

# AIRMEITH'S MUSINGS

SPRING 2011

VOL. 4 ISSUE I

## HORSERADISH

### *Herb of the Year for 2011*

Horseradish is a botanical superhero, able to clear sinuses, boost the flavor of sauces and provide lush vegetation in a single bound. Its versatility and underappreciated ubiquity make horseradish a perfect candidate for the International Herb Association's Herb of the Year.

Horseradish was well-known to the Egyptians by 1500 b.c. Early Europeans primarily used horseradish as a medicine. For centuries, the root was rubbed on sore joints to relieve rheumatism, and pressed upon foreheads - a practice that actually may have helped alleviate sinus pain. By the Renaissance, the root of horseradish was used as a savory meat relish in Germany, and its popularity spread from there.

Try some new things with horseradish this year.

### *Horseradish Leaf & Potato Patties*

- I 1/2lb. russet potatoes
- 4oz horseradish leaf, washed and stalk removed
- I small onion
- 2TBL butter
- Salt & pepper
- Olive oil & butter for frying
- I. Peel potatoes and cut. Bring to boil in salted

water and simmer until just tender. Drain and coarsely mash. Set aside to cool

2. Roughly chop & cook the horseradish leaves in salted water for 2 minutes until tender. Quickly cool leaves to retain color. Squeeze out excess water, then spread out on a clean towel and dry thoroughly.
3. Finely chop the onion and fry in butter until soft but not browned.
4. Mash the potatoes and chop horseradish leaves into small pieces. Mix potatoes, horseradish leaves and onion, salt & pepper. Shape mixture into patties. Cover and chill for I hour.
5. Fry in butter and oil mixture for 5 minutes on each side or until golden brown.

Serves 4-5



*Armoracia rusticana*

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*Earth laughs in flowers.*

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

Continued from front

## *Horseradish* *Monograph*

**Name-** Horseradish (*Armoracia rusticana*)

**Family-** Cruciferae (mustard)

**Synonyms -** (Mountain radish)

**Description-** A herbaceous perennial with large strap-like leaves to 3 feet tall. Flowers are an attractive, creamy, fragrant white. Invasive, fleshy root is high in vitamin C and potassium. One of its first uses was as a medicine, when it was soaked in vinegar and used to remove freckles.

**Cultivation-** Likes a rich soil in the full sun. Feed with compost and well aged manure for large roots. Difficult to eradicate once planted so put in area where it is to stay; even a small piece of the root will start a new bed of horseradish.

**Propagation-** Slow growing from seed; usually root cuttings are taken.

**Parts Used-** Leaf and roots

**Harvest-** Leaf in early spring, use fresh; root in fall after a hard frost.

**Uses-** Culinary: Leaves can be eaten raw in salads or boiled as vegetable greens. The root is preserved in vinegar and used as a condiment to accompany various dishes.

Medicinal: Horseradish is a stimulant and a diuretic.

**Preservation-** Harvest the root in the late fall after a hard frost. Wash dirt off and peel the hard outer skin. Cut in to small pieces with a grinder or blender. Pack in sterilized canning jars and pour vinegar over it (just to cover) Seal with a cover and refrigerate once seal is broken.



*Think Spring!!!*

## *Cultivating a Gardening Habit*

*Discover the Health Benefits of Yard Work*

Feeling the need to exercise, clean up your diet or meditate? Want to be more creative, get out and meet people, enjoy the outdoors, and slow down? There's one activity in which you can accomplish all of these objectives: gardening. Studies have shown that vigorous digging burns 500 calories an hour, weeding burns 210 calories, and mowing the

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*In the Spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt.*

*~ Margaret Atwood*

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lawn burns 400 calories. As a moderate exercise, gardening has been found to decrease the risk of heart disease and diabetes and a study at Boston University found that gardening was almost as effective as weight lifting in reducing the risk for osteoporosis in women. So instead of taking that indoor aerobics class this summer, try mowing the lawn or planting an herb garden. As with any exercise regimen, the key is to start at a comfortable pace and gradually work your way up to longer, more difficult activities. Your heart rate should be about the same as when you take a brisk walk. As always consult your health care practitioner before starting an exercise program.

### ***Improving Your Diet***

Gardening will also likely help you eat better. Research shows that people who grow gardens eat more vegetables and fruits than those who don't. Growing fresh herbs, even in a container on the deck or balcony, is another great way to add flavor and freshness to home-cooked meals and an incentive to try new recipes.

