

edible & useful plants



on the

risc roof garden

with recipes



www.risc.org.uk/garden

the garden

Most decorative gardens grow plants purely for their visual effect. On the Reading International Solidarity Centre (RISC) roof garden, our plants have to work hard to be included. They not only have to look attractive but are also useful as food, medicine, fibre, wood, wax, dye or cut flowers and most have multiple uses. They come from all over the world including a section on British native plants. The many uses of plants are often forgotten – this booklet is a reminder of the valuable resource we have in plants.

background

When the idea of a roof garden at RISC began to take shape, it was a practical response to the problem of a leaking roof and how to provide sound and heat insulation for a conference hall which doubled as a venue for noisy events. From this seed of an idea grew a forest garden – food-producing, low maintenance, no-dig – based on a natural woodland ecosystem. The design is based on permaculture principles and was a collaboration between RISC and Paul Barney. It aims to be an educational tool for raising awareness of global issues, including sustainable development and the economic and historical importance of plants.

Planting was completed in June 2002 and the garden is now well established. In an area of 200 m², over 185 species of perennial plants from around the world thrive in soil only 30cm deep. The garden supports a range of layers, from roots, through small shrubs to our miniature version of a canopy layer. Most have multiple uses: food, medicine, fuel, fibre, construction, dye, scent.

The garden demonstrates many ways we can all reduce our environmental footprint. Features include: composting of kitchen waste from the Global Cafe, irrigation using harvested rainwater pumped by renewable energy from a solar array and wind turbine, use of recovered soil and recycled newspaper, wood, stone and plastic in its construction.

In many parts of the world roof gardens are not a novelty, but a solution to pressing urban problems. Over 40% of German cities offer financial incentives for green roof construction and the International Green Roof Institute was opened in Malmö, Sweden in 2001 to research and promote roof greening. In Britain planners, architects and developers are just waking up to the potential of putting soil and plants on top of buildings.

Green roofs (particularly the intensively planted kind found at RISC rather than the more common extensive sedum mat) are huge sponges, prevent flash flooding (50-80% of rain is absorbed). They provide insulation and so cut costs and CO₂ emissions for heating and air-conditioning. In summer they reflect heat rather than absorb it, thus helping to break up the heat islands created by towns. They absorb atmospheric and noise pollution and become vital oases for insects and birds, providing habitat and refuge. A roof garden is a means to re-connect a building with the landscape that surrounds it and creates a beneficial relationship between internal and external activities. We become slightly different people when sat in a garden, more relaxed and less formal – it creates a valuable meeting place for people.

credits

This booklet has been compiled by Mary Tindall. Much of the plant information originates from the **Plants for a Future** database. Further information about the plants can be found at www.pfaf.org.

Herbal information from **Amanda Dean**, MNIMH Medical Herbalist, www.herbalist.machynlleth.biz.

future proof your garden

The hose-pipe bans of 2006 are a wake-up call for many gardeners, particularly in the south-east of England where rainfall for the past two years has been 2/3 below normal. While wine growers might welcome hotter summers, most of us have gardens designed for a 'water-on-demand' regime. Despite an upsurge in sales of water butts and pumps to siphon bath water, many gardens have wilted. Most climate scientists agree that global climate change is a reality and is like to result in greater extremes of weather. Some predict that a drought will occur every three years on average. We need to face the prospect of making our gardens thrive with limited or uncertain supplies of mains water. Is there an alternative to the wholesale conversion to Mediterranean planting?

The RISC roof garden has only 30cm of light soil and is like an enormous hanging basket – and they sometimes need watering twice a day! It was designed to be as sustainable as possible and included ways of reducing water consumption from the outset. Our experience of keeping it alive over the summers of 2005/6 suggests that the future need not be limited to drought-resistant plants. If we learn the principles of water conservation gardening from people and cultures who have prospered in places with low rainfall, we can adapt or redesign our gardens to meet the challenge of uncertain rainfall, and continue to enjoy diversity and productivity in our gardens. These principles are: collect all suitable sources of water, water economically, retain moisture in the soil, and protect soil and plants from the sun.

collect all suitable sources of water

rainwater

Many gardeners already use water butts to harvest rainwater. However, a large garden with mature trees would need a small swimming pool to store enough water to cope with a prolonged dry spell. If money were no object, a 5,000 gallon cistern dug under the drive would probably do the job! For most of us, a 200 gallon water butt made from reused juice concentrate containers, is an economical way of increasing storage, but would probably not last more than a couple of weeks, even with careful watering [☺]www.thetankexchange.com. One way to overcome this is to use gravity to feed overflow from waterbutts into mulch basins strategically placed around the garden – storing water in the landscape. These act as reservoirs which can be tapped by plant roots. A diverter with a simple valve provides control of the amount of water entering the system, preventing waterlogged soil [☺]www.hayesplastics.com.

You can join your water butt to a simple, gravity-fed porous pipe irrigation system [☺]www.porouspipe.co.uk, but this requires well filtered water from a more sophisticated and expensive diverter to prevent clogging of the tiny holes [☺]www.rainharvesting.co.uk.

greywater

Because the average household uses 135-150 litres/person/day, using greywater provides one solution (provided the hose pipe ban has not graduated to standpipes). However, you need to consider the source of greywater.

Waste water from a handbasin in a toilet may contain harmful pathogens which should be neutralised in reed bed. Ideally kitchen waste water should pass through a grease trap. Check the ingredients of cleaners and washing up liquid – some may be harmful to plants, particularly over a prolonged period as they build up in the soil, others, such as phosphates, may even be beneficial assuming you are not organic. 'Environment friendly' does not necessarily mean plant friendly. One alternative cleaning agent, borax, is particularly lethal and should be avoided. Rotating the area being watered can reduce the possible build up of chemicals. Winter rain may also help flush them out.

Water from dishwashers contains high levels of salt which is also best avoided. Remember to allow warm water to cool in a collecting tank, but do not let greywater stand for more than 24 hours – its organic matter soon begins to rot and gives off a whiff of bad eggs.

The internet and gardening magazines have a range of devices to make using waste water easier than emptying your bath with a bucket. You can buy a little hand pump which will enable you to siphon off the bath water without swallowing soapy water [☺]www.banbeater.co.uk, or you can fit a diverter on the bathroom waste pipe [☺]www.watertwo.co.uk. There are very sophisticated greywater processing plants but

these are expensive, and can be unreliable. You can also use mulch basins to store grey water in the soil
☞ www.oasisdesign.net.

water economically

Watering dry soil with a rose will produce a fine sprinkle which wet the surface and keep root systems near the surface. If you direct water straight to the roots you can train them to grow deep down to search out water in the sub-soil. Creating a watering basin around a plant is one way of ensuring precious water soaks deep into the soil. Another trick is to water into a small plastic plant pot buried to the rim next to the plant. Watering in the evening or early in the morning will reduce the loss of water through evaporation.

retaining moisture in the soil

The key to successful gardening is the soil. This is especially true of low water gardening where the aim is to keep as much water in the soil as possible. Organic gardeners know the importance of muck which works its magic by feeding the organisms which live in the soil and holds water and nutrients like a sponge.

- 1 Increase the humus content of your beds through regular application of compost and organic mulch.
- 2 Reduce evaporation from the soil by covering it with a ground cover of low plants and /or mulch.
- 3 Reduce transpiration from plants by protecting them from direct sun.

drought proofing mulch

This recipe kills two birds with one stone. It creates a rich compost as well as a water conserving mulch. It is best done in autumn when rain begins to soak into the soil, and allows time for bacteria and worms to do their work.

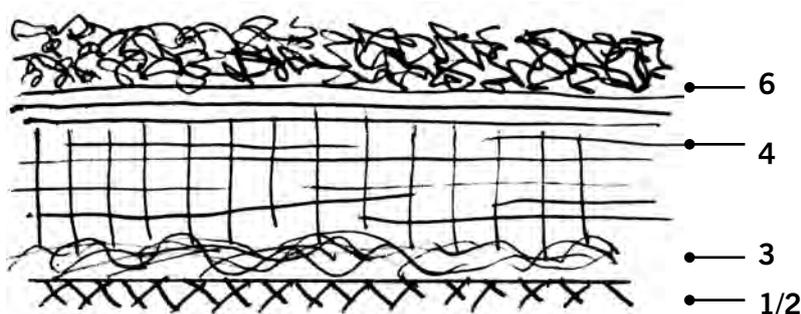
You can use this method of sheet composting/mulching on new or existing beds.

ingredients

- bag of fish, bone and blood meal
- organic material – garden or kitchen waste (not cooked food or meat/fish which will attract rats), shredded paper or cardboard, straw
- high nitrogen activator (keep fresh manure from burning live stems) – farmyard manure, poultry pellets (spread thinly), grass clippings, ‘liquid gold’ – urine!
- rainwater

method

- 1 Cut down or flatten weeds – these will add to the mix and rot down.
- 2 Apply a slow acting organic feed such as fish, bone and blood meal – about 150gm/square metre – this will gradually release nutrients over several years.
- 3 Apply a layer of cardboard (large cartons for bikes or white goods are best). This retains moisture and suppresses weeds, and eventually rots down. Ensure an overlap of at least 20cm to control perennial weeds. You can also use newspapers (which use soy-based inks), but not glossy magazines (which may include inks made from toxic metals). Wetting the cardboard or paper makes them easier to arrange around existing plants and follow the contours of the bed.



