

HERBS
for the
GOURMET
GARDENER



A Practical Resource from
the Garden to the Table

CAROLINE HOLMES

*Herbs for the
Gourmet Gardener*
*A Practical Resource
from the Garden to the Table*

By Caroline Holmes

The rise of the slow food movement and the return to home gardens mean cooks are donning gardening gloves as often as oven mitts. Modern cooking is heading back to its roots, with home cooks embracing local ingredients and down-to-earth recipes. With more and more of us discovering the delight of preparing and eating freshly harvested food, *Herbs for the Gourmet Gardener* is the indispensable guide to what to grow, cook, and eat.

A feast for the eyes and the table, this user-friendly resource traverses

the realms of both the garden and the kitchen, addressing the cultivation, storage, and preparation of more than sixty herbs. Practical growing tips, fascinating histories, nutritional information, and classic recipes appear alongside botanical illustrations drawn from the Royal Horticultural Society's cherished collection. With both familiar varieties and novel options, *Herbs for the Gourmet Gardener* will inspire you to create a world of new shapes, colors, and tastes.

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*For a review copy or other
publicity inquiries, please
contact:*
Lauren Salas
Promotions Manager
University of Chicago Press
lsalas@press.uchicago.edu
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LEFT: Cumin (*Cuminum cyminum*) is one of many herbs that are prized for their seeds, which are used in both food and medicine.



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ABOVE: The flowers of the garden nasturtium (*Tropaeolum majus*) have a peppery taste and can be used as a substitute for capers.

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INTRODUCTION

The first foray into *Herbs for the Gourmet Gardener* will reveal beautiful botanical illustrations of 60 herbs, all of which were drawn by artists to aid identification. Herbs are ideal plants for all levels of gardeners and cooks. Many herbs are so easy to grow that the beginner gains confidence, their growing skills promoted by the taste of home-grown flavors. Conversely the gourmet cook may find themselves drawn to gardening. For the experienced gardener, the palette of the colors and scents of herbs means that their use extends beyond the herb plot into borders, lawns, and pots. Herbs

are excellent short-term plants for new gardens: allow the more expensive shrubs and perennials space to develop, and while they are doing this, infill with the grays, greens, and scents of annual and perennial herbs.

The properties that herbs bring to food are those of fresh taste, fragrance, and aroma. The journey to the table just requires someone armed with a sharp thumbnail or scissors to forage the herbs for gourmet rather than gourmand use. The subtle difference between gourmet and gourmand can be counted in calories, the latter comes to play when you fold herbs into cream, butter, and seriously rich sauces.

Rather than trying to group them by use, flavor, or family, they are listed in this book by their Latin names in alphabetical order. The herbs are interleaved with feature spreads on cooking, salads, and flowers, not forgetting a short history of herbs.



LEFT: Three widely used culinary Mediterranean herbs: rosemary, *Rosmarinus officinalis*, sage, *Salvia officinalis*, and thyme, *Thymus vulgaris*.

GROWING HERBS

A GUIDE TO HOW, WHEN, AND WHERE

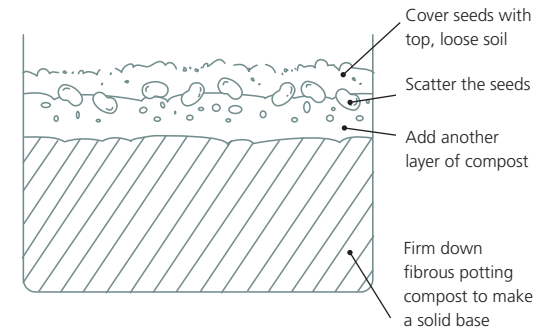
Each herb description includes brief growing instructions. Outlined on the following pages is more detailed information that will increase your chances of success.

RAISING FROM SEEDS

Many herb seeds will self-set when they fall from the plant if the earth is firm and they are just covered lightly with soil or leaves. Replicate this in the ground by forking the soil over, then gently pressing the soil down and raking the surface flat. Water so that the soil is moist. Decide whether to sow in rows or scatter sow and cover seeds. Lastly, cover with dry compost or soil because this seals in the moisture under the seeds and avoids unnecessary watering.

When using a seed tray, start by filling it with three-quarters of seed or fibrous potting compost. Then firm down, add more compost, water, sow seeds, and cover with the remaining compost. Such careful preparation makes it much easier for the tiny seed root to make its first foray into the growing medium before unfurling its first seed leaves. If the seed bed is poorly prepared, the seed's initial root may waste precious resources in gaining a secure foothold, resulting in weak top growth.

Seeds should be covered by their own depth in soil, so very fine seeds should have almost no soil cover. It is important to distribute them evenly because crowded seedlings will be liable to fungal infection (damping off) and difficult to manage



ABOVE: Setting herb seeds to grow in tray.

when it comes to potting on. Label the seed tray with the name of the herb sown, since it is easy to get trays mixed up.

Germination can vary, and some seeds come up more reliable and more quickly than others. Some need the warmth of a sunny windowsill or propagator to germinate, while others will be perfectly happy on the shelf of a cool glasshouse or in a cold frame. Some seeds, especially if they are old, may show a low rate of germination. On sprouting, the first seed leaves are soon followed by the first and second "rough" leaf stages. At this stage, thin the crop, removing all the weakest seedlings and any that you do not need, in order to prevent overcrowding. This is the best time to transplant the seedlings into individual pots before growing them on and eventually planting them into their final positions. The thinned seedlings do not have to be wasted: they can be eaten as a salad or garnish.

If sowing into gravel or a wall, find crevices where moisture will be retained. If building a

drystone wall, set the stones to slope upward on the outside to encourage the rain to run back into the wall to the herb roots, rather than just washing the foliage. If raising in a seed box you might also consider microsals, i.e. sowing densely and cutting at first and second rough leaf stage. You need a great deal more seed but the resulting “mustard and cress” pickings are classed as superfoods.

Many annual herbs are available by mail order as plug plants. If space and time are at a premium this is an excellent way of stocking up your supplies. Many cultivated varieties of herbs (cultivars) are not available as seed. In these cases, only a rooted cutting, offshoot, or division will guarantee that the characteristics of the parent herb are propagated (see Propagation, p.202).

PLANTING HERBS

Most of the herbs profiled in this book are temperate hardy and are best planted in the spring. Seek out specialist growers for maximum choice. Apart from the Internet, one of the best ways to peruse the market is to go to a major gardening or flower show.

When buying, look for healthy, disease-free herbs and check that they are not root-bound, i.e. the roots are bursting out of the pot. If you do buy a herb plant like this, take it out of the pot and gently ease the roots apart, then trim back to healthy root nodes. This encourages the herb to create a new efficient root system. Soak any new herbs for up to an hour in a bucket of water (preferably of collected rainwater) before planting.

