy for Treason	1998	A Potion For A Widow	2001
Cure for A Charlatan	1999	A Draught For A Dead Man	2002
An Antidote for Avarice	1999	A Poultice For A Healer	2003
Solace for A Sinner	2000	Consolation For An Exile	2004

Katherine Kerr

The long "Deverry" series (now nearly finished) has as its two central characters a pair of wizards, who in normal times earn their livings as herbmen. These two come and go through a time-spanning convolution of plotlines, making an addictive series for those of us who like that sort of thing.

Daggerspell	1986	Days of Air and Darkness	1994
Darkspell	1987	The Red Wyvern	1997
The Bristling Wood	1989	The Black Raven	1999
The Dragon Revenant	1990	The Fire Dragon	2001
A Time of Exile	1991	Silver Wyrn	2004
A Time of Omens	1992	The Gold Falcon	2006
Days of Blood and Fire	1993		

Stephanie Barron

Barron's "Jane Austen" series includes one title involving some knowledge of herbalism; enough to put it on this list!

Jane and the Stillroom Maid	2000
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A quick search of the local library catalog under "herbalism" also brings up these titles, which I have not read. Anyone willing to read one and tell me what they think?

<i>Circle of Gold</i> , Karen Harper	<i>Eye of Newt</i> , Denise Dietz
<i>The Essential Charlotte</i> , Libby Schmais	<i>The Holding</i> , Merilyn Simons

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