- 4 Apply layers of organic materials mixed with a high nitrogen activator.
- 5 Wait for heavy rainfall to give the mix a good soak or use harvested rainwater. The organisms which break down the ingredients into compost need moisture as well as carbon (paper, straw) and nitrogen (grass clippings, 'liquid gold' – urine!) in the proportion about 25:1, to work most effectively.
- 6 Cover with a thick layer of wood chip or bark mulch. This will gradually settle and slowly decompose into soil – keep it topped up over the years.
- 7 You can plant through the mulch by cutting a hole in the cardboard, and planting into a mound of peat-free compost. Carefully replace the mulch, ensuring the cardboard does not rub against the stem.

protect soil and plants from the sun

Bare soil not only provides ideal conditions for opportunistic weeds, but also heats up quickly and increases water loss through evaporation. Ground cover plants in combination with mulch will help solve both these problems, and can look and taste good – strawberries, herbs etc. A forest garden, with plants of varying heights, is particularly well adapted to provide areas of shade which will create habitats for shade tolerant plants and help reduce soil temperature. Careful selection of plants will create a plant community adapted to your needs – food, flowers, herbal remedies, basketry etc.

further information

RISC's garden website provides links to sources of information about forest gardens, green roofs and permaculture www.risc.org.uk/garden.



what does risc do?

RISC is a development education centre which aims to raise awareness of global issues and particularly to make the connections between local and global. Our activities include:

- developing an urban roof garden for local and global education
- organising a programme of events and exhibitions on global issues & speakers from the Majority World
- providing training for teachers and youth workers on development education resources
- producing resources such as teaching packs, AV aids and exhibitions for use by schools, and/or youth and community groups
- selling books and development education resources: fiction and non-fiction for children and adults on global issues
- promoting campaigns on local and international issues
- providing a loan service of artefacts and education packs for schools and youth workers
- selling fair trade, organic and environmentally friendly products, and world music CDs
- giving work experience opportunities for volunteers.

herbs@risc

A wide range of herbs grow on the RISC forest garden. They are not only used in the Global Café downstairs, but are also the ingredients for medicinal infusions, ointments and other preparations. Here are a few of our favourites.

Lemon Balm *Melissa officinalis*

A relaxing tonic for anxiety, mild depression, restlessness and irritability. It reduces feelings of nervousness and panic and can even quieten the palpitations that may accompany these. Often used with St John's Wort for Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). Lemon balm is useful when over anxiety is causing digestive problems such as indigestion, acidity, nausea, bloating and colicky pains. It is also useful for cold sores, chickenpox and shingles. It is best used fresh, a couple of sprigs to a cup of boiling water or as a tincture of fresh plant. Can also be used to flavour cooking.

Sage *Salvia officinalis*

A first rate remedy as a gargle for sore throats due to its combination of antiseptic, relaxing and astringent actions. For the same reasons it makes an excellent mouthwash for mouth ulcers and sore gums. Sage is a digestive tonic and stimulant and is also used as a nerve tonic, helping both to calm and stimulate the nervous system. This combination of actions make it an ideal tonic for older people. As a cold tea it helps to reduce menopausal night sweats. New mothers should know that it will dry up breast milk. Fresh leaves can be rubbed onto bites and stings as a first aid remedy.

Caution not to be used in medicinal doses if pregnant or epileptic

Thyme *Thymus vulgaris*

A useful remedy used as a tea or syrup for chest infections, even proving helpful in more serious problems such as bronchitis, whooping cough and pleurisy. The volatile oils in thyme are both antiseptic and expectorant, helping to clear infections and make mucous secretions thinner and therefore easier to cough up. The oils also help relieve muscle spasms; very useful for the tightness that often accompanies chest infections. Thyme is an anti-fungal in conditions like ringworm and athlete's foot. Research suggests that thyme and its volatile oil have a significant tonic effect, supporting the normal functioning of the body and countering the effects of ageing.



St John's Wort

St John's Wort *Hypericum perforatum*

Well known as a safe and effective antidepressant, St John's Wort has a long history of use as a herb for nervous problems, especially any combination of anxiety, tension, insomnia and depression - particularly when associated with the menopause. It is also a valuable tonic for the liver and gall-bladder. Externally the beautiful deep red infused oil is an excellent antiseptic and is used for wounds and burns. It helps relieve cramps and nerve pain such as sciatica when massaged over the affected area. Flowering tops are gathered just as the flowers are opening.

Caution St John's Wort may affect the metabolism of other medications. If you take other medicines please consult your GP or a Medical Herbalist before taking this herb.

Fennel *Foeniculum vulgare*

The most important use of fennel seeds is to relieve wind and bloating. A tea made from $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp of seeds per cup of water can be taken up to 5 times a day. Crushing the seeds slightly before making the tea will help to release the aromatic oils, making the tea more effective. Fennel increases breast milk production and is safe for treating colic and painful teething in babies. It is an excellent choice of tea for breastfeeding women, as the medicinal properties of fennel will pass through the breast milk to the child.

Echinacea/Purple Coneflower *Echinacea angustifolia*

Used traditionally for a wide range of acute and chronic infections, from boils and abscesses to septicaemia. It can be used for impetigo, childhood diseases like chickenpox, mastitis and epidemic influenza among many others. Echinacea is an excellent remedy for tonsillitis, both internally and as a gargle. The fresh root tincture is regarded as the most effective preparation and as Echinacea is very non-toxic it can be taken frequently in quite large doses to good effect. The best quality preparations should leave a tingling sensation on the tongue. It can be useful for people who have chronic diseases of the lung or diabetes to take a course of Echinacea in low doses over the winter to help prevent infections.

Caution If a condition is potentially serious it should be treated by or in conjunction with a qualified medical herbalist or your GP.



Echinacea

Marigold *Calendula arvensis*

Calendula, well known as one of the ornamental marigolds, blooms month after month from early spring to the first frost. The herb has been used to heal wounds and treat inflamed skin since ancient times.

Comfrey *Symphytum uplandicum*

This plant is so useful that every garden should have some. It is edible, attracts bees, is used as chicken feed, made into liquid plant feed and fed to horses to condition their coats. In herbal medicine it is made into ointments and poultices to draw out infection and heal bruised and broken skin.

making herbal medicines at home

Before you gather any plant to make a medicine:

- check and recheck its identification
- do not use scarce or endangered plants
- get permission from the landowner where appropriate

infused/macerated oils

sun method

finely chop fresh herbs and pack tightly into jar; fill with vegetable oil
seal jar and leave in direct sunlight for 2 weeks; shake daily
strain and repeat with fresh herbs. strain and pour into bottles (preferably dark) and label

quick method

place finely chopped herbs in heatproof bowl and cover with vegetable oil
put over pan of boiling water. simmer for 1hr
remove from heat, strain off herbs and repeat with fresh herbs
strain and pour into bottles (preferably dark) and label
oils will keep for around 12 months in a cool dark place

ointment

method

gently heat an infused oil over simmering water
add 1 tablespoon grated beeswax per 30ml oil
pour into clean jug
pour into jars – top-up as ointment cools
add lids and labels
keep in cool place away from direct sunlight. will keep up to a year

fresh herb tinctures

ingredients

use approximately 2 parts herb to 5 parts alcohol (vodka or brandy), eg 200g to 500ml; gather plants at time of year traditionally harvested

for above ground parts this is most commonly just before or during flowering. for roots it is usually autumn and sometimes spring as well

plants are found to have higher quantities or better active ingredients at those times; for details of individual plants consult a herbal

method

gather the plant when thoroughly dry, if possible when the sun is shining on the plant
finely chop herb, put into glass jar and just cover with alcohol
put on lid and keep in cool place out of direct sunlight. shake jar twice a day
after 2 weeks strain and pour into dark glass bottles. label and store in a cool dark place
tinctures keep well, even for years in some cases, but discard if it smells strange or goes mouldy