### ***Boosting Your Social Life***

Gardening can also be quite social. Whether at a garden club, a community garden or an online forum, people love to share ideas, solve common problems and connect through mutual interests.

### ***Easing Stress***

Finally, gardening is a great way to manage stress. Spending time outside and tuning in to the rhythms of nature we're reminded to be patient, slow down, and breathe the fresh air. Whether growing flowers, vegetables, or herbs a garden reminds us of our connection to life and the abundance that nature so freely gives.

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## **Here Comes the Sun** ***Updated UV Index Shines Light*** ***on Rays***

A crucial warning system has been recently updated for your skin's protection. In compliance with the World Health Organization; the Environmental Protection Agency and the National Weather Service revamped the UV Index, a system created to alert people about the level of harmful ultraviolet (UV) light rays from the sun. Overexposure to UV rays can cause wrinkles and premature aging, skin cancer, cataracts and immune system suppression. Many factors influence the strength of UV rays: UV light is stronger in the summer, at higher altitudes and in areas closer to the equator. It's also stronger at midday, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., when the sun is directly overhead.

The new guidelines are as follows:

#### **0-2: low.**

Minimal exposure for the average person, but watch for reflected UV from snow and water.

#### **3-5: moderate.**

Stay in the shade during midday. Cover-up outside.

#### **6-7: high.**

Wear a hat, sunglasses and a sunscreen with a minimum sun protection factor (SPF) of 15. Avoid midday sun.

#### **8-10: very high.**

Take extra precautions and avoid midday sun. Wear protective clothing.

#### **11: extreme.**

Take all precautions, seek shade and avoid midday sun. If possible, stay indoors.

As part of its daily forecast, the National Weather Service publishes the UV index for each area of the country. Go to [www.epa.gov/sunwise/uvindex.html](http://www.epa.gov/sunwise/uvindex.html) and enter your zip code to find your UV index for the day. The Weather Channel, as well as most local TV stations, include the UV index in their weather forecast. It can also be found at [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com). For a detailed description of the UV index, or for more information on sun protection, visit [www.epa.gov/sunwise](http://www.epa.gov/sunwise)

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*Gardening is civil and social, but it wants the vigor and freedom of the forest and the outlaw.*

*~Henry David Thoreau*

# Herbal Lore

## Witch Hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*)

Witch hazel is a deciduous bush or small tree that is found throughout most of North America. It has broad, toothed oval leaves and golden yellow flowers. Brown fruit capsules appear after the flowers. The dried leaves, bark and twigs are used medicinally

Witch hazel is a widely known plant with a lengthy history of use in the Americas. One source lists more than 30 traditional uses for witch hazel including the treatment of hemorrhoids, burns, cancers, tuberculosis, colds and fever. Preparations have been used topically for symptomatic treatment of



Vernal Witch Hazel - Calyx  
*Hamamelis vernalis*  
2010 - South Hadley, MA

itching and other skin inflammations and in ophthalmic preparations for ocular irritations. Traditionally, witch hazel was known to native North American people as a treatment for tumors and eye inflammations. It was used internally for hemorrhaging. Eighteenth century European settlers valued the plant for its astringency and it still is used today for this and other purposes.

Witch hazel is thought to have astringent and hemostatic (stop bleeding) properties. These effects are thought to be because of the presence of a relatively high concentration of tannins in the leaf, bark and extract as well as other unknown mechanisms of action. These properties make witch hazel potentially useful as a skin astringent to promote healing in hemorrhoid treatment, as well as skin inflammations such as eczema. The mechanism of witch hazel astringency involves the tightening of skin proteins, which come together to form a protective covering that promotes skin healing. Witch hazel is also used to treat damaged veins. Its ability to tighten distended veins and restore vessel tone is employed in varicose vein treatment and also is valuable for bruises and sprains. It also is claimed that it rapidly stops bleeding and that it is useful as an enema for inwardly bleeding piles. Witch hazel's action on skin lesions also protects against infection. Skin lotions also may contain witch hazel for these purposes.

*For educational purposes only. This information has not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This information is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease.*

*What is a weed? A plant whose virtues have never been discovered.*

*~ Ralph Waldo Emerson*

## *From Our Kitchen to Yours*

### *Salt, Sugar and Herb Blends*

Airmeith is pleased to introduce some new offerings from our kitchen: Naturally flavored sugars, gourmet herbal salts and delicious herb and spice blends. These are blends that Anna has been cooking with for years and now wants to share with others.