Nutrients and water are drawn from the soil by the hairs on a root. Fibrous soil or potting compost encourages their development and shortens the time for a herb to establish itself. So whatever the ground

in which you choose to plant your herbs, give them a head start by creating a planting hole filled with good fibrous compost. A generous quantity of horticultural grit dug into the soil will also help to improve drainage, which most herbs appreciate. Altogether, this creates a healthier root run for surviving the two extremes of drought and waterlogging.

WHERE TO GROW

The general rule is a sunny, sheltered spot because that is what most herbs like best and it also captures their wonderful fragrances. The cook's essential and favorite herbs need to be grown near the kitchen door, either in the ground or in tubs, since only a dedicated enthusiast goes out by flashlight to gather in fresh herbs from the garden. Large and less frequently used herbs can be dotted about the garden or used to form a decorative herb garden.

A sunny site is defined as receiving seven or more hours of sun per day, weather permitting. Some herbs such as garlic and chives like their tops in the sun but their roots in moisture-retentive soil. The “Mediterranean” herbs such as basil, hyssop, marjoram, oregano, savory, and thyme as well as nasturtiums, will thrive in hot, dry summers. This will be essential if you want to grow a clipped myrtle or rosemary hedge.

Shady sites are defined as those not exposed to midday sun. Receiving no more than four hours' sunshine per day, this can be helpful with semitender shrubs like bay and possibly myrtle, although the latter flowers best in a sunny location. Other shade-loving herbs include mint, sorrel, sweet cicely, and sweet woodruff. Shade from trees is usually better than shade from buildings because it allows water to percolate down to the ground.

Large and vigorous annual herbs, such as angelica, lovage, and sweet cicely, tend to like a relatively moist but well-drained soil. Make a virtue of this by having a corner of “jungle herbs.” Bergamot and mint also thrive with good levels of soil moisture.

HEDGING AND TOPIARY HERBS

Ideal for formal edible designs, any of the following herbs would be suitable grown as hedging or topiary: hyssop, lavender, myrtle, and dwarf rosemary for low hedges; bay, myrtle, and rosemary provide an evergreen backdrop perfect for larger hedges; while bay, elder, and roses could be planted



BELOW: Although this is a fig tree, the principles of encouraging a straight trunk and supporting it, can equally be applied to bay, myrtle, rosemary, and even scented geraniums.

in a mixed outer hedge. For topiary, many herbs tolerate clipping into a simple ball or more exotic shapes (see p.108). Regular clipping is essential to keep the hedges or topiary in good shape.

If you are prepared to live with a gappy hedge for the first two or three years, young one- or two-year plants will establish better but while you wait, interplant the spaces with annuals or biennials. Classed by its flowers, the largest “herb” in this book is *Tilia cordata*, the lime or linden tree. Apart from in grand avenues, a single specimen or row in a smaller space could be pleached (see p.197).

EDGING HERBS

There are soft, cushion-forming herbs that will edge and spill over paths or gravel. Many will also provide fresh spring leaf color and dried flower heads through the winter. For long-term interest, plant perennials; for seasonal interest, plant annuals. Good perennials include chives, dwarf hyssop (*Hyssopus aristatus*), oregano, sage, winter savory, and thyme. The tidiest annual is bush basil, but it needs a warm climate to grow well outdoors.

TENDER HERBS

These are typically herbs from subtropical and tropical regions, requiring generally warmer temperatures and freedom from all frost. Examples include cumin, fenugreek, ginger, lemongrass, lemon verbena, scented geraniums, turmeric, and Vietnamese cilantro. This may well mean growing under glass in cooler temperate climates. Their individual requirements are described under their separate entries.

ROMAN HERBS

CLASSICAL ROOTS AND BACCHANALIAN BOUNTY



The excesses of Roman feasts are recorded in contemporary writings and colorfully portrayed in paintings such as *The Roses of Heliogabalus* by Lawrence Alma-Tadema. The Emperor Nero, who reigned from AD 54–68, started the fashion for strewing rose petals across the floor of his banqueting hall; further petals were rained gently down from the ceiling during the course of the evening. The scent was believed to enhance enjoyment and to mask the odor of wine in the guests' hair. During his four-year reign in the early 3rd century, the Emperor Heliogabalus (or Elagabalus) took excess to new heights, not least

ABOVE: *The Roses of Heliogabalus* by Lawrence Alma-Tadema. The Egyptians introduced the Romans to roses, Cleopatra had the sails of her barge washed in rose water, while the Romans had them rained on banqueters.

with roses. One fateful night he and his guests were all so intoxicated that the order to stop the gentle rain of rose petals was never given. Many slumped and slumbering inebriates simply suffocated under a deep blanket of petals. The extravagance was nearly matched by Alma-Tadema when he had regular supplies of rose petals sent from the French Riviera during the winter of 1887/88 so that he could paint the event in orgiastic detail.

Across the Roman Empire, their citizens grew and ate herbs from the shores of the Mediterranean to those of the North Sea as well as North Africa and Asia—the seeds were as important as the leaves, roots, and flowers. Roman courtyard gardens have been recreated in Europe and the United States in a typical arrangement of rectangular beds, sometimes including a vine-covered outdoor *triclinium*. This is effectively three sloping stone couches faced in concrete that are arranged to form three sides of a square. Cushions and fabrics were laid out on the couches for the comfort of the prone diners and often a small ledge was created around the inner edge for a glass of wine. The food would be laid out on a dining board that could be carried to the center for each course. In larger gardens this central area might be a water feature on which baskets of food would be floated from one diner to another—the grandest being the Canopus at Hadrian's Villa in Tivoli.

The Roman gastronome Apicius wrote *De Re Coquinaria* (*On Cookery*), which is divided into 10 books that include many herbs. Under his instruction, “field herbs” could be served raw, with broth, oil, and vinegar, or as a cooked dish by adding cumin seeds. He viewed spiced salts, as well as the usual aromatic herb seeds, as an elixir for life. He recommended parsley seeds as a substitute for those of lovage and his recipes also included seeds of marjoram, arugula, and thyme. Both bay and myrtle berries were also used in sauces and forcemeats. The recipes for *mortaria* are preparations of fresh herb leaves pounded in a mortar such as cilantro, fennel, lovage, and mint, often with honey and vinegar or broth. Although harder work, pounding herbs, rather than processing them, does create a more aromatic taste.