lavender oil

method

half fill jar with lavender flower spikes. cover with vegetable oil and 1tbs white vinegar
place on sunny window ledge for at least 2 weeks. shake jar daily
if scent not strong enough remove flower spikes and add fresh ones; repeat process
strain and add a couple of new flower heads at end for decoration
use as bath oil, insect repellent or salad oil

rosemary hair rinse

method

combine 1 cup rosemary leaves with 3 cups water; simmer $\frac{1}{2}$ hr
cool, strain and bottle
use as a final rinse after shampooing to control oily hair and promote a healthy shine

chamomile hair rinse

for blond/light brown hair – make as above using fresh or dried chamomile or use chamomile teabags
dry hair in sun to bring out natural blonde and golden highlights

marigold hand cream

ingredients

100g of Marigold (*Calendula*) flower heads, freshly picked on a dry day
150g emulsifying ointment (from chemist)
70ml glycerine (from chemist)
80ml water
few drops lavender oil (optional – acts as preservative)

method

chop flowers and put into heat-proof bowl with emulsifying ointment, glycerine and water
mix well and put bowl over a pan of gently simmering water for 2-3 hrs
add lavender oil if you want to keep the cream for more than a week or two
heat glass jars (preferable brown) in cool oven 130°C/250°F/gas1/2 for 15-20 min to sterilise
strain warm mixture and pour into jars. label and date. store in fridge for up to one year
use on insect bites stings, cuts and grazes etc

recipes

from the roof garden

day lily/elderflower fritters

ingredients

125g plain flour
pinch salt
25g castor sugar
2 tablespoons oil
1 tablespoon rum (optional)
150ml water
2 egg whites
oil for frying

method

pick flowers on a sunny day when just opened and dry – do not wash if possible, but check for insects
whisk first six ingredients to a thick batter and leave to stand for 30min
beat egg whites till stiff and fold into batter
heat 5cm oil to 170°C (piece of bread sizzles when dropped in)
dip flowers in batter and deep fry till golden
drain on paper towels and serve with sugar and lemon. decorate with extra flowers

stuffed flowers

ingredients

nine large courgette or 12 day lily flowers
4 oz long grain white rice
1 small onion finely sliced
1½ tablespoons parsley, finely chopped
1½ tablespoons fresh mint, chopped
1 tomato peeled and cut into small pieces
70 ml olive oil
150 ml water
salt and pepper

method

wash and drain the flowers if necessary
mix the rice with the oil, tomato, parsley, onion and mint
stir well and stuff the flowers carefully using a small teaspoon

do not overstuff the flowers as the rice gains more size when it is boiled

place the stuffed flowers in a single layer into a saucepan, add water and cover – simmer until rice is cooked; check water during cooking to see if more is required

good served with a tomato sauce

other edible flowers

Many flowers such as pot marigolds and roses are edible. Try using in salads or to garnish puddings and drinks.

Borage freeze in ice cubes and add to cold drinks

Chives decorative and peppery all onion flowers can be eaten

Primroses and violets eat fresh or crystallise for cake decorations

edible leaves

Many leaves are edible, eg garlic chives, mustard, chickweed, hawthorn. They are best picked fresh and young when they are tender and full of vitamins and minerals. Add to sandwiches, omelettes or salads.

herb teas

Mint, lemon balm and fennel make excellent herb teas are very easy to make.

method

pour boiling water over a sprig of fresh or half teaspoon dried herb

leave to infuse for a few minutes, strain and add sugar or honey to taste

crush large seeds such as fennel to obtain more flavour

nettle soup

ingredients

2 medium potatoes

half carrier bag full of tips young nettles

1 onion or leek

2 cloves garlic or handful wild garlic

2oz butter/oil

1pt stock

1/2pt milk

salt/pepper

method

wash nettle tips carefully wearing rubber gloves

melt butter and add chopped potatoes and onion/leek – cook gently till soft

add nettles and garlic and cook for a few minutes

add stock, milk, salt and pepper. simmer for 10 minutes

liquidize. sieve if necessary

serve the bright green soup with a swirl of cream or yoghurt and fresh crusty bread

hedgerow jelly

This jelly can be made in a wide variety of versions depending on the fruit available, eg Crab apples, Sloes, Rowan (mountain ash) berries, Rose hips, Damsons, Blackberries, Elderberries.

ingredients

- 1 cinnamon stick (optional)
- 1 inch grated ginger (optional)

method

- pick selection of fruit as available, slightly unripe to ensure jelly will set
- simmer fruit and spices gently in just enough water to cover till soft
- strain through a jelly bag or fine tea towel for several hours. do not squeeze bag if you want a clear jelly
- measure juice and pour into large pan
- add 1lb sugar per pint juice. boil till set
- pour into warmed jars and cover

medlar mousse

These can be picked green for jelly (see hedgerow jelly) or left until soft and brown (bletted).

ingredients

- medlars soft and brown
- whipped cream or thick yoghurt
- sugar or honey to taste

method

- peel medlars and squeeze out the brown pulp
- mix with cream and honey
- serve chilled with crisp biscuits

quinces

Quinces (pear shaped) are very tart and cannot be eaten raw. When cooked with sugar a chemical reaction occurs and they become sweet and red. Japanese quinces (apple shaped) can be used in similar ways but do not turn so red. Quinces make a beautifully coloured jelly (see hedgerow jelly).

Quinces can be added to any apple or pear dish, eg pies or crumbles, giving a pinkish tint and adding fragrance.

baked quinces

ingredients

- 2 quinces – pick when turned yellow and fragrant but still hard
- 4 tablespoons honey
- 6 tablespoons butter
- 4 tablespoons water

method

halve lengthways and remove core but not skin

butter an ovenproof dish and lay quince halves in with hollows facing upwards

put a tablespoon honey and a teaspoon butter in each hollow. add water and cover dish

bake 150°C for 1-1½ hours till quinces soft and red – serve with yoghurt or ice cream

quince & apple cake

8oz self raising flour

1 teaspoon baking powder

6oz soft margarine

6oz sugar

2eggs

1lb cooking apples and/or quinces

grated rind of 1 lemon

4oz sultanas

pinch salt

topping

1oz soft brown sugar

1teaspoon ground cinnamon

method

peel core and roughly chop apples and quinces

sprinkle with a little lemon juice to stop going brown

put flour, salt, margarine sugar and eggs into bowl and beat till smooth

stir in apples quinces, sultanas and lemon rind.

put into greased and lined 8inch round cake tin and sprinkle top with sugar and cinnamon