Our herbal salt blends combine the distinctive qualities of a variety of unique salts with herbs and spices to help enhance the flavors and finish of foods. Our salt blends can be used during the cooking process, as a finishing touch to dishes, or as a topping for a variety of foods.

We are offering 4 different varieties of our own naturally flavored sugars : Lavender, Vanilla,



Lemon and Ginger. You can use flavored sugar in place of regular sugar when making your favorite recipes. It can be used to give a flavor boost to coffee or tea, as a topping on oatmeal, pancakes, ice cream, or to give a interesting twist to fresh whipped cream. You can also use as a substitute for regular sugar when rimming cocktail glasses.



#### *FIND US ONLINE:*

*Facebook - [www.facebook.com/airmeith.ma](http://www.facebook.com/airmeith.ma)*

*Etsy - [www.etsy.com/shop/AirmeithHerbals](http://www.etsy.com/shop/AirmeithHerbals)*

*Websites - [www.airmeith.com](http://www.airmeith.com) & [www.airmeithbodyworks.com](http://www.airmeithbodyworks.com)*

## The Other Spring Greens

### Flavorful & Healthy Spring Herbs

We all wait for the last of the snow to melt and “mud season” to be over. Everyday the sun gets a little stronger and the day last a little longer. The first greens of spring are always so full of flavor and provide a much needed change from our winter diet of “heavy” foods.

#### Penne with mushrooms and Fresh Sorrel

1 TBL Olive oil  
16 oz Mushrooms, sliced  
3 cloves of garlic, mashed  
1 large onion, sliced  
1 dried hot chili pepper (2in long)  
2 chopped tomatoes (14.5 oz can is fine to use)  
8 C hot cooked penne (about 1 pound dry)  
1/2C chopped fresh french sorrel leaves

Method: Sauté mushrooms, garlic, onions and hot pepper in large pan with oil for 5 minutes. Stir in tomatoes and cook until sauce forms about 7 minutes. Take off stove and add to a large bowl; toss the penne with the sauce and sorrel. Serve while still warm.



French Sorrel - *Rumex scutatus*  
2010 - South Hadley, MA



Stinging Nettles - *Urtica dioica*

#### Nettle Pudding

1 bunch of sorrel  
1 bunch of watercress  
1 bunch dandelion leaves  
2 bunch of young nettle leaves  
Some chives  
1 C of barley flour  
1 tsp salt  
Pork or Vegetable Stock

Method: Chop the herbs finely and mix in the barley flour and salt. Add enough water to bind it together and place in the center of a linen or muslin cloth. Tie the cloth securely and add to a pot of simmering pork or vegetable stock. Leave in the pot until cooked; serve with chunks of buttered bread.

Reminder: Please wear gloves when harvesting nettles. They call them “Stinging” for a reason. Once heated or dried the nettles are safe and will not “sting”

*Let food be your medicine and medicine be your food.*

~ Hippocrates

## *Upcoming Events*

### April-

#### **24th Gore Place Sheep Shearing Festival**

Saturday

April 30- 10am to 5pm

52 Gore Street Waltham, MA

[Sheep Shearing Festival](#)

### June-

#### **Lavender Festival**

Saturday & Sunday

June 25 & 26 - 10am-5pm

Johnson Hill Farm

51 Hog Hollow Road

Buckland, MA

[Lavender Festival](#)

### July-

#### **Greater New Bedford Summerfest 2011**

An International Folk Music & Arts Festival

Saturday & Sunday

July 2 & 3 - 10am to 7pm

New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park

New Bedford, Massachusetts

[Summerfest 2011](#)

To keep up to date with us:



[www.facebook.com/airmeith.ma](http://www.facebook.com/airmeith.ma)



**Contorted Hazelnut Tree ~ Catkins**

*Corylus avellana 'Contorta'*

2010 - South Hadley, MA



**Tidal Basin Japanese Cherry**

*aka Yoshino Cherry ~ Blossoms*

*Prunus x yedoensis*

2010 - South Hadley, MA

SPRING 2011

*Newsflash...*

**Be on the look out for our new Herbal Foot Comforters.**

These wonderful comforters consist of a washable cotton "slipper" with an insert of flaxseed and soothing herbs. The inserts can be used either heated or cooled to provide the type of relief that is needed by your tired, over worked feet.

For more information about the herbal foot comforters please email Tony at [tony@airmeith.com](mailto:tony@airmeith.com)

VOL. 4 ISSUE I

*Naturally handcrafted herbal  
and nature inspired products for  
body, mind & spirit*



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