

Enchanting Aromas

Angela England and Linda Bertaut

Nature heals in many ways. Most of us have felt the sense of renewal that comes from walking through a garden filled with fragrant flowers, or sitting under a massive tree, shaded from the burning rays of the sun. Indigenous peoples worldwide believe that each plant has a spirit we can communicate with, to ask for their help in healing.

You can tap into "plant spirit" by keeping aromatic plants around your home or wherever you spend time. Whether fresh or dried, herbs and plants can delight the senses and offer varied health benefits.

aids digestion, and improves appetite. Good for circulation to the surface of the skin. Induces perspiration. Good as an overall tonic.

Jasmine: Magical--Helps menopause symptoms. Antibacterial, antioxidant, and aphrodisiac. May lower bad cholesterol when used in teas.

Lavender: Healing--Calming and sedative. Relieves anxiety, depression, and exhaustion. Helps with digestion, headaches, and skin problems. Antiseptic, antibiotic, and a natural detoxifier.

Lemon Balm: Joyful--A member of the mint family, it was used for centuries to

A truly happy person is one who can enjoy the scenery on a detour.

-Author Unknown



Enhance any area with aromatic plants.

Choosing Favorites

Here are some popular herbs, as well as their purported health benefits. When choosing your favorites, take a few minutes to breathe in the scents and try to identify what the aroma does for you. Caution: If you have plant allergies, some herbs may cause a reaction.

Chamomile: Euphoric--Soothes nerves,

treat melancholy. Soothes the nerves and helps with indigestion. May be used topically to reduce redness and swelling.

Peppermint: Uplifting--Calms the stomach and helps with digestion. Increases secretion of bile. Antifungal, highly nutritive, and can alleviate

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symptoms of allergies and asthma.

Red Clover: Cleansing--Blood purifier, sedative, and good for the nerves. May be used topically to help acne, psoriasis, and skin sores.

Rose Hips: Fortitude--High in vitamin C and bioflavonoids. Antioxidant. Also contains vitamins A and B, essential fatty acids, and lycopene.

Rose Petals: Beautiful--Antibacterial, antidepressant, and aphrodisiac. Rose water is beneficial to the skin.

Rosemary: Awakening--Highly nutritive, with vitamins A, C, and B complex. Boosts the immune system. Antifungal, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and antiseptic.

Sage: Wisdom--Grounding. Antibacterial and astringent. Helps with digestion; good as a gargle for sore throats; relieves sore gums; helps reduce hot flashes. Can be used as a rinse to darken grey hair.

Growing Your Own Herbs

In addition to having these wonderful herbs surround you, there can be an additional cost-saving benefit with growing them yourself. Fresh basil can cost more than \$4 for a small sprig, while a \$1 packet of seeds will provide fresh basil for the summer months, as well as enough basil to dry and use in the autumn and winter. Plus, you can find varieties of basil via seed you simply can't purchase otherwise (think lemon and even chocolate basil), creating a one-of-a-kind experience for pennies on the dollar.

Other herbs that grow easily from seed include chamomile, lemon balm, sage, and thyme. Some herbs, however, do not grow well from seeds, including lavender, lemon verbena, and mint. Lavender, though, is an economical plant in another way--it is a perennial plant that will come back year after year, such as rose, sage, and thyme. Here are some growing tips that are especially helpful if you're working with a small space:

Choose containers carefully

Plants that enjoy quick-draining soil,

like lavender and chamomile, grow well in traditional containers. Plants like basil, roses, and strawberries that need more consistent watering will benefit from a self-watering container.

Grow up!

Use plant stands, ladders, or shelves to elevate containers to different levels if you don't have a lot of space for your garden. Trellises or fences can be used to grow climbing plants vertically as well. Cucumbers and climbing roses grow vertically and can become useful and beautiful backdrops in otherwise wasted spaces.