bake for about 1½ hrs Gas mark 4, 350°F

plants common to latin

Alecost, Costmary	<i>Tanacetum balsamita</i>	Indian physic	<i>Gillenia trifoliata</i>
Aloe vera	<i>Aloe vera</i>	Japanese fibre banana	<i>Musa basjoo</i>
American mandrake	<i>Podophyllum peltatum</i>	Japanese horseradish	<i>Wasabia japonica</i>
American spikenard	<i>Aralia racemosa</i>	Japanese raisin tree	<i>Hovenia dulcis</i>
Angelica	<i>Angelica archangelica</i>	Japanese wineberry	<i>Rubus phoenicolasius</i>
Arnica	<i>Arnica montana</i>	Jostaberry	<i>Ribes x culverwellii</i>
Asparagus	<i>Asparagus officinalis</i> Purple Jumbo	Kiwi, Chinese gooseberry	<i>Actinidia chinensis</i> Hayward
Babbington's leek	<i>Allium ampeloprasum</i> var <i>babbingtonii</i>	Lemon	<i>Citrus x limon</i>
Bergamot, Bees' Balm	<i>Monarda didyma</i>	Lemon balm	<i>Melissa officinalis</i>
Black bamboo	<i>Phyllostachys nigra</i>	Lemon verbena	<i>Aloysia triphylla</i>
Black chokeberry	<i>Aronia melanocarpa</i>	Liquorice	<i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i>
Black mulberry	<i>Morus nigra</i>	Loquat	<i>Eriobotrya japonica</i>
Blackcurrant	<i>Ribes nigrum</i> Ben Sarek	Lovage	<i>Levisticum officinale</i>
Borage	<i>Borago officinalis</i>	Marsh mallow	<i>Althaea officinalis</i>
Chamomile	<i>Chamaemelum nobile</i>	Medlar	<i>Mespilus germanica</i>
Chickweed	<i>Stellaria media</i>	Moroccan mint	<i>Mentha spicata</i> var <i>crispa</i> Moroccan
Chicory	<i>Cichorium intybus</i>	Mountain ash	<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>
Chilean guava	<i>Ugni molinae</i>	Nasturtium	<i>Tropaeolum majus</i>
Chilli Pepper	<i>Capiscum frutescens</i>	Oca	<i>Oxalis tuberosa</i>
Chinese yam	<i>Dioscorea batatus</i>	Peach	<i>Amygdalus persica</i>
Chocolate vine	<i>Akebia quinata</i>	Pear 'Comice'	<i>Pyrus communis sativa</i> Comice
Cob nut / hazel	<i>Corylus</i> Webbs Prize	Pineapple sage	<i>Salvia elegans</i> Scarlet Pineapple
Comfrey	<i>Symphytum uplandicum</i>	Pokeweed	<i>Phytolacca americana</i>
Common chives	<i>Allium schoenoprasum</i>	Pot marigold	<i>Calendula officianalis</i>
Common thyme	<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>	Potato	<i>Solanum tuberosum</i>
Cone flower	<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>	Primrose	<i>Primula vulgaris</i>
Coreopsis	<i>Coreopsis tinctoria</i>	Purple sage	<i>Salvia officinalis</i> Purpurascens
Cornflower	<i>Centaurea cyanus</i>	Quince 'Vranja'	<i>Cydonia oblonga</i> Vranja
Crab apple	<i>Malus sylvestris</i> John Downie	Ribwort plantain	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officianale</i>	Rosemary	<i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i>
Day lily	<i>Hemerocallis</i> Bonanza	Seakale	<i>Crambe maritima</i>
Dog rose	<i>Rosa canina</i>	Serpent garlic	<i>Allium sativum ophioscorodon</i>
Elf wort, Elecampane	<i>Inula helenium</i>	Shiitake Mushroom	<i>Lentinula edodes</i>
Emmer wheat	<i>Triticum dicoccon</i>	Solomon's seal	<i>Polygonatum x hybridum</i>
English lavender	<i>Lavandula angustifolia</i>	St John's wort	<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>
Evening primrose	<i>Oenothera biennis</i>	Stinging nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>
False spikenard	<i>Smilacina racemosa</i>	Sunflower	<i>Helianthus annuus</i>
Fennel	<i>Foeniculum vulgare</i>	Sweet cherry	<i>Prunus avium</i> Stella
Feverfew	<i>Tanacetum parthenium</i>	Sweet cicely	<i>Myrrhus odorata</i>
Foxglove	<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>	Sweet woodruff	<i>Galium oderatum</i>
French sorrel	<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	Sweet wormwood	<i>Artemisia annua</i>
Ginger	<i>Zingiber officinale</i>	Tansy	<i>Tanacetum vulgare</i>
Globe artichoke	<i>Cynara scolymus</i>	Tiger flower	<i>Tigridia pavonia</i>
Good King Henry, Fat hen	<i>Chenopodium bonus-henricus</i>	Toothache tree	<i>Zanthoxylum alatum planispinum</i>
Greek oregano	<i>Origanum vulgare hirtum</i>	Valerian	<i>Valeriana officinalis</i>
Ground elder, Goutweed	<i>Aegopodium podagraria</i> Variegatum	Victoria Plum	<i>Prunus domestica</i> Victoria
Ground nut, Indian potato	<i>Apios americana</i>	Wax myrtle	<i>Myrica cerifera</i>
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Welsh onion	<i>Allium fistulosum</i>
Himalayan rhubarb	<i>Rheum australe</i>	Wild garlic, Ramsons	<i>Allium ursinum</i>
Hop	<i>Humulus lupulus aureum</i>	Wild marjoram	<i>Origanum vulgare</i>
House leek	<i>Sempervivum tectorum</i>	Wild strawberry	<i>Fragaria vesca</i>

Kiwi, Chinese Gooseberry

Actinidia chinensis 'Hayward'



The fruit can be eaten raw, cooked or dried. Leaves have been eaten as a famine food



Used to treat kidney stones, reduce fever and as a sedative. A tea made from the leaves is used to treat mange in dogs.

Other Paper can be made from the bark. The bark removed in one piece from near the root and placed in hot ashes becomes very hard and can be used as a tube for a pencil. 'Hayward' is a female Kiwi.

153

Actinidiaceae

East Asia - China

Ground Elder, Goutweed

Aegopodium podagraria 'Variegatum'



Is said to have been introduced by the Romans. Was cultivated as a food crop in the Middle Ages. The young leaves have a tangy flavour and can be used in salads or soups



The leaves used to be eaten as a treatment for gout. It has also been used to treat rheumatism and arthritis

Other Vigorous ground cover. Less invasive in dry conditions.

112

Umbelliferae

Eurasia

Chocolate Vine

Akebia quinata



The flowers smell of chocolate. The fruit has a sweet delicate flavour. Its bitter skin can be fried. The soft young shoots can be used in salads.



Used in China as a contraceptive. It controls bacterial and fungal infections and is used in the treatment of urinary tract infection.

Other The peeled stems are very pliable and can be used in basket making.

167

Lardizabalaceae

East Asia

Babington's Leek

Allium ampeloprasum var. babingtonii



Leaves and bulbs are used as a vegetable.
The flowers can also be eaten.



Can be used as an antiseptic for stings or bites, but less effective than garlic.

Other The juice of the plant is used as a moth repellent. The whole plant is said to repel insects and moles.

119

Alliaceae

U.K.

Welsh Onion

Allium fistulosum



Bulb and leaves used in salads or as vegetables.
Flowers can be eaten raw



Fights infection and helps clean the blood and kidneys

Other The name does not derive from Wales but from the germanic word 'welsche' meaning foreign. Also known as Japanese bunching onions.

8

Alliaceae

Asia

Serpent Garlic

Allium sativum ophioscorodon



Leaves cultivated in China as a winter vegetable.
Seed can be sprouted for salads



Garlic has many medicinal uses e.g. treatment of ringworm.
Daily use benefits blood & heart.

Other A glue made from the juice can be used to mend glass and china.
A few cloves of garlic spread amongst stored fruit will delay rotting.

58

Alliaceae

Central Asia

Common Chives

Allium schoenoprasum



Leaves and bulbs are eaten like spring onions.
The flowers can be used as a garnish.



The whole plant has a beneficial effect on the digestive system and the blood circulation.

Other The juice has fungicidal properties - effective against mildew and scab, and is also an insect repellent.

61

Alliaceae

Eurasia

Wild Garlic, Ramsons

Allium ursinum



The flowers, leaves and bulbs are all edible.



Good for promoting the general health of the body when used regularly.
It is particularly effective in reducing high blood pressure and blood cholesterol levels.

Other The juice of the plant has been used as a general household disinfectant.

32

Alliaceae

Eurasia British native

Aloe Vera

Aloe vera



The leaves and seeds can be eaten in times of famine but are very bitter. Gel from the leaves can be used in jellies.



Widely used herbal medicine. Gel from the cut leaves forms a soothing protective coat over wounds and burns, aiding healing & preventing infection. Sap from the base of the leaves (bitter aloes) is taken to treat constipation, poor appetite & digestive problems.

Other The leaf extracts are used in skin care products. The plant releases oxygen and absorbs carbon dioxide at night as well as during the day so is a good plant for bedrooms.

96

Aloeaceae

Mediterranean

Lemon Verbena

Aloysia triphylla



A delicious lemon flavoured herb.

The leaves can be used fresh in salads or cooked as spinach, or dried as a herb or tea



Undervalued medicinal herb - the strong lemon scented essential oil is calming & digestive

Other Good to grow amongst vegetables as it repels midges & other insects

52

Verbenaceae

S. America

Marsh Mallow

Althaea officinalis



The leaves can be chopped finely in salads or used to thicken soups. The water left from boiling the roots can be whisked like egg whites to make meringues. The sweet 'marshmallow' was made from the powdered roots.



A useful, soothing herb for inflammations of mucous membranes, as in the digestive system. An ointment from the roots can be used for boils, bites or sprains.

Other Glue can be made from the roots or they can be dried and used as toothbrushes. Paper can be made from the stems and roots.

83

Malvaceae

Eurasia / N. Africa British native

Peach

Amygdalus persica



The rich juicy fruit is eaten raw, cooked or dried. The flowers can be added to salads or used as a tea. The seeds can be eaten unless very bitter, when they contain high levels of hydrocyanic acid.



All parts of the tree are used in herbal medicine for conditions such as gastritis, coughs and constipation.

Other Oil from the seeds is used in skin creams. The bruised leaves can remove strong flavours such as garlic. The leaves and fruits produce dyes. A sticky gum is made from the stems.

33

Rosaceae

Eastern Asia

Angelica

Angelica archangelica



The stems can be used to sweeten tart fruits such as rhubarb, replacing sugar. The stem can also be crystallised for cake decoration. The leaves taste of liquorice.