TASTING NOTES

Culinary herbs mentioned by Pliny the Elder

Half of the herbs in this book appear in Pliny's *Historia Naturalis*, pictured below. Many have uses beyond the kitchen but there are some surprising omissions from his list which include the following:

Culinary	Aniseed, basil, chervil, chives, cilantro, dill, fennel, garlic, lovage, marjoram, mint, myrtle, parsley, purslane, arugula, saffron, sorrel, and thyme. Also bay, hyssop, and rose (only for wine and medicinal purposes)
Medicinal	Cumin, orache, rosemary, and violet. The following were also used medicinally: aniseed, basil, chervil, cilantro, dill, fennel, garlic, lovage, myrtle, parsley, purslane, arugula, saffron, and sorrel
Wine	Juniper, lavender, and sage



Cilantro

Coriandrum sativum

Common names: Coriander, cilantro, Chinese parsley, Indian parsley

Type: Annual

Climate: Half-hardy, unheated glasshouse, mild winter

Size: 18–35in (45–90cm)

Origin: Western Mediterranean

History: There is evidence dating back to the late Bronze Age (about 2000 BC) that cilantro was one of the first flavoring herbs to be introduced from the Mediterranean into Britain. The name is said to derive from the Arabic *koris* or “bed bugs.” If the seeds are harvested too early or too green they do have a distinctively fetid smell. However, allowed to fully ripen they become aromatic and orange scented.

Cultivation: Scatter sow directly from spring onward, thinning to 8–12in spacings. Late summer sowings will provide pickings until the first frosts especially in a cold frame or with some protection.

Storage: Harvest seeds when paper-dry and brown, then store in airtight jars. Freeze whole leaves and break off as required.

Preparation: The distinctively aromatic leaves and young stems of cilantro add

a contrasting and cooling flavor as side dishes for hot spicy foods. In Indian recipes, *hara dhaniya* and *kothmir* are the terms used for fresh leaves. Slice tomatoes with red bell peppers and cilantro leaves served in plain yogurt with or without garlic. Excellent as a “bite” in green salads or added to guacamole or houmous. Add to cold chicken. Warming carrot and cilantro leaf soup tastes and looks good.

The Indian words for whole and ground coriander seeds are *dhania*, *sabut*, and *pisa*. Apart from seasoning curries, the seeds can be added to sweet pie toppings along with finely grated orange peel. When harvesting is complete, pull up the plants and cut off the small roots to chop into soups and sauces.



LEFT: It is worth growing separate plants for seed and leaf to ensure plentiful supplies of both. The seed-bearing crop can be sown in among flowers.

All early records relate to coriander seeds not leaves, which, once dried, could be stored for year-round use and were easily carried by travelers. Fresh leaves in Britain were only available to home gardeners and were praised by Beeton during the 19th century. The name “cilantro” was originally introduced by Hispanic communities into the United States while at the same time better leaf-forming varieties became available. A distillery in Cornwall, England, now produces Tarquin’s gin, which boasts an array of herbs among which they promote “... also lemon-sherberty coriander seeds from Bulgaria, rather than the hot and spicy Moroccan variety.” Other names such as Chinese parsley and Indian parsley are indicative of the popularity of its leaves in Asian cooking.

Seed varieties, as opposed to those grown for leaf production, can be sown as an annual plant among perennials. Their white umbelliferous flowers are tinged with pink and create a splendid massed effect until seed formation. The flowers become luminescent by moonlight so are ideal for the night garden. To create an ornamental haze of greens and good aroma, mix the seeds with those of caraway and chervil, then scatter sow and grow in blocks. Alternatively, mix with carrot seeds to help deter carrot root fly. Although cilantro is still a good leaf variety, the choice has widened. That said, during periods of intense dry heat all varieties will run to seed very quickly.



TASTING NOTES

Cilantro varieties to try for their leaves

The distinctive taste of cilantro is well known but it varies. The young top leaves are more strongly aromatic. As leaves mature, the texture changes and when mixed with stems will impart their flavor in cooking. The seeds must always be fully ripe or they will have a fetid aftertaste. Why not try these:

- “Calypso”** British bred. Seed producers claim that it can be cut back three times and continue to supply a succession of leaves as well as being slow to bolt.
- “Confetti”** Fine, feathery-leaved with a good flavor. It can be sown successionally into September. It is also recommended for windowsill pots.
- “Leisure”** Popular for quantity as it is slow to bolt. It has a good flavor and its flowers, when they come, are very attractive.
- “Santo”** Also slow to bolt. Has high leaf production and rapidly reaches maturity. In the right conditions it takes 55 days from sowing to harvest.
- “Slobolt”** Has the most distinctly pungent flavor that is popular for Chinese, Thai, and Mexican cooking. It is slow to bolt.

Orache

Atriplex hortensis

Common names: Orache, mountain spinach, arrach

Type: Annual

Climate: Hardy, cold winter

Size: 24in–3½ft (60cm–1m)

Origin: Asia

BELOW: Apart from green there are striking red forms, such as the deep red var. *rubra*, which can be grown among flowers. Coastal varieties are more succulent.



History: The Romans noted that only cultivated varieties should be eaten. According to Pliny, wild forms could cause “dropsy, jaundice, and pallor.” The leaves were cooked with meat and eaten raw.

Cultivation: Although tolerant of both high salinity and alkalinity, to ensure succulent leaves, sow direct into a rich moisture-retentive soil from spring onward, thinning along drills spaced at 24in. This can be repeated until late summer.

Storage: It is not worth storing orache; just save seeds for next year’s crop.

Preparation: Orache is traditionally cooked with sorrel to counteract its acidity, and they are useful in combination for white sauces served with fish. If tender, use purple orache leaves (var. *rubra*) for a more decorative dish. Use only fresh young leaves for salads.

Hyll in *The Gardener’s Labyrinth* (1577) suggested sowing in a “wel dressed and dunged earth” in December. If the soil is not frozen it would be interesting to experiment. Orache lost its popularity in Europe with the introduction of spinach in the 17th century.

The white-and-pale green-leaved varieties are the more tender, but for ornamental effect look for red- or pink-tinged varieties, such as var. *rubra*. Pinch out the tops to stop flowering. In dry weather, orache bolts rapidly and has an unpleasant taste. If you only want occasional pickings, grow as colorful border plants in rich soil and harvest fresh young leaves.

There are closely related coastal varieties that still grow wild in the UK, especially southwest Scotland, such as the spear or halberd-leaved orache, *A. prostrata* syn. *A. hastata*; frosted orache, *A. laciniata*; and Babbingtons orache, *A. glabriuscula*. They are found on and above the high tide line, typically in decomposing seaweed bands—replicating this might prove challenging if you live inland. The young leaves are succulent and salty, hence their American name of sea purslane, and are at their crunchy best at first and second rough leaf stage. Older leaves can be stripped from the stems and treated like spinach. Mark Williams of Galloway Wild Foods recommends mixing them with smoked haddock in a tart, wilted over monkfish, and with wild mushrooms. Away from the coast, *A. patula* is known in Scotland as common or inland orache.



ABOVE: The orache plant goes to seed quite readily. Its seeds should be saved for the next crop, air dried, and stored in a paper bag in a cool, dry place.

