



SOUTH CAROLINA FAMILY AND COMMUNITY LEADERS
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Leader Training Guide

Adventures With Herbs

Objectives:

1. Growing Herbs.
2. Growing and use of Basil
3. Making Herbal Oils
4. Making Lip Balm
5. Making Herbal Salve
6. Making Herb Pillows or Sachets
7. Making Herb Tea
8. Lesson "Hands-on Activities"

Lesson Overview/Introduction:

Do you like the fragrance of herbs? We know herbs are used to add flavor and fragrance to food to enhance the taste but not dominate the dish. However on my travel/study trip in Alaska, I was awed by meeting and attending an educational workshop conducted by co-author, Marsha Munsell "Adventure With Herbs In Interior Alaska." During her workshop I learned herbs can be successfully grown and can be used in many ways.

Lesson:

"Growing Herbs"

Herbs can be successfully grown by anyone. Keep in mind they like plenty of sunshine whether grown in pots or in gardens. If planting in pots make sure the pot is large enough so the roots have room to grow. Make sure the pot is sturdy and will not topple over from the weight of the plant. Draw a plan so you will get the idea of how they will look in your garden. You must be careful to make sure the taller mature plants will not shade the smaller ones. Herbs can be grown from seeds or from plants already started. The information on seed packets is especially important. The packet will tell you germination time so you can start back to the starting date, light requirements, and other information to help your seeds get a good start. You just need seed starting mix, containers, water, seeds, good light, and time. If you are reusing containers clean with 10 parts water to 1 part Clorox or Lysol solution before using.

“Growing and Use of Basil”

Why eat herbs? They not only contribute flavor in foods but are beneficial to our health. For example one of the popular herbs to grow is Basil. Basil is an annual herb with over 150 species. It likes full sun or greenhouse, rich, moist, well-grained soil. It can be started from seed or from cuttings. Basil really starts growing when the temperature is in the 80's. The size of the plant is dependent on the variety and can be anywhere from 8 inches tall to 32 inches tall. There are as many flavors of basil as there are varieties. They like to be fed with a liquid fertilizer every two weeks. You can start harvesting the leaves on the top and sides when the plant reaches 6-8 inches snipping at the leaf junctions. Basil contains a good source of copper, Vitamin C, Calcium, iron, folate and Omega3s. All varieties can be helpful in treating or preventing acne, stress, pink eye, gout, heart attack, gastric upsets, pain, and wound healing. They also have strong antibacterial properties. Lab studies in India have shown that basil has the potential to block or suppress liver, stomach, and lung cancer.

Making Basil Water: Place several leaves or 1 teaspoon of dried basil in the bottom of an 8-ounce glass. If you use fresh leaves, press them to extract some of the oil. Cover with boiling water and let steep for 5 to 10 minutes. Drink after meals to prevent indigestion. It may have some sedative effect so drinking in evening can have a plus.

Making Basil Pesto: Put 1 cup basil leaves, 2 tablespoons Parmesan cheese, 2 tablespoons pine nuts and 1-2 cloves garlic in blender or processor. Slowly add ¼ cup olive oil as the machine runs. Process until creamy.

“Herbal Oils”

Making Herbal Oils are useful to treating dry skin, sore muscles, and massage. Arnica, Comfrey, Yarrow, Rosemary, Marjoram, Wormwood, Plantain, Lavender, Horsetail, Ginger, Calendula, Basil are used in making herbal oils.

Herbal Oil Recipe: Gather healthy fresh herbs, Let wilt 12-24 hours. Chop herb material. Place in top of double boiler or yogurt maker. Cover herbs with high quality oil; want to have ¼” oil above the plant material. Add 1 tablespoon cider vinegar to each 1 liter (2 cups) of oil. The vinegar begins extracting the herbal properties. Cover with lid and leave several hours. Heat to no more than 130-degree F. (100-130 degrees F is ideal). Temperatures above 150 degrees F. destroy the medicinal properties. If using a double boiler turn off heat and repeat the heating several times over a 24-hour period; if using a yogurt maker, you can leave heating up to 10 hours and 10 nights. Strain the oil. Store in a cool, dark place.

Recipe for oil from DRIED plants: Measure 1-ounce dried plant material into a blender and blend fine. Add two tablespoons of cider vinegar and let sit overnight. Next day add 7 to 8-ounce good quality oil and blend until warm, about 4-5 minutes. Place in a jar, put in a water bath and keep warm 1-3 days, never letting the temperature rise above 130-140 degrees. Strain and bottle in preferably dark bottles. Keep in a cool dark place.