Long used for digestive disorders & circulation problems. Good for flatulence.

Other The oil from the seeds has a musk-like aroma and is often used to flavour liqueurs and in perfume.

69

Umbelliferae

Europe

Ground Nut, Indian Potato

Apios americana



Tuber can be eaten raw or cooked. Has a delicious flavour somewhat like roasted sweet potato. The seeds and pods are high in protein and can be used like peas or beans.



In New England the nuts were boiled & made into a plaster to treat skin cancer.

Other Contains latex - possibly useful as a rubber substitute

59

Leguminosae

N. America

American Spikenard

Aralia racemosa



The fruits and young shoots can be eaten.

The roots have a liquorice flavour and can be used as a substitute for sarsaparilla and for making 'root beer'



A drink made from the pulverised roots is used as a cough treatment. A poultice made from the roots or fruit is applied to sores, burns, itchy skin, ulcers and swellings. Used widely by North American Indians.

Other Known as 'Life-of-man' due to its many healing properties Two or three spoonfuls of the oil helps passions of the heart and swoonings!

79

Araliaceae

India, N. America & Japan

Arnica

Arnica montana



Toxic if eaten!



Use externally for bruises & sprains as increases local blood supply & accelerates healing. Used in minute doses by homeopaths to treat traumatic injury & pain.

Other Known as 'Mountain tobacco' as leaves & roots can be smoked

26

Asteraceae

Central Europe

Black Chokeberry

Aronia melanocarpa



The fruit has a good flavour but is very astringent. It should be fully ripe before being eaten and is best after a frost. Is very rich in pectin and makes a good jelly.



An infusion of the berries can be used in the treatment of colds.

Other The juice of the plant can be used as a moth repellent.

7

Rosaceae

North America

Sweet Wormwood

Artemisia annua



Oil from the leaves is used to flavour Vermouth and other spirits.



Contains artemisinin which is a proven cure against drug resistant malaria. The leaves and seeds are used to treat fevers, indigestion and wind.

Other Used in China when brewing wine. The essential oil is used in perfume.
Also known as Qing Ho.

99

Asteraceae

China

Asparagus

Asparagus officinalis 'Purple Jumbo'



The young shoots are eaten raw or cooked.
The roasted seeds can be used as a coffee substitute



The roots have a strong diuretic and laxative action.
The seeds are said to possess antibiotic activity

Other Contains asparagusic acid, which kills nematodes.

37

Asparagaceae

Europe

Borage

Borage officinalis



The leaves and flowers have a cucumber flavour and are used in salads and cold summer drinks.



Has been used since ancient times to relieve depression. The seeds contain high levels of gamma linolenic acid used for hormonal problems & high blood pressure.

Other A blue dye from the flowers turns pink on contact with acid. The plant helps repel insects. Also known as Starflower.

124

Boraginaceae

Central Europe

Pot Marigold

Calendula officianalis



The leaves are eaten raw and are very rich in vitamins and minerals. The petals can be used fresh in salads. Dried petals are used to flavour and colour soups, cakes or rice.



A common home remedy for skin problems applied externally to bites, stings, sprains & wounds. It is a detoxifying herb and is taken internally to treat fevers & infections.

Other The growing plant reduces insect attacks. A shampoo of the flowers can lighten hair colour. The flowers produce a yellow dye.

221

Asteraceae

Europe

Chilli Pepper

Capiscum frutescens



Very hot fruits used as flavouring fresh or dried. Leaves can be cooked.



Sensitizes nerve endings so is used as a local anaesthetic. Dried fruit stimulates the circulation & has been placed inside socks as a traditional remedy for cold feet .

Other Plant repels insects. Fruits blended with water and a little pure soap make a good spray for greenfly.

181

Solanaceae

South America

Cornflower

Centaurea cyanus



Flowers used in salads or as a garnish. The young shoots can be eaten. Edible blue dye from flowers.



Used in France for tired eyes. Infusion of flowers used as a mouthwash for ulcers & bleeding gums

Other Blue ink and dye from petals. Used for colour in pot-pourri. Attracts bees & butterflies

74

Asteraceae

Europe & Near East

Chamomile

Chamaemelum nobile



An aromatic but bitter herb. Herb tea is made from the dried flowers. The young shoots will flavour food.



Frequently used for intestinal disorders and as a sedative especially for teething babies. The flowers can be used externally to treat cuts sores and burns.

Other The flowers are used to lighten fair hair. The plant acts as an insect repellent and can be used as a plant tonic. The flowers produce a yellow dye

130

Asteraceae

Europe & N. Africa British native

Good King Henry, Fat Hen

Chenopodium bonus-henricus



Small quantities of young leaves can be eaten raw. Can be cooked as a spinach. The flowers, buds and seeds can also be eaten.



The seeds work as a gentle laxative. A poultice of leaves can cure sores. The leaves are a good source of iron.

Other Gold/green dyes can be obtained from the whole plant.

109

Chenopodiaceae

Europe British native

Chicory

Cichorium intybus



The blanched leaves are used in salads or cooked. They are rather bitter. The roots can be cooked like parsnips.



Has been used as a tonic. Latex from the stems can cure warts

Other The roots are rich in inulin which can be converted to alcohol. The leaves produce a blue dye.

158

Asteraceae

Eurasia British native

Lemon

Citrus x limon



The acid fruit is used mostly as a drink or flavouring. The dried leaves can be added to tea. The flowers can be eaten in ice-cream or fritters.



A valuable medicinal plant rich in vitamin C, used to fight off infections and by sailors to prevent scurvy. Makes a good gargle for sore throats due to its astringent and bactericidal properties.

Other The essential oil is used in soaps and perfumery. The juice can be used as a bleach, for cleaning old brass or removing ink stains. The dried rind repels insects.

38

Rutaceae

Tropical Asia

Coreopsis

Coreopsis tinctoria



The dried plant can be used to make tea



The roots have been used to treat diarrhoea. The plant has been used by women wanting a female baby!

Other The flowers produce a yellow or red dye. They are good for attracting wildlife and as cut flowers

135

Asteraceae

North America

Cob Nut / Hazel

Corylus 'Webbs Prize'



An excellent nut for eating raw or roasted. A clear yellow oil is obtained from the nuts for use in salad dressings, baking etc. They can also be liquidized and used as a plant milk.



The oil has a gentle action in cases of infection with threadworm or pinworm in babies and young children.

Other The seed oil can be used in paints and to polish wood. The twigs are used as dowsing rods by water diviners. The coppiced wood makes excellent fences, hurdles and charcoal.

103

Betulaceae

Eurasia

Seakale

Crambe maritima



All parts of the plant can be eaten, the leaves as spinach, the blanched shoots as asparagus, and the flowering shoots as broccoli. The flowers are honey flavoured and the roots rich in starch and sugar.



None known

Other None known

9

Cruciferae

Coastal Europe, British native

Hawthorn

Crataegus monogyna



The fruits make a very flavourful jelly. The young shoots have a nutty flavour. Traditionally they were eaten by school children and known as 'bread and cheese'.



Hawthorn is a very valuable herb used for heart and circulatory disorders. The flowers and fruit can reduce high blood pressure.

Other Makes a good animal-proof hedge. The wood is very hard and good for wood turning. It burns well producing a lot of heat.

105

Rosaceae

Europe British native

Quince 'Vranja'

Cydonia oblonga 'Vranja'



The fruit needs to be cooked before being eaten in cooler climates. It is rich in pectin and is used in jellies, preserves etc



The bark is astringent and is used in the treatment of ulcers. The fruit and its juice can be used as a mouthwash or gargle, to treat mouth ulcers, gum problems and sore throats.

Other The seed coat is used as a gum arabic substitute, in syrups, gumdrops and paints.

41

Rosaceae

Mediterranean

Globe Artichoke

Cynara scolymus



The flower buds are eaten raw or cooked. Small artichokes can be pickled or used in soups and stews. The flowering stems are peeled & eaten raw or cooked and have a sweet nutty flavour. The dried flowers are a rennet substitute, used for curdling plant milks.



Contains cynarin in the leaves, which improves liver and gall bladder function, stimulates the secretion of digestive juices, especially bile, and lowers blood cholesterol levels.

Other A dark grey dye is obtained from the leaves.

170

Asteraceae

Mediterranean

Foxglove

Digitalis purpurea



Highly toxic!



A powerful medicine for heart disease making the heart beat slower, stronger and more regularly. Also increases the production of urine.

Other Foxglove tea added to the water prolongs the life of cut flowers. Good companion plant and liked by bees. The flowers produce a green dye.

172

Scrophulariaceae

W. Europe British native

Chinese Yam

Dioscorea batatus



The tuber tastes like potato and is cooked in similar ways.