Lavender

Lavandula angustifolia

Common names: Lavender, English lavender, true lavender—there are myriad cultivars of the old English variety, *Lavandula angustifolia*, ranging in size and flower color. There are celebrated names such as “Hidcote,” “Hidcote Pink,” and “Munstead.”

Type: Evergreen shrub



Climate: Hardy, average winter

Size: 19½–40in (50–100cm)

Origin: Atlantic Islands, Mediterranean

History: The Greeks named it Nardus, believing it came from the Syrian city of Naarda, and it is one of the plants also known as Spikenard. The Egyptians used it for mummification and perfume. *Lavandula* is derived from the Latin *lavare* meaning “to wash.” Not only did the oils in lavender add fragrance to the wash, but they are also an insect repellent.

Cultivation: Lavender can be raised from seed but sometimes does not come true to type. Sow seeds in spring, direct into the soil or seed boxes, then thin or transplant to 12–19½in apart. Alternatively buy named varieties from a specialist nursery.

Storage: Lavender leaves and flowers dry excellently. Dry in sugar (see box) or store in an airtight can or jar away from the light. Flowerheads can be infused in oil or vinegar (see p.75).

Preparation: The leaves can be used as a substitute for rosemary when cooking lamb with garlic. Use both leaves and flowers in ice cream, sorbets, and cookies. Chop finely and add to marzipan candy. The flowers will give a highly scented flavor. A tisane of lavender flowers is said to ease headaches, insomnia, and gum problems.

LEFT: The lavender-covered hillsides of Provence in France are seas of purple when in flower and the heady scent is an integral part of the local cuisine.

The Romans used lavender to deter bed bugs. English lavender started to be developed commercially in the 17th century, at the same time as plants were taken to America, where the Quakers farmed lavender and other herbs. The English Romantic poet John Keats poetically captured the scent and blue flowers with the joy of deep sleep in clean sheets: “And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep, In blanched linen, smooth and lavender.” Old writers praise its virtues as a decorative plant for the garden as well as attracting bees and smelling sweet. Historical recipes for distillation, oils, and comfits were intended for medicinal use. On a culinary note, Napoleon would drink a hot cocktail of coffee and hot chocolate



ABOVE: The taste of lavender has a zest and fragrance that matches Crane’s portrayal of Perdita in *A Winter’s Tale*. Lavender flowers on cakes and desserts can make an equally dramatic stance.

sweetened with lavender sugar before going to his first wife, Josephine. In the past *L. angustifolia* has been known as *L. vera* and *L. officinalis*, all more commonly called Old English Lavender. The oils and flowers are used to scent soaps, bags, and perfumes.



TASTING NOTES

Lavender-scented sugar

Lavender-scented sugar is an easy way of infusing a perfumed tone into desserts.

Preparation time: 5 minutes, plus 1–2 weeks for standing

Serves: makes 10oz (280g) Kilner jar

You will need:

- 2oz (55g) lavender flowerheads
- 8oz (225g) superfine sugar, plus some extra for topping up

Mix the lavender flowerheads with the sugar.

Select a dry glass jar and simply layer the flowers and sugar alternately.

Cover tightly and leave in a warm room (not in full sun) for 1–2 weeks, occasionally giving the jar a shake.

Before using, sift the sugar, then return the flowerheads, and top up with more sugar.






TASTING NOTES

Lavender varieties to try

The leaves and flowers of the lavenders listed below can be used in cooking, for both their scent and flavor.

<i>L. angustifolia</i> Traditional gray-green bush with rich lavender-blue flowers. Leaves evergreen in warm winters, foliage and flowers highly aromatic, growing up to 4ft.		"Loddon Pink" Soft pink flowers, growing to 18in, drought hardy, good for hedges. Space at 12–15¾in. Introduced in the 1950s.
"Alba" Smaller lavender with gray-white leaves and white flowers. Sweetly fragrant but more tender, growing to 24 x 24in.		"Munstead" Introduced in 1902 and named for the Munstead wood gardens of Miss Gertrude Jekyll who made quantities of pot-pourri from her scented roses and lavender in the early 20 th century. Large, blue-lilac flowers contrast with small leaves. Flowers good for lavender sugar. Grows 24 x 24in.
"Blue Ice" The flowers appear to be frosted with their pale mauve florets peeping out from woolly sepals. Ideal for a white or night garden. Grows to 24 x 29½in.		
<i>L.a.</i> "Elizabeth" The dark lavender-purple florets have a royal blue appearance, sometimes described as "shocking violet," are very fragrant, on strong stems set against evergreen silvery foliage appearing in late summer. Good for hedges, as a specimen, or clipped into a cone. Grows 18 x 24in.	<i>L. x intermedia</i> "Grosso"	Also known as Fat Bud French Lavender—popular on both sides of the Atlantic with a naturally globular habit; trim after flowering and then in spring for shape. Flower spikes unusually plump. Both leaves and flowers are highly aromatic. Good for topiary, spot planting, and containers. Grows to 18–29½in x 18–29½in.
"Hidcote" Deep purple flowers; as the name suggests, it is taller than the original compact "Hidcote"; also there is the supposedly improved "Hidcote Superior," growing to over 3¼ x 3¼ft. Ensure you keep it well pruned to stop it becoming woody.	<i>L. x intermedia</i> "Seal"	Old-fashioned, tall elegant lavender; strong, long stems and pale well-scented lavender flowers. Ideal as a specimen or for tubs and pots. Grows to 35 x 35in.

As a native of Mediterranean hillsides, lavenders like sunny, well-drained sites and calcareous soil. In England, the low rainfall of Norfolk seems to meet these requirements, assisting with the successful production of commercial lavender. However, lavenders do not like summer humidity, extreme winter cold, or winter damp, which can make growing lavender difficult in some areas.

The *L. angustifolia* forms are the best for culinary purposes and can be grown as a low hedge or path edging in a sunny position. There are many more decorative species but they are neither as aromatic, nor suitable for consumption. If you want to ensure the variety, propagate from tip or heel cuttings, which will root well. The former in early summer and the latter in early fall. Lightly prune the bushes as soon as the flowers start to fade, then trim back again in early spring, being careful not to prune into old wood because lavenders do not reshoot readily from the bare stems. Lavender will also tolerate air pollution, but be careful to clean the leaves and flowers of plants growing in polluted areas before consumption. Lavender and roses grown together evoke the traditional English garden.

LEFT: *Lavandula angustifolia* is the traditional highly fragrant lavender and parent of many cultivars. The leaves infuse an aromatic, summer taste into barbecues or cookies.



FIELDS OF LAVENDER

Between 1946 and 1989 Deeside Lavender could boast that it had the most northerly lavender fields in the world. They were planted and developed on two acres in Banchory, northeast Scotland, by Andrew Inkster. Inkster was a chemist and entrepreneur. He established that the light, sandy soils of Deeside—near the River Dee in Aberdeenshire—probably in conjunction with the very long summer days, produced a lavender oil that was superior in quality to other commercial extractors, but yielded less in quantity.

