

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 5 * SUMMER 2005

A Newsletter by Joseph Pattin

Photo Gallery: www.GardenRetreats.net

New Email: joe@gardenretreats.net

THIS ISSUE:

The Kitchen Herb Garden:

- 1. From the Garden to Your Kitchen Table*
- 2. Herb Gardening Made Real Simple*
- 3. The Herb List*
- 4. Joe's Recipe from the Garden*

Summer is a wonderful time to be outside basking in the sunshine and soaking up the delights of nature. BBQ's, fresh corn on the cob, lushes salads and soothing iced teas bring fond memories of carefree sunny days at a backyard feast. The very best 5 star restaurants have a secret strategy – cook with fresh picked ingredients! Why not embellish your kitchen recipes by adding a *pinch of zest* to your meals with *fresh* home grown herbs? Summer is the time to create a delightful culinary herb garden.

1. FROM THE GARDEN TO YOUR KITCHEN TABLE. Where is the perfect location for the herb garden? The *first important success factor* is to place the herbs within easy access to your kitchen or close to the BBQ. Small is beautiful so you may begin with a ceramic pot or two if that's all the room you have on your patio. It is essential that you choose pottery that does not contain lead or other heavy metals; just ask the pottery supplier for pots that are *certified safe for growing food*. A small plot of ground 2 feet wide by 10 feet long is a good size to get you started with a basic collection of fresh herbs.
2. HERB GARDENING MADE REAL SIMPLE. Most culinary herbs require sunshine, excellent drainage, warmth and basic soil amendments. The *second important success factor* is to create a *raised bed* that is anywhere from 6 to 18 inches above the surrounding garden. Locate some bricks, cobble stone blocks, or large rocks to build a perimeter edge around your planting area. Increase the top soil layer, add several inches of garden sand and compost to the bed and till it in with a digging fork. Smooth out the soil and you're ready for the new plants. Select well established plants from your local nursery from the list below. Be sure to prune roots that are container bound before planting. Apply a generous layer of bark or wood chips to cover the soil and water plants thoroughly.

3. THE HERB LIST. There are hundreds of wonderful herbs to choose from so here is an abridged practical list of herbs suitable for our Mediterranean climate and hopefully for your taste buds.
 - a. **ROSEMARY** (*Rosmarinus officinalis* ‘Blue Boy’). Size: 12”x18”; Sun: full; Water: weekly once established. This herb’s name means “dew of the sea” and is very hardy. Not all Rosemary varieties are flavorful so be sure to choose a dwarf culinary plant from your nursery.
 - b. **BASIL** (*Ocimum basilicum*). Size: 8”-12”x12”; Sun: full with afternoon shade; Water: 3 times per week. Keep pinching off the flowers so it will keep producing leaves all summer. Harvest the top 1/3 of plant or select a few choice leaves.
 - c. **PARSLEY** (*Petroselinum crispum*). Size: 24”x24” or larger; Sun: full with afternoon shade; Water: 3 times per week. Harvest a full stem or cut tops off.
 - d. **GARLIC CHIVES** (*Allium Tuberosa*). Size: 12”x12”; Sun: full with afternoon shade; Water: 3 times per week. The beautiful pink-purple flowers on a gray grass like foliage, makes an attractive boarder plant. Harvest entire leaf and chop up for salads and to sauté.
 - e. **OREGANO** (*Origanum vulgare*). Size: 24”x24” or larger; Sun: full; Water: 1 to 3 times per week. Pinch flowers and strip leaves from stems.
 - f. **SAGE** (*Salvia Officinalis*). Size: 24”x24”; Sun: full; Water: 1 to 3 times per week. There are many types of Sage plants available so it can be fun to collect a few varieties; however, some can grow to be quite large.
 - g. **THYME** (*Thymus vulgaris*). Size: 12”x12”; Sun: full or part shade; Water: weekly once established. This herb also has many varieties with many exotic scents. Can be used for ground cover or boarder plant.
4. JOE’S RECIPE FROM THE GARDEN. Well, recipes are a point of departure so be creative and experiment with these culinary herbs.
 - a. **ROSEMARY CHICKEN.**
 - i. Place 1/2 teaspoon of Oregano into an oiled (Olive) frying pan.
 - ii. Add 2 to 5 cloves of garlic diced or $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of Garlic Chives.
 - iii. Add 1 handful of chopped Basil with chopped Parsley and sauté with other herbs until lightly brown.
 - iv. Insert sprigs of Rosemary Leaves into small cuts into Chicken (this helps flavor to penetrate into the meat).
 - v. Place Chicken pieces into pan and scoop up sauted herbs to cover Chicken. Sprinkle black pepper on top. Saute for a few minutes.
 - vi. Add enough water to cover up the sides of Chicken. Cook-poach for 20 minutes with a tight lid covering the pan.
 - vii. Add seasonal chopped vegetables like Broccoli, Zucchini and Cherry Tomatoes around the edges of the Chicken and let simmer 10 minutes or until done.
 - viii. Serve with your favorite beverage.

Congratulations: You are now a world class chef in the making! Enjoy the aroma of fresh herbs next time you prepare a meal.