Many medicinal uses. In modern medicine, chemicals from the tuber are used to speed healing processes and to manufacture steroids.

Other None known

155

Dioscoreaceae

East Asia

Cone Flower

Echinacea purpurea



The leaves are edible



Native Americans used echinacea for centuries to cure everything from colds to cancers, and particularly for snake bites and stings. Research indicates that it is also effective in treating some viral and bacterial infections, and in healing wounds and reducing inflammations.

Other Good cut flower

128

Asteraceae

N. America

Loquat

Eriobotrya japonica



The fruit can be eaten raw or cooked in pies, sauces and jellies.
The roasted seed is a coffee substitute



Is one of the most popular cough remedies in the Far East.
It is the ingredient of many patent medicines.

Other The wood is hard and close grained and used for rulers etc

62

Rosaceae

E. Asia - Japan

Fennel

Foeniculum vulgare



Leaves have an aniseed flavour and can be used as a garnish, salad or tea. The aromatic seeds are used in cakes, breads and curry.
The root can be cooked like parsnip.



Commonly used household remedy, especially useful in digestive complaints.
A tea of the seeds is a safe and effective cure for wind in babies.

Other The essential oil is widely used in toothpastes, perfume etc. The crushed leaves can be used to keep dog fleas at bay. A brown or yellow dye can be obtained from the leaves and flowers.

19

Umbelliferae

S. Europe

Wild Strawberry

Fragaria vesca



The fruits are sweet and succulent but are usually very small and fiddly.
The young leaves can be eaten raw or cooked added to salads or used as a potherb



An infusion of leaves can check diarrhoea.
Good source of vitamin C

Other The fruit is used cosmetically in skin-care creams. It soothes sunburn and whitens the teeth if kept in the mouth for five minutes!

43

Rosaceae

Eurasia British native

Sweet Woodruff

Galium oderatum



Hot and cold drinks can be made from the fresh or dried leaves and flowers. The leaves and white, scented flowers can be eaten in salads.



An anticoagulant is made commercially from this plant to prevent blood clotting. Used in herbalism as a tonic and anti-inflammatory.

Other Smells of vanilla - used in pot-pourri and was used as a strewing herb. Produces red and grey/green dyes.

159

Rubiaceae

Europe / N. Africa British native

Indian Physic

Gillenia trifoliata



None known



Tea made from the whole plant acts as a strong laxative and emetic. Tiny amounts are used internally to treat colds, indigestion, asthma and hepatitis. A poultice of the plant is used to treat rheumatism, bee stings and swellings.

Other None known

214

Rosaceae

North East USA

Liquorice

Glycyrrhiza glabra



Liquorice powder is extracted from the roots and used in sweets etc. It is very much sweeter than sucrose. It is still grown in Pontefract, Yorkshire, for making Pontefract cakes.



A remedy for coughs and chest complaints, esp. bronchitis, and is an ingredient in almost all popular cough medicines due to its soothing properties.

Other Extracts from the roots are used as a foaming agent in beer and fire extinguishers. The fibre can be used as an insulating material

164

Leguminosae

Mediterranean

Sunflower

Helianthus annuus



Seeds have a nutty flavour & are very nutritious. Oil used in cooking, salads and margarine.



Tea from flowers or leaves used as cough mixture. Seeds act as a diuretic

Other Valuable oil widely used in lubricants, soap, paint etc. Fibre from stems. Yellow dye from flowers.

35

Asteraceae

North America

Day Lily

Hemerocallis 'Bonanza'



The flowers are edible and make an attractive garnish. Dried flowers are used in China in soups and vegetable dishes



The juice of the roots is said to be an effective antidote in cases of arsenic poisoning

Other Fibres from leaves used to make rope and shoes

117

Hemerocallidaceae

China

Japanese Raisin Tree

Hovenia dulcis



The fruits are sweet and fragrant with a pear-like flavour. When dried they are similar to raisins. An extract from the seeds, stems and young leaves makes a honey substitute.



The fruits can reduce fever, relax muscles and are a laxative. The seeds can reduce the effects of intoxication from wine.

Other None known

113

Rhamnaceae

East Asia

Hop

Humulus lupulus aureum



The shoots can be cooked and the young leaves cooked or eaten raw. The dried flower heads are used as a flavouring and preservative in beer.



Hops have a long and proven history of herbal use for their soothing, sedative, tonic and calming effects. A tea can be made from the leaves.

Other The flowers can be used to stuff pillows when the weight of the head will release the volatile oils.

3

Cannabidaceae

Eurasia

St John's Wort

Hypericum perforatum



The herb and fruit are sometimes used as a tea substitute. The flowers can be used in making mead.



It has a long history of herbal use for many different conditions. Recent research has confirmed it to be effective against depression. The dried herb can be mixed with oil as a treatment for bruises and varicose veins.

Other Yellow, gold, brown and red dyes can be obtained from the flowers and leaves.

217

Hypericaceae

Eurasia, N. Africa British native

Elf wort, Elecampane

Inula helenium



Bitter, aromatic herb used by the Romans. The root can be candied. It contains the starch inulin which can be converted to a sugar substitute suitable for diabetics.



Long history of use as a medicinal herb, very effective for coughs and other chest complaints. It is a very safe herb and suitable for all ages. It cleanses toxins from the body, stimulating the immune and digestive systems. A root extract will kill parasitic worms.

Other

A blue dye is obtained from the root and also a camphor-scented essential oil.

152

Asteraceae

Eurasia.

English Lavender

Lavandula angustifolia



The leaves, petals and flowering shoots can be used in salads, soups, stews etc. The flowers can be crystallized or used as a tea.



An important herb for its soothing and relaxing effects. The essential oil is a good antiseptic and can be used neat to heal burns, stings and cuts. Rubbed into the temple it can cure headaches. Added to the bath water it aids sleep.

Other The essential oil is much used in soap and cosmetics. It can also be used as a detergent and cleaning agent, and to repel insects and mice.

24

Lamiaceae

Mediterranean

Shiitake Mushroom

Lentinula edodes



Use fresh or dried as a meat substitute. Common source of protein in China & Japan in dishes like miso soup & dashi.



Strengthen immune system to fight disease. Lowers blood cholesterol. Used in cancer treatment in Japan. Contains all 8 essential amino acids.

Other Aids weight reduction

81

Fungi kingdom

East Asia

Lovage

Levisticum officinale



All parts of the plant are edible, having a yeasty/celery flavour. They can be used in salads, soups, stews etc, either fresh or dried.



Lovage is a warming and tonic herb for the treatment of indigestion, poor appetite, wind, colic and bronchitis.

Other An essential oil from the plant is used in perfumery.

91

Umbelliferae

Eurasia

Crab Apple

Malus sylvestris 'John Downie'



The fruits make excellent jam and preserves but are not usually eaten raw. They are a very good source of pectin.



Good source of vitamin C.
Pectin is said to protect against radiation.

Other Used as a pollinator for all apple species, and as root stock for fruit trees. The bark produces a red/yellow dye.

121

Rosaceae

Litchfield, England

Lemon Balm

Melissa officinalis



The lemon-flavoured leaves can be used fresh in tea, salads and cooked foods. Used to flavour Chartreuse and Benedictine liqueurs.



Has a long tradition as a tonic remedy. Used to calm the nervous system and for indigestion.
Modern research has shown that it can help in the treatment of cold sores

Other Can be rubbed on the skin as a fly repellent.
Good in pot-pourri.

34

Labiatae

Eurasia & N Africa

Moroccan Mint

Mentha spicata var crispa 'Moroccan'



The leaves have a strong spearmint flavour and are used in mint sauce. They make a very good mint tea.



Mint tea is commonly used to help nausea and other digestive disorders. It can relieve nervous headache and help concentration.

Other Mint oil is used commercially as a flavouring and in toothpaste. Rats and mice dislike the smell so the plant was used to protect grain.

138

Labiatae

Europe

Medlar

Mespilus germanica



The fruit can be eaten raw after 'bletting' - leaving until it is brown and soft and almost rotten.

The unripe fruit makes a good jelly.



The pulp of the fruit is laxative.

The seeds contain hydrocyanic acid and should not be eaten in quantity.

Other The wood is hard and flexible.

46

Rosaceae

Eurasia

Bergamot, Bees' Balm

Monarda didyma



Leaves used in Earl Grey tea or to flavour salads & cold drinks. Flower petals decorative in salads.



Used as a tea for digestive upsets such as flatulence or nausea. Essential oil used in depression and fighting infections

Other Oil used in perfumes.
Dried leaves & flowers good in pot pourri.
Flowers rich in nectar for bees.

