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Salvia officinalis: The Herb of Healing

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Salvia officinalis: The Herb of Healing

If you haven't discovered the sensory delight of using fresh herbs, I have to tell ya, you're missing out. We have a bed at the farm devoted to these most flavorful of plants, and anyone with a share is welcome to harvest! Sage in particular grows so effortlessly that we have a veritable culinary explosion of it! We may even have to cut it back hard just to keep it from enveloping our smaller herbs, so please, take some home even if only to enjoy the delicious fragrance, which acts as a natural pick-me-up.

But what can I say about sage and it's diverse and beautiful extended family? It's hard to begin when there's so many interesting species. Perhaps I'll stay with the common variety, often called culinary sage, which has quite the colorful past. It was more well known as a medical miracle than a seasoning since the Greek era. Depictions of one variety appear in a Cretian-Minoan fresco painted around 1400 BCE! The herb was sacred to the later Romans, who gathered it after preforming a small ceremony that involved bathing, food sacrifice, and using a non-iron knife to harvest.

Even later in history, it was prescribed in medieval manuscripts for everything from wound healing and snakebite to memory improvement, and was even recommended as part of a concoction called four thieves vinegar, which was professed to prevent the plague! The genus name, Salvia, (not saliva, as I've been amused to hear sometimes) comes from the Latin word salvere, which means “to save,” or alternatively “to be well.” Other words that are based on the original Latin include “salve” and “salvation.” The latter half of the Latin name, officinalis, is named after the officina, the storeroom of a monastery where medicine was traditionally stored.

Some modern studies on the use of sage have substantiated some pretty cool effects. Multiple tests have shown increased memory recall in testers, and the herb has also shown promise as an anti-depressant and antibacterial treatment. It even has possibility in the treatment of mild to mid progression Alzheimer's.

Yet despite being used as a medicine, it's also one of my favorite and versatile herbs in the kitchen. With a strong, woody flavor, it's a natural with poultry and stuffing, and is one of the most important seasonings used in sausage. To me, it reminds me of homey, stick-to-your-ribs food. Not surprising then, that it's a traditional herb used during Thanksgiving. And don't forget, we have more than sage in the herb garden! Feel free to give them all a try.

Andrew Croft

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**Fried Sage Leaves**

While sage is often used as a condiment in many dishes, this simple recipe can help you make it a central part of your meal. These crisp leaves are an excellent appetizer, a tasty garnish, and a simple way to bring life into a pasta dish. If kept in a cool, air tight container they can also last all day.

**Ready in** 15 mins  
**Serves** 6

**Ingredients**
- 4 cups of oil (vegetable or olive preferred)
- 30 sage leaves
- 1 egg
- 1 cup flour
- Sea Salt

**Directions**
1. Heat four cups of oil in a heavy saucepan until it is 350 degrees F.
2. While the oil is heating wash the sage leaves and pat dry.
3. With a fork whip egg until it is homogenous.
4. Dip sage leaf into the whipped egg and then dip in flour.
5. Once coated place in hot oil for 3 to 5 seconds per side.
6. Remove with a slotted spoon and place on a paper towel to drain
7. Season with sea salt
8. Serve and Enjoy!
Announcements

How to Freeze Leafy Herbs
1. Remove the leaves of the herb from stem.
2. Gently wash herbs in a colander.
3. Lay flat on a towel until the leaves are dry.
4. Once dry line the side of a Ziploc freezer bag with paper towel.
5. Lay a single layer of herb leaves on the top of the paper towel then cover with another paper towel.
6. Repeat until you are out of herb leaves or the Ziploc bag is about a half inch thick.
7. Label the bag with the date.
8. Place in the freezer.
9. Grab a handful of frozen herbs to dress up any meal through the winter.
(Use within six months of freezing for best results. Can be stored for up to a year.)

Herbs in the Garden
- Thyme
- Lemon balm
- Sage
- Lavender
- Garlic chives
- Greek oregano
- Chamomile
- Chives
- Catmint
- Hyssop
- Summer savory

Volunteer hours:
Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 9 am to 12 pm

Missed pickup policy:
If you forget to pickup your share for the week at your scheduled time, we are so sorry but you will have to forfeit the share for the week. If you let us know a week in advance that you will be gone, we can definitely work something out so you don’t miss a share. Also, you can have a friend, neighbor, or relative come pick up your share for you if you will be gone. They just need to come at your scheduled pickup time and let us know who they are picking up for.

On the Farm News
This week was a busy one here at the farm! Despite the heat, we got a lot done. We’ve been fixing irrigation pipes, and setting up a trellis for our tomatoes and cucumbers in the field. The field has come to life with the transplanting of tomatoes, cucumbers, pumpkins, winter and summer squash, watermelons, and cantaloupe. Mmm such yummy produce to come! We also had a wonderful BBQ with you!

Our irrigation pipes have sure been giving us some learning opportunities this year. We have been moving pipe, fixing seemingly broken nozzles on sprinkler heads (usually there is just gunk in the nozzle that needs cleared out), and turning the water on with patience so the pipes don’t burst and separate with the rapid increase in pressure.

On to transplanting! It is one of our favorite duties on the farm. It’s fun to take care of those little plants and place them in the soil bed we have prepared for them to watch them grow up and do great things right before our eyes. Trellising is a small thing we can do to help our plants grow properly and comfortably. Tomatoes and cucumbers especially like something to lean on as they grow. We use stakes in the ground and net fencing for the cucumbers and twine for the tomatoes.

The pumpkin field looks great and we have been careful to make sure we leave enough room between plants for the tractor tiller. Last year we forgot this minor detail which lead to many hot days spent hand weeding. Needless to say, even with the laborious efforts of weeding by hand, we had a forest of weeds. We made sure to avoid that happening again this year. We’d like to let the tiller do that work for us so we can focus on taking care of plants we can actually eat.

We are having so much fun out here everyday and thank you for supporting our education at the farm. We could never learn these things in the classroom. We all really enjoyed the BBQ and getting to know you. It’s so nice to meet the people who support us and it means so much to us to see your faces and hear your stories. It’s so wonderful to connect with you and we hope to continue to do so!

What you might see in your next box
red russian kale
swiss chard
parsley
lettuce
peas