Culinary Herbs and Their Uses – June 6, 2012

On Wednesday, June 6th, 2012, the aromatic scent of garden herbs filled the room of the Greely community centre where members of the Greely Gardeners Group were treated to a presentation on *'Culinary Herbs and Their Uses'* by **George and Gerry** of the Herb Garden in Almonte.

In their presentation, George noted the many uses of herbs: culinary and medicinal, as well as the additional benefit of adding aromatic highlights to our gardens.

From the talk, members learned that herbs can be grown in separate herb gardens, mixed into our perennial and vegetable beds, or potted up for our decks and patios. That said, we need to be aware of the 'special' growing conditions for herbs in pots -- pots dry out very fast.

As a result of a question from a member concerning companion planting, George and Gerry provided us with the following suggestions:

> potato / horseradish
> chard / mint
> tomato / basil
> cabbages / horseradish

On the next page is a list of various herbs, their flavours and uses that has been provided by George and Gerry via their website:

http://www.herbgarden.on.ca/explore-learn/cooking-with-herbs/

Cooking with Herbs

Cooking with herbs is much easier than many people think. Using the herbs grown in your garden means that you know that they have been grown without any artificial stimulants or fertilizers. They can be added to your food, fresh or dried. If you are not able to grow your own, purchasing them from a local grower or organic market will more likely ensure their quality.

Herbs are a perfect substitute for salt because they add so much flavour. One easy way to do this is to create a "herb shaker" that you leave on your table in place of the salt and pepper shakers. Herb shakers can be made in many different combinations. How about a "herbes de Provence" shaker combining rosemary, thyme, marjoram, oregano, chervil, summer savory, tarragon, bay and lavender? Another shaker could be "Italian" combining oregano, marjoram, thyme, basil, rosemary and sage. Use your imagination and simply combine the herbs you like the most and shake them on a variety of foods.

Here is a short list of a few of the most common herbs, their flavours, and uses:

SWEET BASIL

Fresh or freeze-dried leaves (Do not dry as most of the flavour will disappear.)
Sweet, with clove-like pungent tang
Eggs, meats, pesto, salads, soups, stews, tomato dishes

THAI BASIL

Fresh or freeze-dried leaves (Do not dry as most of the flavour will disappear.)
Anise scented leaves and flavour
Thai dishes with fish, seafood, garnish for pho [soup]

BAY LEAVES

Fresh or dried leaves
Pungent, aromatic, slightly sweet
Meats, pickling, sauces, soups, stews

CHERVIL

Fresh or freeze-dried leaves
More aromatic than parsley, slight anise flavour
Eggs, fish, salads, sauces, soups, stuffing

CHIVES

Fresh or freeze-dried
Mild onion-like flavour
Appetizers, cream soups, eggs, garnish, salads

GARLIC CHIVES

Fresh or freeze-dried
Finer stalk than regular chives

Mild onion flavour with a hint of garlic
Same uses as reqular chives

DILL

Fresh or freeze-dried feathery leaves
Pungent, tangy
Breads, pickles, cheeses, fish, salads, sauces, vegetables
[Plant seeds regulary through the season to insure quantity]

MARJORAM

Fresh or dried leaves
Aromatic, milder cousin of oregano
Cottage cheese, fish, lamb, poultry, sausages, soups, stews, stuffing

OREGANO

Fresh or dried leaves
Strong, aromatic with pleasantly bitter undertone
Cheese, eggs, fish, Italian dishes, meats, sauces, soups, vegetables

PARSLEY

Fresh or freeze-dried curly leaf and Italian flat leaf
Slightly peppery
Flat leaf parsley has more flavour than the curly leaf
Garnishes, herb mixtures, sauces, taubouli

ROSEMARY

Fresh or dried leaves
Piney, sweet flavour
Casseroles, fish, lamb, salads, seafood, soups, pastas, roasted potatoes

GARDEN SAGE

Fresh or dried leaves
Aromatic, slightly bitter
Fish, meats, poultry, salads, sausages, soups, stuffing

THYME

Fresh or dried leaves
Aromatic, pungent
Chowders, fish, meats, poultry, stews, pastas, tomato dishes