“Lip Balm”

Making Lip Balm is a natural recipe that leaves lips healthy and soft.

Lip Balm Recipe:

Ingredients: ¼ cup oil (sweet almond, coconut, or grapeseed.)
¼ cup butter (shea, cocoa, or mango.)
¼ cup grated beeswax (You can also use soy wax. Use enough wax to make ¾ cup total lip balm mixture.)
Several drops essential oil or Vitamin E (For flavor-use your favorite flavored oil)

Instructions: Measure beeswax into a double boiler or small pan over low-med heat. Melt. Add butter, oil to beeswax, and melt together. Remove from heat and add essential oil or flavored oil stirring with a metal spoon. Pull the spoon out and wait a few minutes until what is left on the spoon hardens. Test this to see if it's hard or soft enough for your liking. Make your adjustments now (adding more oil if you want it softer, or more wax if you like it harder). Carefully pour into lip balm tubes or tins. You can clean and reuse old ones or buy new ones.

Note: The wax you use varies in hardness, so you may need to remelt your finished product to discover your preferred texture. Add a bit more wax to make it harder or a bit more oil to make it softer.

“Herbal Salves”

Herbal Salves are useful for dry skin, chapped lips, insect bites, skin irritations and wounds. The recommended herbs used in making salves are the Yarrow, Chickweed, Plantain, Sage, Usnea, Comfrey, Calendula, Thyme.

Herbal Salve Recipe:

Materials needed: 1 cup Herbal Oil
4-6 Tablespoons Beeswax
Jars for salve
Double Boiler

Recipe: Melt 4-6 Tablespoons beeswax in the top of a double boiler. Use room temp or warm herbal oil (no hotter than 140-degree F. Slowly add herbal oil to beeswax and stir until completely mixed. Take a spoonful of mixture and let cool for a few minutes, to check consistency. If a more liquid salve is desired add more oil, if a firmer salve is desired add more melted beeswax. Once salve is at desired consistency, stir and pour into jar while hot (as salve cools depression may form on top of poured salve) Leave lid off salve and cool for 1/2-1 hour to prevent condensation. Store in a cool, dry place.

Note: Do not pour hot salve into plastic containers, use glass jars.

“Herb Pillows or Sachets”

Herb Pillows or Sachets can be used to promote relaxation, sleep, and deep rest. Herbs suggested to use are Lemon Balm, Skullcap, Rose Petals, Lavender, Catnip, Hops, Chamomile.

Directions: Sew tightly woven cloth into a bag. Fill with dried herbs and sew or draw shut. Place near head while sleeping.

“Herbal Teas”

Calming teas can be made using the herbs: Chamomile, Lavender, Lemon Balm, Lemon Verbena, Red Clover, Rose Petals.

Teas for digestion: Lemon Balm, Ginger, Lemongrass, Lemon Verbena, Cardamom, Peppermint

Headache relief: Chamomile, Clove, Ginger, Lavender, Lemon Thyme, Mint, Willow Bark (if you are not allergic to aspirin),

Herbs to enjoy: All of the above, Anise Hyssop, Scented Geranium Leaves.

You can use any herb that you prefer or a combination of herbs that suit your palate.

Directions: Use 1 teaspoon of crumbled dried herbs or 1 tablespoon of fresh herbs in a tea ball, bag, or sieve to start. Pour 1 cup boiling water over the herbs and let steep for 8 to 15 minutes. Herbs can become bitter if steeped too long. You may have to adjust the quantity of herb to make your tea stronger or weaker. Experimenting is fun to find your personal preference.

“Suggested Activities in Club Meeting”

1. Conduct a workshop making any of the above recipes.
2. Have a workshop sewing herb pillows or sachets, filling them with favorite herbs.
3. Have each bring in a dried herb. Each can try a new herb or mix combinations to make a cup of tea.

Lesson Prepared by: Betty Osgood, SCFCL 2024 recipient of Buff-Swicegood Travel Study Award to Fairbanks, Alaska. Recognition of Resources: “Adventures With Herbs in Interior Alaska” by Virginia Damron and Marsha Munsell. Experienced activity making “Herb Tea” in “Adventures With Herbs” workshop attending Alaska 4-H Summit Conference.

Lesson Reviewed by: Connie N. Lake, SCFCL State Advisor