21

Lamiaceae

North America

Black Mulberry

Morus nigra



The juicy fruit can be eaten raw, cooked, or used in preserves. It stains the hands and mouth purple.



Has long history of use in Chinese medicine, almost all parts of the plant are used and have antibacterial and antifungal properties.

Other A fibre used in weaving is obtained from the bark. A purple dye comes from the fruit and a yellow-green dye from the leaves. The wood is used in joinery.

23

Moraceae

Asia minor

Japanese Fibre Banana

Musa basjoo



The nectar of the flowers is sweet and drinkable.
The fruits of this banana are not edible.



Used to treat beriberi, constipation and jaundice.
The leaves are diuretic.

Other The fibre is used for making paper and cloth, giving the plant its name.

48

Musaceae

East Asia

Wax Myrtle

Myrica cerifera



The fruit can be eaten raw or cooked.



A popular herbal remedy in US - it increases circulation, perspiration and reduces bacterial infection.

Other The wax covering on the fruits is used for candles and soap. The fruits produce a blue dye.

163

Myricaceae

N. America

Sweet Cicely

Myrrhus odorata



The raw leaves have a sweet, aniseed flavour. They are used to flavour foods in herb mixes.

The seeds will freshen breath if chewed.



The whole plant is useful in the treatment of coughs and wind.

Other The leaves and seeds can be rubbed over wood as an aromatic polish.

29

Umbelliferae

Europe

Evening Primrose

Oenothera biennis



The roots, stems, leaves and flower buds can all be eaten. The boiled roots taste like parsnips.



A very important medicinal herb. Used in the treatment of pre-menstrual tension, multiple sclerosis, hyperactivity and eczema. Regular use can reduce high cholesterol levels.

Other The oil from the seeds is used in skin creams and cosmetics. The flowers give a yellow dye.

56

Onagraceae

East N. America

Wild Marjoram

Origanum vulgare



Widely used in Mediterranean cooking. The leaves are used fresh or dried with vegetables, in salads, or in soups and casseroles. Herb tea can be made from the flowering stem or leaves.



It has a beneficial effect upon the digestive and respiratory systems. Its high thymol content makes it a very good antiseptic.

Other The essential oil is used in food, soaps and perfumes. Good in herb pillows or in the bath. The plant repels ants and other pests, so is a good companion plant.

197

Labiatae

Eurasia

Greek Oregano

Origanum vulgare hirtum



Oregano is an important herb in Mediterranean cookery and is often used dried



Has a long history of medicinal use for digestive and chest problems. It is a good antiseptic due to its high thymol content. As a weak tea it can aid sleep.

Other The essential oil is used in food, soap and perfume. The plant repels ants. A red/purple dye is obtained from the flowers.

193

Labiatae

S. Europe

Oca

Oxalis tuberosa



The tubers can be prepared like new potatoes. If left to dry in the sun they become sweet and are sold as fruits in S. American markets. The young leaves and flowers are edible.



The sharp flavour of this plant is due to oxalic acid and should not be eaten in very large quantities without cooking.

Other None known

156

Oxalidaceae

South America

Black Bamboo

Phyllostachys nigra



The young shoots can be cooked.



Leaves are used to treat fever, vomiting and nosebleeds.

Other The canes are used for plant supports, musical instruments, furniture and handicrafts.

78

Gramineae

E. Asia, China.

Pokeweed

Phytolacca americana



All parts of the plant are toxic! Young leaves are edible if very carefully prepared.



Has a long history of medicinal use, containing potent anti-inflammatory and anti-viral agents.

Other The crimson juice from the berries used to be used as ink and as a food dye despite being poisonous.

151

Phytolaccaceae

N. America.

Ribwort Plantain

Plantago lanceolata



The very young leaves can be eaten. The seeds can be cooked like sago or ground into powder and added to flour.



An effective treatment for bleeding and skin problems. The seeds act as a laxative as the gummy mucus they contain swells up in the gut.

Other The leaves produce a good fibre. The mucilage from the seeds can be used to stiffen fabric. The plant produces golden brown dyes.

131

Plantaginaceae

Eurasia British native

American Mandrake

Podophyllum peltatum



The fully ripe fruit is edible raw or cooked, or made into jams, jellies, pies etc



Leaves and roots are poisonous!
The unripe fruit is a strong laxative.
Has been used to treat cancers.

Other Has been used as an insecticidal spray on potato plants

92

Podophyllaceae

North America

Solomon's Seal

Polygonatum x hybridum



The young shoots can be eaten raw or cooked like asparagus.
The North American Indians made the powdered root into bread in times of famine.



Long history of herbal use.
A poultice of the roots prevents excessive bruising and stimulates tissue repair.

Other The powdered roots have been used as a snuff.

101

Convallariaceae

Europe and Asia

Primrose

Primula vulgaris



The young leaves can be eaten raw, or steamed and tossed in butter. The flowers are very attractive in salads, or they can be crystallized for puddings and cakes.



Occasionally used as an expectorant for treating bronchitis. A tea from the leaves and flowers acts as a mild sedative.

Other Very attractive ground cover plant.

60

Primulaceae

Europe British native

Sweet Cherry

Prunus avium 'Stella'



Sweet dark red fruits best raw.



An aromatic resin obtained from wounding the bark can be used as an inhalant for persistent coughs.

Other Cherry wood is much prized by wood workers and for firewood. Dye from the leaves and fruits.

200

Roseaceae

Europe, N.Africa, W Asia

Victoria Plum

Prunus domestica 'Victoria'



The large fruit can be eaten raw or cooked. The flowers can be used as a garnish or in a tea. The seeds are edible unless they are very bitter when they contain hydrogen cyanide.



The dried fruits, prunes, are a safe and effective laxative. The bark can be used to reduce fevers.

Other Dyes can be obtained from the leaves, fruits and bark. The sticky gum from damaged branches can be used as an adhesive. Wood used in musical instruments

31

Rosaceae

Eurasia cultivar

Pear 'Comice'

Pyrus communis sativa 'Comice'



Dessert pear - soft, sweet, juicy fruit when ripe.



The bark contains arbutin, an antibiotic. The leaves have been used for renal and urinary infections.

Other The wood is hard and fine grained so good for carving. It is scented when burnt. The bark contains a yellow dye.

28

Rosaceae

France - 1849

Himalayan Rhubarb

Rheum australe



The leaf stem is eaten raw, cooked or made into preserves. The leaves should not be eaten as they contain rutin.



Is one of the most widely used herbs in Chinese herbal medicine. Used for stomach and liver complaints, and is a powerful laxative.

Other The leaves can be up to 1 metre wide and are used to protect fruit in baskets.

108

Polygonaceae

Himalayan region

Blackcurrant

Ribes nigrum 'Ben Sarek'



The fruit is usually cooked for pies, jams, etc. The aromatic leaves can be used in soups or teas.



Good source of minerals and vitamins especially vitamin C, so good for treating colds and flu. The infused leaves are used for sore throats and mouth ulcers.

Other A yellow dye comes from the leaves and a blue/violet dye from the fruit. Oil from the seeds is used in cosmetics.

115

Grossulariaceae

Scotland

Jostaberry

Ribes x culverwellii



The fruit tastes like a gooseberry when under-ripe and like a blackcurrant when fully ripe. Good raw or cooked in pies, jams etc.



High in vitamin C.

Other None known

100

Grossulariaceae

Cultivar

Dog Rose

Rosa canina



The fruit is used to make jams and syrups. The dried fruits are used in fruit teas. The petals are used as a garnish or made into rosewater flavouring.



The hips are used to treat colds coughs and scurvy. Rosehip syrup was used as a Vitamin C supplement for mothers and babies during the War.

Other The petals are used in potpourri and perfumery.

85

Rosaceae

Europe and S.W.Asia British

Rosemary

Rosmarinus officinalis



A strong culinary herb used in small quantities in soups and stews, vegetables and sweet dishes. Also used in vinegars and oils.



The oil has anti-fungal, anti-septic and stimulant properties. It helps poor circulation if rubbed into the affected joints and relieves headaches. Rosemary tea is a good mouthwash and gargle. Put in the bath it promotes healthy skin.

Other Used in many shampoos and as a hair rinse to make the hair shine. The leaves act as a moth repellent.

25

Lamiaceae

Mediterranean

Japanese Wineberry

Rubus phoenicolasius



Very sweet and juicy fruits used raw or in jams, jellies and wines.



None known

Other A purple dye is obtained from the fruits.

165

Rosaceae

East Asia

French Sorrel

Rumex acetosa



The leaves have a strong lemony flavour and can be added in small quantities to salads or cooked. The root can be dried, ground and made into noodles.



