



FEBRUARY 26, 2009



THE HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA BATON ROUGE UNIT

MISSION: The Herb Society of America is dedicated to promoting the knowledge, use and delight of herbs through educational programs, research, and sharing the experience of its members with the community.

VOLUME II, NUMBER 3

BAY LAUREL, *Laurus nobilis* 2009 Herb of the Year

Presentations

MYTHOLOGY- Kathy Mullin

GROWING – Butch Robichaux

MEDICINAL - Dr. Callahan

COOKING - Melinda Winans & Rita Salman

CRAFTING – Karen Fairchild



The Baton Rouge Herb Study Group, organized in 1989, became the Baton Rouge Unit of the Herb Society of America, Inc. in October 1991.

Officers:

Rita Salman, Chairperson

Lori Mann, Vice-Chairperson

Kathy Mullin, Treasurer

Sondra Thornhill, Secretary

Introduction *Laurus nobilis*. Say it again. It has such a nice ring to it, conjuring fantasies of kings and their subjects and tales of the ancient Olympics. Call it by its homelier name, bay laurel, and it evokes the memory of hot soup on a cold rainy day. Bay is an aromatic robust plant native to the Mediterranean, with glossy, dark green leaves that are smooth and leathery. The tree's common name of bay, as in bay laurel and sweet bay, comes from *baie* & *bacca*, the Middle French & Latin words for "berry", referring to the small purple-black fruits that form on mature trees that have not been heavily pruned.

<http://www.herbsociety.org>

Medicinal Comments

Diabetes: I enjoy the bay-bean Dia Beanie soup with the bay "insulinade" that I proposed in the *The Green Pharmacy*. Start out with Anderson's mix: bay leaf, cinnamon, cloves and turmeric. Add a pinch or two of each of them to a teapot and steep for ten minutes. I'd also add fenugreek which is well proven and a pinch of coriander and cumin (evidence not so strong). In animal studies, both have been shown to lower blood sugar somewhat and the rosemary sage and tarragon go as well with the insulinade. Don't use sugar with the tea and instead add stevia, a non-nutritive sweetener which has its own hypoglycemic phytochemicals.

Arthritis: Bay contains half a dozen natural COX-2-Inhibitors that your genes may have know for thousands or millions of years, depending on whether you are faith based (bay does occur in the Holy Land) or evolutionist. (Natural COX-2-Inhibitors, like the synthetics Celebrex or Vioxx, can relieve inflammation.)

*Dr. James A. "Jim" Duke
(past honorary president of HSA)*

From The Desk of Rita:

IMPORTANT! Grow Your Own Herbs, buy plants from HSABR and the money stays here to put on programs like this.

The following regular monthly meetings are free, open to the public, and held at the Baton Rouge Garden Center at 7:00 PM unless otherwise noted.

**March 26
Native American Herbs**
**April 23
Passionate Platter**
**May 28
Eat your Flowers**
**September 24
What's "Bugging you?"**
**October 22
Craft**

The HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA, Inc. was founded in 1933 for the purpose of furthering the knowledge and use of herbs.

*The BR Garden Center is located at 7950 Independence Blvd.

QUESTIONS: Rita Salman, 225-291-5684, ritasalman@cox.net



HERB SOCIETY BOOKS:

- The Herb Society of America New Encyclopedia of Herbs & Their Uses, by Deni Brown
- The Herb Society of America's Essential Guide to Growing and Cooking with Herbs, edited by Katherine K. Schlosser.

Bay Syrup RECIPE:

Herb syrups are wonderful flavor essences that can be added in place of the liquid in cakes or pie fillings, and drizzled on all sorts of baked goods. They are good on fruits and fruit salads, used in beverages, and used to make sorbets. My favorite use for bay syrup is on fresh seasonal fruit—peaches and nectarines are my first choice, although the syrup also is lovely on apples, pears, oranges and pineapple. It is delightful added to a piña colada or vanilla ice cream.

This syrup is sweet and concentrated; often I make it less so by using 2 parts water to 1 part sugar (I use this less-sweet syrup in my herbal libations and on fresh fruit).

- 1-1/2 cups water
 - 1-1/2 cups sugar
 - 10 to 12 bay leaves
1. Combine water and sugar in small saucepan. Add herb leaves and bruise gently against the side of the pan with a spoon. Place over moderate heat and bring to a boil.
 2. Cover, remove from heat and let stand for at least 30 minutes; it is best if allowed to cool to room temperature.
 3. Remove leaves and squeeze into the syrup to extract their flavor. This syrup can be made ahead and refrigerated for about 10 days, or frozen for up to 6 months.

Makes about 3 cups.

February/March 2009 Herb Companion Magazine, Susan Belsinger

Did You Know?

Bouquet garni is the French name for a bundle of cooking herbs tied together with string and used to flavor slow-cooked dishes. Often the sprigs of thyme and parsley are wrapped in a large bay leaf, tied and hung to dry and stored in a cool, dark place for using throughout the winter months. *From HSA ONLINE GUIDE*



Bay can be a natural insect deterrent. Try putting some dried leaves in the flour or sugar bowl, with whole grains, or stuff them in the clean toe of an old pair of stockings and use as a sachet in pantries. You could even tape some leaves to the sides of kitchen cupboards, drawers and shelves. *Herb Companion*

Commercially dried bay should be bought carefully from a spice merchant as leaves can be old and fairly tasteless. Growing your own bay and using it fresh or drying it yourself is the way to go. Bay leaves are a very useful resource for creating a wide variety of herbal projects, wreaths and decorations. The fragrant, sturdy leaves dry beautifully and hold their shape indefinitely when protected from the elements.

www.herbsociety.org

The classic Laurel has won a place
In the annals of the human race
And stands for success in all the arts.
In formal gardens she imparts
An elegant note, She also knows
How to garnish hotels, and auto shows,
Serves as garlands where pictures are hung,
Decorates halls where songs are sung.
Her accomplishments are never-ending,
She takes a hand a bar rum blending
And, despite her regal manner and looks,
Talented Laurel helps the cooks.

L. Young Correthers

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