In its heyday, over 25,000 visitors a year flocked to walk along Scottish fields of purple lavender mirroring those of Provence. The British National Collection of Lavenders is held at the University Botanic Gardens, Cambridge; in their taxonomy of *The Genus Lavandula*, its former Director Tim Upson and Susyn Andrews identified a cultivar of lavender that is specific to Banchory, which had been developed commercially by Inkster. In 2001, an especially hardy lavender from Banchory was named for Inkster's old home, *Lavandula* "Torramhor."



EDIBLE HERB FLOWERS

A BOUQUET GARNI OF BLOSSOMS

There are Chinese recipes for flowers as food dating back to 3000 BC. Roman cooks and writers such as Apicius used rose petals, lavender florets, and violets. Herb flower shapes and colors give texture and fragrance to the garden and to food. Edible flowers can be arranged in an “ice” plate on which you serve cold food and this is a good way of keeping the dish cool and making it attractive. Line a dish with water and submerge all or any of the herb flowers listed, freeze until thoroughly frozen to preserve, then remove from the freezer and arrange on food just before serving.

BASIL

The flower colors range from white to striated purple, depending on the variety. They also have more intense flavors than the leaves. Slice large tomatoes or put cherry tomatoes in a ramekin, then cover with basil flowers and olive oil. Bake in a hot oven for 10 minutes to infuse flavors. Also good when crystallized (see box on p.59).



ONE DO AND ONE DON'T

- Do** Pick the flowers early when the dew has dried but before the bees start to forage. Freshly picked, they can be stored in an airtight plastic container in a cool place until needed.
- Don't** Avoid adding flowers to the salad before dressing it, as the oils and vinegars spoil their bloom; sprinkle them over at the last moment.

BERGAMOT

The flowers can be gently infused in milk where they will impart a lightly scented orange flavor. Sprinkle over fruit salads.

BORAGE

Its sky-blue star flowers with fine black centers make them one of the prettiest to use. Flowering sprigs can be added to gin and tonic or pitchers of Pimms, sparkling elderflower, or simply water.

If you want to use the flowers in green or fruit salads, they taste best if you remove the hairy sepals, which come away easily when the flower is ready. The best way to achieve this is

LEFT: The influence of the Roman cook and writer Apicius continues. This image shows a kitchen of delights featured in a 1709 version of his recipes.

to hold the flower stem and then gently pinch the center and lift the flower off.

One time-consuming suggestion is to put the flowers in ice cubes. To do this effectively, you need to half fill the sections of an ice cube tray with water and allow each flower to float on top and place in the freezer. Once the cubes have started to freeze, top up with water and freeze again. That way you achieve a centrally placed flower. They can also be crystallized for cakes (see box on p.59).

CALENDULA

This is a herb defined by its flowers. The whole marigold flowerhead has been used as a poor man's saffron and you are better off using turmeric or the real thing. However, the golden petals sprinkled through salads make great eye candy. They can also be baked in bread.

CHAMOMILE

The flowers are the only culinary part of this herb, noted especially for their use in relaxing tisanes.

CHIVES

The best tasting *Allium* flowers are those of chives, whether purple, pink, or white with tiny firm opalescent onions at their centers.

Firmly holding the flowerhead in your hand, twist at the base and the florets will all separate. Sprinkle in salads for a delicious mild crunchy scallion taste.

Pick when young. You can tell at a glance if they are passed their best as the central florets will have darkened in color and look shriveled, and the taste will be harsh, dry, and hot.

BELOW: Marigold petals, such as the pictured *Calendula officinalis*, can be used to run red gold through salads, rice, and fruit dishes, imparting a subtle, herby flavor.



CORIANDER SEEDS

The underlying orange peel taste of the seeds is more distinct in the fresh creamy white flowers, so use them to decorate sweet orange salads or sauces. Also add to stir-fries.



TASTING NOTES

Herb bread

Herb bread can be made the same way as garlic bread. Delicious with soup or cheese and salad.

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 5–10 minutes

Serves: 1–2 people

You will need:

- 1 baguette or French loaf
- 2 cloves of crushed garlic (optional)
- ½ tsp salt
- 4oz (100g) soft butter
- Handful of chives, coarsely chopped, plus any or all of the following: chervil, fennel, lovage, marjoram, oregano, parsley, and thyme

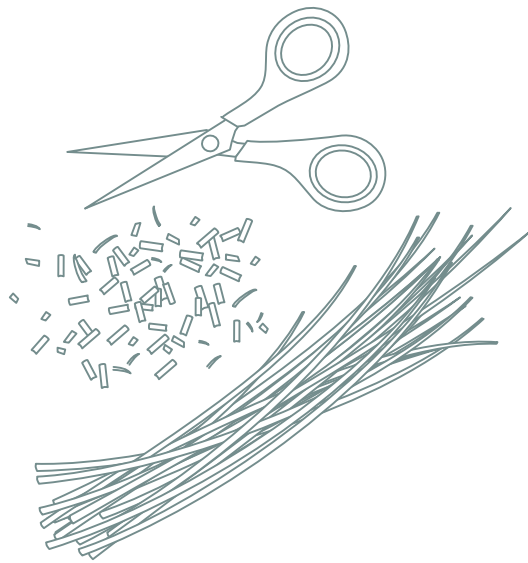
Preheat a conventional oven to 400°F (200°C / gas mark 6 / fan 180°C).

Chop the herbs and mix in the with butter.

Make wide diagonal cuts into the loaf and spread garlic butter evenly into each cut. Any leftover butter can be spread along the top of the loaf and spread only between cuts.

Wrap in foil and cook for 5 minutes or more. To test whether it is done: the butter will be absorbed into the loaf and the herbs should still be green but hot, almost falling out of the bread.

different dishes including any of their own. The flowerheads are pretty and the individual florets are a gentle introduction to the more forceful taste of scallions.



ABOVE: Once a clump of chives has flowered, harvest them and cut them back to the base to encourage new fresh spikes. Wash and use scissors for a fast preparation straight to the plate.

All are rich in sulfur. Chives are a companion plant for carrots, roses, and apples but should not be grown with peas and beans.

CHIVES FOR THE YOUNG GARDENER

Given the right conditions there can be a magic endlessness to chives, which makes them the perfect plant for a child or indeed group of children to hone their horticultural skills. Just follow the general sowing instructions (see p.8) straight into individual pots—the small shiny black seeds should be scattered over the surface and lightly covered.