The leaves have been used to make a cooling drink to relieve fevers. The leaf juice can help skin ailments.

Other The roots provide a dark green / brown dye. An infusion of the stems is used as a polish for bamboo furniture and silver. The juice can act as a stain remover.

12

Polygonaceae

Eurasia

Pineapple Sage

Salvia elegans 'Scarlet Pineapple'



The leaves have a pineapple scent and can be used in cold drinks, fruit salads or under sponge cake. In savoury dishes they give a sausage-like flavour.



None known

Other None known

49

Lamiaceae

S. North America

Purple Sage

Salvia officinalis 'Purpurascens'



Can be used like common sage in cooking. Traditionally used with pork and sausages. The flowers can be used in salads.



The leaves have antiseptic qualities - rub over the teeth and gums to heal the gums and clean the teeth. Aids digestion of fatty foods.

Other The flowers work as a compost activator. Planted among cabbages and carrots, it can repel insects. Essential oil from the leaves is used in toiletries.

129

Lamiaceae

South Europe

House Leek

Sempervivum tectorum



The leaves can be added to salads. The juice from the leaves makes a refreshing drink.



The broken leaves can be applied to stings, burns and insect bites. They can also help remove corns.

Other Used to form living roofs.

57

Crassulaceae

C. & S. Europe

False Spikenard

Smilacina racemosa



The pea sized fruit has a bitter/sweet flavour. Can be made into jellies. The young shoots can be used as asparagus.



Was widely used by North American Indians for a variety of complaints. The root aids healing so is used to treat wounds. Rich in vitamins.

Other Ground cover

71

Convallariaceae

North America

Potato

Solanum tuberosum



The tubers can be eaten raw but are usually cooked in a variety of ways. Cooked potato can be dried and made into a flour. All green parts of the plant are poisonous.



The juice from a potato can relieve pain from peptic ulcers. Raw potato can be pounded and used to sooth and heal burns

Other Starch from the tubers has many uses including making alcohol. Potato juice will clean natural fabrics like cotton. The water from boiling potatoes will clean silver.

137

Solanaceae

South America

Mountain Ash

Sorbus aucuparia



The fruit is very acid but makes excellent jellies. The leaves and flowers can be used as tea.



An infusion of the fruit can be used as a gargle for sore throats. The bark has been used to treat diarrhoea.

Other On May Day a sprig of rowan was hung over doors to repel evil. Wells were dressed with rowan to repel witches. The bark was used in dying and tanning and the wood for handles.

6

Rosaceae

Europe British native

Chickweed

Stellaria media



The young leaves are very nutritious and are usually available all year round. They are good in salad or cooked as spinach.



Has a long history of herbal use. Useful for soothing itchy skin and encourages wound healing.

Other A useful food plant for many caterpillars.

111

Caryophyllaceae

Worldwide British native

Comfrey

Symphytum uplandicum



Young leaves and shoots can be eaten in small quantities.



Comfrey is a common, well researched herbal medicine. Speeds up healing and can be used externally as a poultice on varicose ulcers, bruises and broken bones.

Other Cultivated specifically to provide compost and a liquid plant feed high in potassium. Produces a golden dye.

116

Boraginaceae

Europe - cultivar

Alecost, Costmary

Tanacetum balsamita



The leaves were used in brewing ale before hops became popular for bitter in the Middle Ages. They can be used in small amounts in salads.



A fresh leaf rubbed on bee or horse fly bites can relieve the pain. Has been used to treat burns.

Other Traditional strewing herb - fragrant and discourages insects. A leaf used as a bookmark wards off moths.

1

Asteraceae

Western Asia

Feverfew

Tanacetum parthenium



The dried flowers are used to flavour some pastries. Used in cooking it has a bitter aromatic taste. A tea is made from the dried flowers



Research has found it to be effective for some migraine headaches and arthritis.

Other An insecticide with the same properties as pyrethrum can be made from the dried flower buds.

89

Asteraceae

Eurasia British native

Tansy

Tanacetum vulgare



The bitter young leaves and the flowers can be used in small quantities in salads. They can also be used as a substitute for nutmeg and cinnamon.



Used under supervision to expel roundworms and threadworms. Tansy tea can be used externally to treat scabies.

Other Produces a green or yellow dye. Used to repel insects. Can be rubbed into the coat of dogs or cats to prevent fleas.

70

Asteraceae

Europe British native

Dandelion

Taraxacum officianale



Young raw leaves used in salads. Spicy root used raw or cooked. Ground roots used as coffee substitute. Flowers used as tea or to make wine.



Common herbal remedy especially useful as a diuretic. Has an antibacterial action. Latex used to treat warts and verrucas.

Other Dye from roots. Latex for making rubber from roots. Tea from leaves used to clear freckles. Good bee and caterpillar plant. Liquid plant food from roots and leaves. Enjoyed by rabbits.

146

Asteraceae

N. hemisphere British native

Common Thyme

Thymus vulgaris



The leaves and flowering tops are used fresh or dried, retaining their flavour well in stews and stuffings.



Long history of medicinal use. Is an antiseptic and makes a good mouthwash. A little essential oil added to the bath helps aching joints.

Other The growing plant discourages cabbage root fly. The essential oil can prevent mildew and kill mosquito larvae.

192

Labiatae

S. Europe.

Tiger Flower

Tigridia pavonia



The small corms when roasted taste like sweet potato. They have been eaten in Mexico since prehistory.



The plant has been used to promote fertility

Other The leaves have been used on this garden for weaving baskets.

10

Iridaceae

Mexico

Emmer Wheat

Triticum dicoccon



Makes a good bread which was eaten by the ancient Egyptians. Was the main cereal crop throughout the Neolithic period and into the Bronze Age. In Italy it is made into pasta and used with pulses to make a hearty soup. An important food crop in Ethiopia.



None known

Other The straw can be used for fuel or thatching . It makes good corn dollies because of its length. Sprouted Emmer wheat may have been the main ingredient of ancient Egyptian beer.

97

Poaceae

Eurasia

Nasturtium

Tropaeolum majus



Flowers, leaves and seeds are edible - with a pleasant peppery taste



Has long been used in Andean herbal medicine as a disinfectant and for wound healing

Other They are an excellent companion plant and attract beneficial insects to the garden

219

Tropaeolaceae

S. America - Peru

Chilean Guava

Ugni molinae



Aromatic fruit tasting of wild strawberries. Leaves can be used as tea and the roasted seeds as a coffee substitute.



As all fruit, is a good source of vitamins.

Other Was cultivated commercially in Cornwall and was a favourite of Queen Victoria.

162

Myrtaceae

Chile

Stinging Nettle

Urtica dioica



The young leaves may be cooked as spinach or in soup. They are rich in vitamins and minerals. Nettle beer is made from the young shoots.



Nettles have a long, wide history of medicinal use e.g. for eczema, jaundice and haemorrhoids. The fresh leaves can be rubbed onto the skin to help rheumatism.

Other Fibre from the stems is used for fabric. The leaves make a plant food & insect spray. A nettle hair rinse makes the hair soft & shiny. Green dye from the leaves was used for camouflage in the War.

22

Urticaceae

Eurasia British native

Valerian

Valeriana officinalis



The young leaves can be cooked. Essential oil from the roots and leaves can be used to flavour ice cream and cakes.



Widely used as a tranquilliser and is effective in promoting sleep. Has been shown to reduce blood pressure.

Other The oil is used in perfumery. The dried roots can be used to scent clothes or attract cats. The leaves are rich in phosphorous and make a good liquid plant feed.

120

Valerianaceae

Europe British native

Japanese Horseradish

Wasabia japonica



The grated roots form a green paste tasting like horseradish and are commonly used in Japanese cooking. The leaves and flowers are used to make pickle or in salads.



The root stimulates the digestion and is used as an antidote to fish poisoning.

Other None known

44

Cruciferae

East Asia - Japan

Toothache Tree

Zanthoxylum alatum planispinum



The seed is a pepper substitute and is used in Chinese 'five spice' powder. The young leaves can be eaten.



Can be used to make a poultice for toothache or bruises, or a massage oil for rheumatism and arthritis.

Other The stems can be used as a tooth brush.

178

Rutaceae

Asia

Ginger

Zingiber officinale



Used worldwide for flavouring sweet and savoury dishes. It is the most important spice in Chinese cookery. The rhizome can be used fresh, dried, candied or pickled in a wide range of foods.



Well known cure for nausea and abdominal upsets, it can also help lower cholesterol levels, treat migraines and prevent cancers.

Other Used in the Phillipines to expel evil spirits and in Africa as an aphrodisiac.

45

Zingiberaceae

Eastern Asia