

Marolyn's Massage Update

Winter 13/14

Member, Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals

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

Rest and be thankful

~William Wordsworth



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.

What is Qi?

A fundamental concept of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) dating back over 3,000 years, qi (pronounced "chee") is the Chinese word for energy, which also carries with it connotations of air, breath, and life force.

In TCM, it is understood that everything from humans and animals to rocks and trees is filled with qi. This energy facilitates function, communication, and connection and is the uniting force of the universe, as well as the animating life force in all objects.

Qi in the Body

Qi flows through the body via 14 meridian channels, which run either up or down throughout the body along specific pathways. These pathways deliver energy to organs, structures, and systems in a constant pattern, and when qi is flowing unimpeded along these meridians, a person is said to be in balance.

Illness, injury, stress, and other trauma

can cause blockages along these meridians, thus impairing or stopping the flow of qi and resulting in energy congestion. Several TCM techniques are designed to clear these blockages and restore balance and flow to the body's energy.

Working with Qi

Along each meridian are points, known as acupoints or pressure points, where these energy blockages are likely to occur. Significant acupoints are also known as trigger points, and these are often starting points for therapists working to clear congested qi.

An important principle of qi is that clearing blockages at certain trigger points will help restore flow and thus impact parts of the body that are connected along the various meridians. For example, this could mean that working on someone's foot might benefit an internal organ like the liver, or benefit his or her heart. This concept further illustrates that qi in the body is

one balanced system in which one imbalance can affect several body parts and even alter emotional states.



Keeping qi in balance.

Foods to Boost Your Mood

Don't let your diet get you down. If you're looking for a quick pick-me-up that will boost your mood but go easy on your calorie count, consider these "superfoods" recommended by Mehmet Oz, MD, vice-chair and professor of surgery at Columbia University and contributor to Oprah.com.

KEFIR MILK

Try it if: you're looking to calm down. Made by fermenting more traditional milk with kefir grains, this drink is high in the amino acid tryptophan, which produces a relaxing effect on the nervous system. As a bonus, the drink also contains a healthy amount of B vitamins.

ASPARAGUS

Try it if: you're feeling low. This vegetable is loaded with folic acid,

which is good news for your mood, as low levels of the vitamin have been tied to depression. In fact, one 5.3-ounce serving contains 60 percent of your recommended daily folic acid allowance. Plus, asparagus is low in calories and contains no fat or cholesterol, so it won't ruin your diet.

ORANGES

Try it if: you're stressed out. Why? Vitamin C. This powerhouse nutrient can help support your immune system, skin, and more, but its stress-fighting powers come from its effect on your blood pressure. Studies have shown that consuming 500 milligrams of vitamin C daily can dramatically lower cardiovascular and stroke risk. One orange contains about 80 milligrams.

*"Let yourself be
silently drawn by
the strange pull
of what you
really love. It
will not lead you
astray"*

- Rumi

WINTERTIME

No matter how busy you are, one cannot help but be drawn into the magic of wintertime. Maybe it's the long nights, the sparkle of snow and stars or just the quiet of cold. It all conjures up a magical feeling. Take some time to soak up this season and enjoy.

There are some tips for keeping balanced, calm and happy in this newsletter. Hope some are helpful to you. And as always gift certificates are also available.

Each and every one of you is appreciated and wished a happy, magical winter season.

Be well,
Marolyn

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