The pots can be kept on a windowsill for several months before needing repotting, or be grown in a garden container, or planted out in the ground. The young gardener can then harvest the fine trimmings to add the final touches to a host of

Lemon verbena

Aloysia citrodora

Common names: Lemon verbena, Herba Louisa

Type: Deciduous shrub

Climate: Half-hardy, unheated glasshouse, mild winter

Size: 10ft (3m)

Origin: Argentina and Chile

History: 17th-century Spanish explorers introduced lemon verbena into Spain from South America where it was named for Princess Louisa of Parma, hence *Herba Louisa*. The word *Aloysia* is actually a corruption of “Louisa.”

Cultivation: A tender, small deciduous tree that thrives in dry warmth. Lemon verbena flowers abundantly in regions with a Mediterranean climate. It can be grown outdoors in colder regions, where it is less likely to flower.

Storage: Dry the leaves when flowering, the time of their strongest aroma.

Preparation: The leaves and flowers are not suitable for consumption but are perfect for infusing a sherberty-lemon flavor. Remove before serving,

GROWING SUGGESTION

Whether in the ground or a pot, make sure you place lemon verbena so that you gently brush past it on a regular basis. The lemon scent is gloriously refreshing.

similar to bay leaves. Pour boiling water over fresh or dried leaves for a tisane. Leave to infuse into syrup to pour over fruit or add to desserts. Add leaves to the base of a cake mixture before baking, then peel off. Add them to a finger bowl when eating seafood.



ABOVE: The flowers of lemon verbena are very similar to those of vervain but only appear in very warm, sheltered situations. Tisanes made from the leaves and flowers are often called lemon vervaine.

“The only species of this genus known in Britain is *A. citriodora*, ... a half-hardy shrub, with panicles of small pinkish-white flowers, and very fragrant leaves, which fall off in winter.”

The Ladies Companion to the Flower Garden, (1846) Mrs. Jane Loudon

Introduced into England in 1784 as *Verbena triphylla*, it was renamed *Aloysia*, then *Lippia citriodora*, and is once more *Aloysia*. Its common name derives from the penetrating lemon scent of its lanceolate shiny leaves that is released without crushing, and verbena-like flowers. In fact, it is the source of verbena oil. Not to be mistaken for *Lippia graveolens*, Mexican oregano, and *L. micromera*, Jamaican oregano, both tender herbs with a distinctive taste of origanum.

Aloysia should be planted in a rich but light soil that is well drained, warm, and sheltered—a south- or west-facing wall is ideal. In colder areas it will grow well in a pot, but keep it virtually unwatered after the leaves drop in fall. It thrives outdoors in English coastal locations such as the Isle of Wight and East Anglia. The parchment-like quality of its



ABOVE: Lemon verbena is gloriously lemon scented. As you brush past, it releases a fragrance that is perfect for a refreshing tisane.

trunk and branches in winter make it hard to believe that it is still alive, but stay confident and you will be rewarded by the sight of the new bright green buds. As the first buds start to swell in late spring, start regular watering and, if necessary, re-pot. It roots well from cuttings of young wood taken in early summer. Be mindful to take these cuttings as early as possible to give them the maximum amount of time for root development before the fall. The newly rooted lemon verbenas will need protection until well established. Prune to shape in early summer and keep the prunings to dry—the glorious lemon scent is wonderful about the house or on barbecues.



HERBS AT NIGHT

SCENT AND SAVOR BY MOONLIGHT

A summer's evening in the garden can be enhanced in several ways. First, an area enclosed by a canopy, trees, climbers, or a courtyard ensures that the warmth lasts and contains the fragrance from scented plants. The senses of sight and smell work closely together, whether in the fading light or by moonlight—silver, white, gray, purple, and pale pink leaves and flowers radiate attractively. There are many herbs that will draw the eye and reward with their scent. At a distance both angelica and burdock add texture to the night vision. Finally, don't forget lemongrass for its mosquito-detering properties.

DRAWING IN THE EYE

Purple sage is best planted in blocks between paving, among plantings or in pots.

Use “Blue Ice” lavender for attractive mounds with gray-green to silver of the leaves and flowers, adding architectural notes. Plant so that you brush past them to release the scent. Crush leaves around seating as the scent deters insects. Highly scented, mint and its white variegated forms are equally invaluable. Wipe wooden surfaces with leaves to deter flies.

The white mottle-leaved types of nasturtium such as “Alaska” and the pale butter-yellow

BELOW: Nasturtiums will scramble colorfully with a plenitude of edible flowers from late summer until the first frosts.



flowers of the trailing “Moonlight” will gleam at night. Also beautiful in the night garden are the white-flowering forms of chives. You can snip the leaves and flowers of chives to sprinkle over tapas or suppers.

Mint

Mentha

Common names: Mint

Type: Herbaceous perennial

Climate: Hardy, very cold winter

Size: 12–35in (30–90cm)

Origin: Eurasia, Africa

History: Legend recounts that a young nymph, Menthe, caught the eye of Pluto, the god of the underworld. Pluto's jealous consort Persephone



took prompt action to put a stop to such attentions. She metamorphosed Menthe into a scented herb thriving in the damp soils around the entrance of the underworld.

Cultivation: Mint is rightly classed as a thug. Given a good, moist soil it will rampage across your plot. However, it is an invaluable culinary herb. So either grow it alone in suitable conditions, or lift it every other year, cut back to new vigorous roots, and replant. Grow mint in a large pot and submerge in soil up to just below its rim.

Storage: Pot up some roots for the glasshouse or windowsill to have fresh leaves in winter. Dry or freeze leaves before flowering. Use flowering stems for mint vinegar (see p.75).

Preparation: Sprigs of mint can be used in pitchers of cold drinks, as a digestive tisane, or boiled with new potatoes. The many scents of mint can be infused to make a refreshing mint sorbet (see p.59) and finely chopped fresh mint transforms a chilled summer pea soup and provides aromatic contrast in hearty ham and dried-pea soups. The classic cooling side dish for hot curries, *Raita*, combines cucumber, mint, and yogurt. Added to blackcurrants after cooking, mint acts like a secret ingredient that magically enhances the flavor of the fruit; sprinkle over a salad of fresh orange slices; or add to cold chocolate mousses or ice creams.

LEFT: All parts of mint above the ground can be used. Classic combinations are young, fresh leaves in salads and in yogurt, or bruised stems for infusions and vinegars.



TASTING NOTES

Mint varieties to try

The distinctive taste of mint can also strike up interesting variations from fruity to confectionery, sweet scents to high perfumes that match its wide selection of leaf and stem colors.



