



Creative Gardener

... inspiring gardeners to create
Sue Goetz www.herbloversgarden.com

Herbal Skin Care from the Garden

To know what to grow and what type of recipes to use them in, it all begins with learning about the herb plants and their properties. You may already be growing some herbs, whether for their culinary use or their beauty, or both. It might surprise you to know what else they can do for you. Their special qualities can be antiseptic, aromatic, healing, soothing, cooling, stimulating; and you can use the flowers, leaves, stems, oils or roots. Get to know more about your old favorites and discover how they nurture your body too! Once you get to know the herbs, then get to know other ingredients that bring a plant into a form that your body can easily utilize – and luxuriate in. You will find most additional ingredients in your kitchen cabinet, such as sea salt, baking soda, and oatmeal. *Your herbal adventure starts here!*

A Herbal Harvest

Herb fragrance and flavor come from essential oils in leaves and stems and are at their most flavorful and fragrant in the morning after the dew dries. Cut the stems to avoid damage, do not pluck or pull. Harvest as needed for fresh use. Leave about 4" of stem remaining on leafy annuals and about a third on leafy perennials. Rinse enough to clean before use, avoid a heavy rinse. Larger leaves can spin dry in a "salad" spinner. A good way to store fresh stems for use within a few days is to place them in a clean jar of fresh, cold water "bouquet style" and refrigerate. The harvested part of the plant depends on its use.

Leaves: Young tender leaves have the highest amount of flavor and fragrance; harvest as needed. Never let leafy herbs go to flower or the flavor may be lost, it also sends a signal to the plant to halt leaf production. To preserve herb leaves, air-drying is the easiest method. A drying room should be a dark, airy place with no direct sunlight. Harvest and tie in loose bundles. Hang bundles or lay smaller, weak-stemmed plants on drying screens. Before storage, make sure herbs are absolutely "cornflake" dry to avoid mold. Strip leaves off the stems and store in glass jars. Don't forget to label your harvest; most herbs look a lot alike after they are dried. Store leaves whole for most uses like teas and bath preparations. They can be crushed down anytime as needed.

Flowers: Borage, Calendula, Chamomile, Dandelion, lavender, and rose petals are all favorite flowers for skin treatments. Harvest just as it begins to flower and no later than it's peak of color. Most herbal flowers are best used fresh. Dry heads or petals whole on screens and store in glass jars away from sunlight.

Freezing method: Herbs can be frozen for culinary use or skin care and poultices. Make herbal ice cubes by putting about 1 teaspoon of fresh cut herbs or a whole leaf or two in each section of an ice cube tray. Top with water and freeze. After frozen in to cubes they can be placed in freezer bags for frozen storage. Essentially the herb is captured in frozen water and lingers a fresh taste to use in soups, stews or iced drinks. Also great to soothe overheated skin by rubbing lavender and mint ice cubes over the surface of neck, arms and face

Herbal Tub Tea

Place dried or fresh herb into a muslin bag or press and seal tea bags. Float in a warm bath to create an herbal infusion. Soak in the tub for at least 15 minutes to receive the full benefits of the herbal ingredients.

Herbal Water

8 ounces of pure water
1-3 ounces dried herb
3 drops essential oil

Create an infusion from the water and herbs. Gently simmer for 10 to 15 minutes. Allow herb infusion to cool completely. Strain off the herb materials. Place the infusion in a jar and add essential oil if desired. Shake well for each use.

Cornmeal Facial

1 tablespoon dried rose petals
1 tablespoon dried lavender buds
1 tablespoon dried calendula petals
1 cup cornmeal

Grind dried herbs together until powdered.
Add cornmeal and mix well.

Store in small plastic zip-close bags.

To use:

Rinse face, pat dry. Mix blend with just enough water or yogurt to form a paste. Gently massage paste over face and neck avoiding eye area. Rinse off and pat skin dry.

Peppermint Foot Soak

1 cup coarse sea salt
1/2 cup baking soda
1/2 cup dried peppermint, crushed
2 drops peppermint essential oil (optional)

Combine all ingredients well and store in a lidded glass jar. For a finer blend that will disperse in water easier, you may grind all of the ingredients together. Place mix in a bowl or small tub of warm water. Soak feet for a minimum of 15 minutes to capture the full benefits.

Terms to know:

Emulsifier~ natural ingredient that allows oil to disperse in water

Astringent~ tighten or tingling to skin a natural protection from outside elements.

Humectants~ prevents water loss on skin

Emollient~ maintains a smooth soft pliable appearance on skin

Exfoliant~ abrasive, removes waste from skin

Infusion~ basically a tea. Pour boiling water over herbs, cover and let stand for up to 30 minutes to release the properties of the herb into the water. 1 ounce to 2 ½ cups of water.

Decoction~ for tougher herbs that use the bark, roots and seeds. Bring to a boil in water and simmer for 30 minutes. Simmer to reduce liquid by half. 1 ounce herb to 2 ½ cups of water.

Tinctures~ a method of putting herbs into another base ingredient. Common carriers are oil or alcohol. The ingredient will pick up the qualities of the herb. Pack a glass jar with herb, cover with oil, vinegar or alcohol. Seal and allow to steep for 2 weeks or more. Shake occasionally and repeat until the mixture smells strongly herbal

Essential oils~ an extraction of essential oils from plant tissues

Common Household Ingredients~

Baking Soda: balances skin PH, Acid Neutralizer, and good for itchy, irritated skin

Borax: emulsifier for lotions

Cornstarch: absorbent powder material

Cornmeal: exfoliant for skin scrubs

Lemon Juice: Restores PH, mildly bleaching to skin

Sea Salt: natural water softener. Exfoliate to skin

Yogurt: plain, skin softener, mildly astringent

Oatmeal: whole, natural oats, exfoliate to skin

Honey: raw organic, natural high potassium, healing. Emulsifier and humectants

Vinegar: dilute 1 cup to 8 cups of water, removes alkalinity, astringent

Vodka: plant derived alcohol base to preserve herbs. Use as a tincture carrier

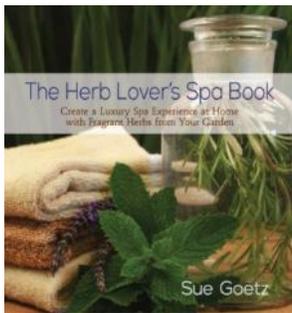
Epsom Salt: draws toxins out of the skin

Beeswax: natural wax, emulsifier

Glycerin: vegetable based. Humectant, emollient

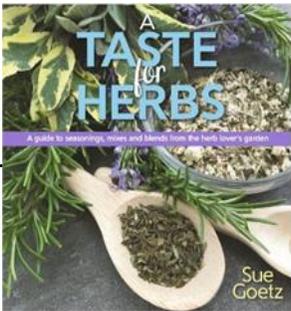


www.herbloversgarden.com



A Taste for Herbs
Your guide to seasonings, mixes and blends from the herb lovers garden

The Herb Lover's Spa Book
Create a luxury Spa Experience at Home with Fragrant Herbs from your Garden



Garden by Design & Garden Coaching

“A landscape becomes so much more when a design is infused into it. It becomes more than just a place to put plants or the mechanics of it. It is the love of the design by combining plants, garden décor, and creativity.”

Susan Goetz, CPH, EPC
Tacoma, Washington

253. 265. 2209 info@thecreativegardener.com