Do double duty

Most businesses or homes have landscaping already. It is easy to replace existing ornamental-only plants with those that will serve a double duty. Rosemary is a semi-evergreen shrub that can take the place of dwarf conifers in

some landscapes and climates. Alpine strawberry can replace other small, flowering plants like coreopsis, phlox, or vinca. Thyme and mint make great ground covers and can serve as a living mulch, while fragrant roses in place of other large, ornamental shrubs provide additional plant material for you to use.

Angela England is the author of Backyard Farming on an Acre (More or Less) and founder of www.untrainedhousewife.com, she stays busy empowering others to live more intentionally.

Linda Bertaut is an author, esthetician, Reiki Master, and award-winning beauty expert. She founded Bertaut Beauty and Chakralicious to help professionals add wellness therapies to their menu of services.



Explore the health benefits of herbs and plants.

Soothe Your Skin's Winter Ailments

Kayla Fioravanti

The drying effects of winter are upon us. Here are some at-home ideas to help soothe your skin through this challenging season.

Cleanse

Put away your foaming gels and soaps and stock up on creamy products. Cleansing creams, lotions, and milks are great winter choices, because they don't contain the harsh, oil-stripping detergents found in most cleansing gels.

Tone

Shelve your astringents and switch to a toner. In the cold months, your skin needs to be soothed and balanced, not dried out further.

Moisturize

Choose heavier creams than you would in summer months. You can even use your heavy eye cream on your lips and face. If your skin itches, the dry air is causing the moisture in the top layer of your skin to evaporate quickly. Slather those areas with extra moisture until you

feel relief, and never be afraid of using pure oils on your skin--a bottle of jojoba or olive oil is great to have on hand.

Exfoliate

Exfoliate twice a week to remove dead skin cells and help your skin absorb the extra moisture you are using. Because central heating systems reduce the amount of sebum our skin secretes, contributing to dryness, exfoliation will free this natural regulating agent. Use a cream-based exfoliant with jojoba beads, so your body can soak up the rich oils.

Hydrate

For a simple in-home hydrotherapy treatment, start your day with a steamy shower. Just as you are finishing, switch the water to cold for about 15 seconds and then back to warm for 15 seconds. Repeat the process for two minutes.

Shower and Bathe with Oils

Did you know you can apply body oil, lotion, or cream during your shower or

bath? The heat and steam help your skin to thoroughly absorb the moisture.

Secrets of Sleep

Jed Heneberry

We've all heard it before: get your eight hours of sleep and watch your life improve. But the reason we've all heard it is because it's true, and research keeps showing the importance of sleep and its variety of health benefits.

The National Sleep Foundation says there is no "magic number" of hours for optimum sleep benefits, but that different age groups, and even different individuals, need different amounts of sleep. General recommendations are 7-8 hours per night for adults, while children often need 10-11 hours. Getting less than what you need has been linked to an increased risk of diabetes, heart problems, psychiatric conditions, and more.

Here's a quick look at some new findings that reveal the secrets of sleep, and also

how to get more of it.

- Sleep Suppresses Appetite: Just one night of sleep loss can increase brain activity in the region that contains appetite sensation in response to food images, increasing the long-term possibility of becoming overweight. "Lack of Sleep Makes Your Brain Hungry," *The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism*.

- Naps for Your Noggin: The right side of the brain, which is generally associated with creativity, is active during so-called power naps, while the left brain remains mostly quiet. While it is not clear what exactly is happening during these brief rest periods, researchers suspect the brain is conducting important memory tasks. "'Power Naps' May Boost Right-Brain

Activity," *Health.com*.

- Cherry on Top: Drinking tart cherry juice increased melatonin in study participants, improving sleep efficiency, quality, and time. "Effect of Tart Cherry Juice on Melatonin Levels and Enhanced Sleep Quality," *European Journal of Nutrition*.

*People become
what they expect
themselves to
become.*

-Author Unknown

Fall brings us cooler temperatures allowing more outdoor activities. Runners get ready, set, and GO! ENJOY! Julia Cini

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