<i>M. australis</i>	Native Australian mint has a strong peppermint scent and was used for tea by Aboriginal peoples. Colonial settlers used it in lieu of European varieties.	<i>M. × piperita</i> f. <i>citrata</i>	Known as lemon mint, <i>M. Eau de Cologne</i> mint and bergamot mint. As the common names suggest, this cultivar is highly scented and perfect for sorbets and Indian desserts.
<i>M. × gracilis</i>	Known as Gingermint or redmint—attractive, red-tinged stems and leaves with a sweet scent, ideal for sorbets. There is also a yellow striated form “Variegata.”	<i>M. × smithiana</i>	Red raripila mint with attractively purple-tinged ovate leaves that are sweetly scented. Good for tisanes and sorbets. Attractive in salads.
<i>M. × piperita</i>	Digestive peppermint with purple-tinged leaves from which oil of peppermint is extracted.	<i>M. spicata</i>	Formally <i>M. viridis</i> , the spearmint for classic mint sauce, it has long, bright green leaves. The variety <i>crispa</i> is more ornamental and equally useful in sauce and salads.
<i>M. × piperita</i> “Chocolate”	A sweet-scented foliage that literally shines in a sunny situation in moisture-retentive soil. It is also said to be deer resistant.	<i>M. suaveolens</i>	Downy-leaved applemint, as the name suggests, has a gentler minty, slightly fruity taste. It is preferred by many for mint sauce but is too downy for salads. “Variegata” has marginal white markings.



“Do you mean to say,’ said my father, ‘that they really eat mint with lamb?’
I said they did, and that it was delicious. He shook his head thoughtfully.

‘What a funny country,’ he said.”

Myself, My Two Countries, (1936) X.M. Boulestin

Mint thrives in moist soil and partial shade. The Roman poet Publius Ovidius Naso called mint the “herb of hospitality,” a perfect description for a plant that infuses refreshing coolness into hot or cold water. Along with this, the Romans believed it increased intelligence and stimulated the appetite. The Old Testament records that tithes of mint, anise, and cumin were paid by the Pharisees. The flavor of mint itself seems able to metamorphose to suit its culinary host, from British mint sauce with lamb, to peppermint tea in North Africa, to Vietnamese salads.

Two mints that are no longer used for culinary purposes are the best for deterring flies and insects when eating—very important for enhancing the gourmet experience of meals al fresco and inside where there are no fly screens. Pennyroyal, *M. pulegium*, appears regularly in old recipes but it is a strong abortifacient and has other contraindications; its overwhelming peppermint scent has a detrimental effect on the flavor of foodstuffs. Its virtue lies instead in its deterrent value: flies simply avoid any area where pennyroyal has been crushed. It likes a shady moist spot. Gather some leaves and wipe them over the table or gently crush the stems before arranging them in small jars near the food to be served. It is short lived but vigorous, low growing with attractive mauve flowers set against purple-tinged green shiny leaves. The tiny leaved Corsican mint, *M. requienii*, will colonize gaps and joints in paving, forming a green “mortar” covered in a haze of tiny mauve flowers. Like pennyroyal, it prefers shade and will certainly not thrive in full sun, and has a strong peppermint scent.



LEFT AND ABOVE: Watercolor of mint by Pierre François Ledoux, c. 1790. There is a vast variety of mint to explore—try peppermint (*Mentha × piperita*), spearmint (*M. spicata*), applemint (*M. suaveolens*), or Eau-de-Cologne mint (*M. × piperita* “Citrata”) to give a subtle twist to the flavor of food and drinks.

Bergamot

Monarda didyma

Common names: Bergamot, bee balm, monarda, Oswego tea

Type: Herbaceous perennial

Climate: Hardy, average winter

Size: 24–59in (60–150cm)

Origin: North America

History: The common name relates to the leaves, which have the fragrance of the bergamot orange, the zest of which is used to flavor Earl Grey tea. The American botanist John Bartram recorded plants growing by Lake Oswego in 1744. He sent seeds to the merchant Philip Collinson living in London, where its scarlet shaggy flowers soon made it a popular garden plant.

Cultivation: Sow the perennial herbaceous species in spring in a cold frame; transplant when large enough to handle. Established plants can be divided in the fall. It will thrive in any soil, preferably in full sun, but grows best if the ground is mulched and dug over with manure or garden compost, as this improves the moisture retention. Divide every three years.

Storage: Dry leaves and flowers, then store in a dry place away from dust and light.



ABOVE: Bergamots are excellent for flavoring drinks—hot and cold, water, milk, or punch. The scent is redolent of the bergamot orange for which it is named.

Preparation: Pour boiling water over fresh or dried flowers to make Oswego tea; it yields a deep red color. Alternatively, steep in syrup and pour over red fruits. Pour hot milk over leaves, stand for 5 minutes, strain, and drink. Leaves add a fragrant seasoning for game and other meat dishes, including goat. The gently fragrant lemon bergamot (*M. citriodora*) makes a good tisane or infusion for fruit salad.

“[The Indian women in Oneida] engaged in carefully collecting and preserving the flowers in baskets. They use them in the shape of a tea, and call the plant O-jee-che—the fiery or flaming plant.”

Professor Benjamin Smith Barton of Philadelphia, (1807)

from *Plants of Colonial Williamsburg*, (1979) Joan Parry Dutton



LEFT: Oswego tea made from bergamot was a popular North American alternative to black tea, especially following the uprising known as the Boston Tea Party in 1773.

Nicolás Monardes (1493–1588) had been the first to publish details of the medicinal flora of North America in 1571. The lengthy title was shortened to *Joyfull Newes out of the New-Founde World* in its 1577 English translation. Bartram was also in correspondence with Carl Linnaeus, who decided to immortalize Monardes's contribution by creating the name *Monarda*. The common name of Oswego tea stems from its use as a brew by both the Native Americans and colonists. The popularity of Oswego tea increased after the 1773 American nonviolent protest against the British, known as the “Boston Tea Party.” Jekyll recommended drifting the red forms of bergamot through summer herbaceous borders for additional color.

The annual, tender, lemon or lemon-scented bergamot, *M. citriodora* (sometimes also known as lemon mint), should be sown directly into the ground in spring and they prefer sandy soils. The plant has paler green leaves with soft purple flowers and luminescent, almost white, bracts. It is especially attractive to bees and butterflies. Bergamot leaves are subject to powdery mildew, so ensure the bergamot is not under stress by keeping the soil moist and mulching with well-rotted organic matter; some varieties are more resistant than others. The wild bergamot, *M. fistulosa*, has a much broader growing range that makes it invaluable for many American gardeners. The mint-leaved bergamot or Oregano de la Sierra, *M. fistulosa* var. *menthifolia*, as the common name suggests, has a strong flavor of oregano and is popular with chefs in the southwest United States. It has gray-green foliage and pale lavender flowers.



TASTING NOTES

Bergamot: a feast for the eyes

The flavor of bergamot is more or less a constant, but the range of flower colors provide decorative choices. Britain's national collection of monardas holds 87 cultivars including ones raised from European and American suppliers.

Red “Adam” has red flowers, fragrant foliage, and withstands dry conditions better. Grows to 35in tall.

