

YUMMY NORTHWEST

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Luscious Lavender

Does aromatherapy work? I don't know for sure. But I do know that when I smell or taste lavender, I feel as if I am relaxing in a warm, fragrant lavender field.

This month, **Yummy Northwest** urges you to explore lavender. Go to a festival, visit the farms (those in Sequim are open all summer), find some to eat.

Throughout the year, the scent and taste of lavender will remind you of sweet summer days.

An introduction to culinary lavender



"Culinary lavender" generally refers to the tiny flower buds of the plant, as shown here (above). You can use them fresh (usually for decoration), or dry them and put the buds in a small storage container. Dried lavender can be used as long as it retains its fragrance. Unless otherwise specified, use dried lavender in recipes. Leaves can be used, too, in which case, use half the amount of dried flowers called for.

As a member of the mint family, all lavender is edible. But the species called English lavender – *Lavandula angustifolia* – is the best used for culinary purposes. Others are higher in camphor oil, which can give a slightly bitter taste to food.

Use only the minimum amount needed to get

Lavender festivals

Washington Lavender Hills Farm Festival

July 8, 2006
Marysville
www.lavenderhillsfarm.com

Sequim Lavender Festival

10th anniversary!
July 14, 15, & 16, 2006
Sequim
www.lavenderfestival.com

Vashon Lavender Harvest Celebration

July 15 & 16, 2006
Vashon Island
www.vashonlavender.com

San Juan Island Lavender Festival

July 15 & 16, 2006
Friday Harbor
www.pelindaba.com

Oregon Lavender Celebration Days

August 5 & 6, 2006
Shooting Star Lavender Farm
Clatskanie
www.shootingstarlavender.com

the flavor you want – you don't want the perfume or bitterness to overwhelm a dish.

As with any edible flower, use only organically grown varieties. Plants from florists or nurseries might be sprayed with insecticides.

To harvest, pick flowers that look fresh and colorful. Rinse the flowers in cool water, removing insects and dirt. Quickly dry them on towels or in a salad spinner, or put the stems in a glass of water to keep fresh until you need them.

To dry, put the lavender into bundles, wrap with rubber bands, and hang with stems up in a dark place. (Sun will cause fading and loss of flavor.) The drying process takes about two weeks.

Get ready to eat...lavender!

By Leslie Phillips

The scent of lavender gently surrounds you. Ahhh, it smells good enough to eat. And you can eat it! Lavender is great in food, and at lavender festivals, everyone is enjoying it!

The trick is to plan ahead: Scout the lavender farms' Web sites to see what tasty treats are featured and be sure to arrive as early as possible. Imagine waiting in a long, slow line on a hot, humid summer day for your first taste of lavender ice cream...only to find the person in front of you got the last scoop!

Lavender is used in many sweet dishes: vanilla ice cream with a subtle lavender flavor; lavender-lemon sorbet; cheesecake with lovely lavender sauce drizzled on top; frosty glasses of lavender-raspberry lemonade; shortbread cookies with lavender frosting made by the local 4-H kids.

Lavender enhances main dishes, too: chicken barbecued with a sun-dried tomato and lavender rub; grilled lavender sausages; pork tenderloin glazed with lavender honey.

You can lick your fingers when you are through eating, or find some lavender soap to wash with instead.

Lavender Lemonade

1 quart lemonade
1 tablespoon dried lavender
1/2 cup boiling water (take from total amount used to make lemonade)

Pour boiling water over lavender and steep for 20 minutes. Strain and add to lemonade. Serve chilled.

from Purple Haze Lavender Farm



LAVENDER COMES IN MANY COLORS. ENJOY THEM ALL.

Herbes de Provence

[Editor's note: This is one of many possible recipes. You can adjust amounts and types of herbs to suit your taste. But be sure to use some lavender!]

3 tablespoons dried lavender
3 tablespoons dried marjoram or oregano
3 tablespoons dried thyme
3 tablespoons dried savory
1 teaspoon dried rosemary
1 teaspoon dried basil
1/2 teaspoon dried sage

Mix together and store in a small jar with a tight-fitting lid. Keep in a dark, cool place. Although this will last for years, it is best to use within one year.

from "The Lavender Garden," by Robert Kourik

Lavender Vinegar

Use 1/2 cup of dried lavender for every pint of vinegar. White, white wine, or champagne vinegar will allow the lavender flavor to come through best. Place lavender in a sterilized jar and add vinegar. Place in a dark place to steep for three weeks. Shake occasionally. Strain into sterilized bottles with tight-fitting lids.

from "Growing Lavender and Community on the Sequim Prairie: A How-To History," by Betty Oppenheimer

Lavender information

Here are a few Web sites to help you get started in your quest for more information and lavender products.

USA

Sequim Lavender Farm and Angel Farm
www.sequimlavenderfarm.com

Jardin du Soleil Lavender
www.jardindusoleil.com

Olympic Lavender Farm
www.olympiclavender.com

Pelindaba Lavender
www.pelindaba.com

Purple Haze Lavender
www.purplehazelavender.com

What's Cooking America
whatscookingamerica.net/Lavender.htm

England
Norfolk Lavender
www.norfolk-lavender.co.uk

France
Essence de Provence
www.essencedeprovence.com

Route de la lavande
www.provenceweb.fr/e/mag/terroir/lavande.htm

...and a book

Useful information, lovely photos, and tasty recipes make this a worthwhile purchase.

The Lavender Garden
by Robert Kourik



GROW YOUR OWN OR FIND SOME TO PICK.

Aren't you sleepy yet?

To help insomnia and migraines, steep 1 teaspoon lavender in 1 cup hot water for 15 minutes (it will get bitter if you steep longer). For a healthy boost (though not recommended for insomnia), add some green tea to steep for the last two or three minutes.

To doubly assure a good night's rest, buy a lavender spray and mist the corners of your pillow before climbing into bed.



LAVENDER CARRIES THE MEMORY OF SUMMER DAYS.

About Yummy Northwest

Each monthly issue highlights an edible delight available in the Pacific Northwest. Online at rainydayrose.com.

Contact the editor

Comments, corrections, topic ideas, and submissions are all most welcome at Yummy_Northwest@hotmail.com.

all photos by Mary Rosewood