“Cambridge Scarlet” is a reliable old variety.

“Fireball” has deep red globe-shaped flowers set against dark green fragrant foliage. Compact 14 x 24in.

“Jacob Cline” has showy, large, long flowering red blooms. The fragrant foliage is one of the best for mildew resistance. Pinch or cut back in early summer to get a second flowering. Grows to 47in tall.

**Pink/
Purple** Favorites are “Beauty of Cobham” which has pale pink flowers, while those of “Croftway Pink” are deeper.

“Blaustrumpf” or “Blue Stocking” has deep lilac to purple-colored flowers and fragrant foliage. Grows to 5ft tall.

“Purple Rooster” is an American cultivar with imperial purple flowers set against clean, mildew-resistant foliage. Grows to 35in tall.

White “Schneewittchen” or “Snow Maiden” has whorls of long-lasting, tufted white flowers set against green bracts.

HERB FLAVORS

SIMPLE AND COMPOUND

The art of simpling is learning and identifying the individual properties of one herb or simple; the art of cooking is knowing when to use the flavor of one herb, or a compound of complementary aromatics. It is as important to identify and use a simple variant of lemon as it is to combine them, as described under *salads*, *fine herbes*, *bouquet garni*, or *herbes Provençales*. The list below acts as a flavor-first guide to the individual aromatic qualities that herbs provide in each mouthful or infusion in cooking.

LEMON

Most of the lemon-scented herbs indicate in their common names that they have this property, not forgetting the lemon vinegar taste of sorrel leaves. The lemon fruit with its thick rind and many segments within seems to equate with the myriad notes of lemon in woody and soft herbs. The quintessential lemon-scented herb has to be lemongrass, where all parts of it can be consumed for this taste, acting deliciously either as a main component in a dish or as a mere flavoring. The favorite for my sense of smell is the gloriously scented lemon verbena, where every part exudes the fragrance of the finest lemon bath products. Its leaves and bark impart a citrus fragrance to tea, tisane, and pot pourri.

The easiest and hardest must be lemon balm, *Melissa officinalis*, which has plenty of attractive cultivars: “All Gold,” “Aurea,” and “Gold Leaf.”



The young fresh leaves have the best zing but the stems can be used on barbeques or when broiling or baking fish. Almost as vigorous and useful is the lemon mint, *Mentha x piperita* f. *citrata* which gives a new twist to sorbets and Pimms. The American cultivar “Hillary’s Sweet Lemon” was named for the former US Senator Hillary Clinton.

There are several cultivars of lemon-scented thyme, *Thymus pulegioides*, which often prove to be longer lived than the common thyme. Apart from the reliable cushion-forming type, there are the gold-leaved “Archers Gold” and “Aureus” as well as the delicately candid white variegated “Silver Posie” and “Silver Queen.”

Basil and bergamot, both tender annuals, have a delicacy of scent that matches their cultural requirements. There are several lemon basil: the *Ocimum basilicum* “Mrs. Burns’ Lemon” of Mexican parentage; and “Sweet Dani,” of which the pure and clean citrus-lemon flavor is described as being “like a growing field of lemon drops.” Also, there is Indonesian Kemangie (*Ocimum x africanum*) and the Thai lime basil (*Ocimum americanum*). The light green-leaved and mauve-flowered is the only lemon-fragranced bergamot (*Monarda citriodora*).

ANISEED

Apart from its namesake, the anise (*Pimpinella anisum*), the fresh green seeds of sweet cicely taste like traditional aniseed balls. There are anise variations to be found in the leaves of chervil, fennel, and sweet cicely. The anise basil (*Ocimum basilicum* “Horapha”) carries the flavor in both its reddish purple leaves and flowers and has a dwarf form called “Horapha Nanum.”

PERFUME

Fragranced food is redolent of Middle Eastern cuisine where rose petals and rosewater are frequently used, and the sun-ripened herbs used in Provençal food are imbued with a characteristic woody perfume. Apart from thymes, especially the orange-scented *Thymus fragrantissimus*, the aromatics of hyssop and lavender are key ingredients in Mediterranean summer perfumed dishes. The heady, sweet muscat grape taste of elderflowers and orangey spice of bergamot leaves are excellent infused into drinks. And let us not forget the elusive perfumes of the humble sweet violet.

HOT AND PEPPERY

This description links four very different herbs. There is the radish-hot and peppery bite in the leaves of salad arugula, whereas nasturtium leaves and flowers have more of a dry pepperiness. Horseradish sauces are marketed on scales of hotness and it is at its hottest when simply served with vinegar. The flowers have a gentle afterburn. Freshly grated ginger has a taste that heats you up when it is cold and conversely cools you down in hot weather.

GINGERY

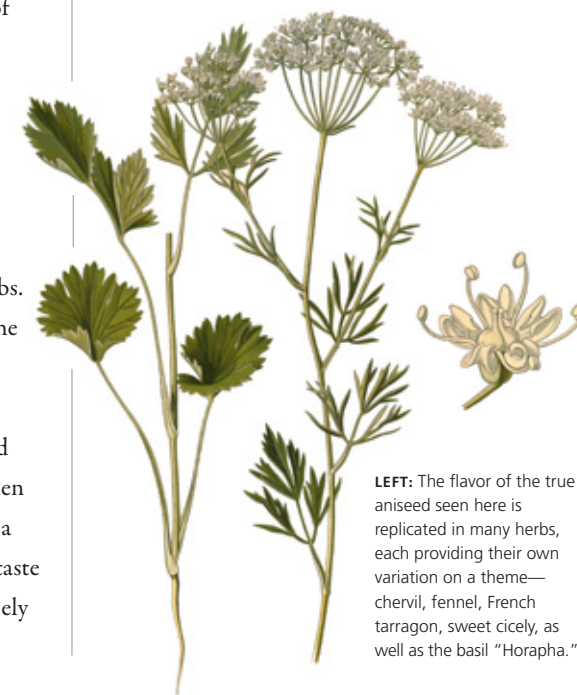
Apart from the qualities of ginger, its taste can be gently appreciated in gingermint, *Mentha x gracilis*, and a cultivar of rosemary “Green Ginger” whose normal resinous taste has additional spicy notes.

COOL

The cucumber qualities of the green and golden purslanes make them invaluable cooling additions to a salad—green, mixed, couscous, or rice. The lemon tang of the small, buckler-leaved sorrel makes a refreshing contrast with cold fish salads.

SMOKY

Smoking salmon and other fish is a delicious tradition, and there is something similarly smoky but more aromatic in the difference between the leaves and seeds of dill. French tarragon imparts a more smoky flavor when cooked than when raw.



LEFT: The flavor of the true aniseed seen here is replicated in many herbs, each providing their own variation on a theme—chervil, fennel, French tarragon, sweet cicely, as well as the basil “Horapha.”