

TOPIC: "GROWING HERBS".

GUEST SPEAKER : SARAH HEATH

MALENY GARDEN CLUB MEETING : 27 JANUARY, 2021 AT TRANQUIL PARK MOUNTAIN RESORT

Sarah is dedicated to sharing the love of herbs and the benefits they bring. She markets herbs into Brisbane restaurants and bars and encourages other people to grow their own herbs. She has a Horticultural Certificate dedicated to the wide world of edible plants. She was recommended by the Queensland Herb Society to address the MGC meeting. She started growing in Queensland after a tree change from Melbourne, growing plants that look good in the garden, are liked by bees, and are great as food – fresh or cooked. Her focus is on culinary herbs but she also likes medicinal herbs.

- Basil has lots of benefits, is nutrient rich, tends to grow in Summertime but varieties grow all year. Likes sunlight hours with Spring and Autumn the best times to grow. Extreme light and heat hours in Summer with too much sunlight causes leaves to go leathery and flowers to seed with plants thinking it's the end of life. Picking off whole leaves and leaving stems helps propagation. New growth appears from naked nodes on stems and thrives in shade. Cut stems 7cm above bottom to strike. Holy/Tulsi Basil is very good steeped as a tea for use as a sleep aid
- Prostrate Rosemary should be cut above a node to stimulate new growth. Don't be shy to cut back herbs
- Mint has a habit of rambling through garden. There are 20 different varieties of Mint e.g. Chocolate Mint; Grapefruit Mint; Vietnamese Mint; Hot Spicy Mint; Menthol Mint (very strong); Apple Mint is the first Mint to flower in Summer. Mints add flavour and nutrition to foods and drinks
- Mother of All Herbs also has a trailing habit. Arid soil, dry and low in nutrients suits it
- General rule of thumb – if you like it use it, keep it
- Potted herbs from supermarkets – eat tonight, plant tomorrow – within 24 hours their nutrient value dissipates
- Purchase mature seedlings with more foliage for better value
- Don't overboil Green Tea as it will lose all nutrients. Steep once water is off the boil and warm at 70°C for 2 to 5 minutes. Tea flavour is a personal choice. Sarah puts Rosemary in hers. Experiment with varieties
- Rare, edible Amaranth, known as Chinese Spinach, has burgundy leaves heavy with nutrients and responds well to pruning. It flavours and colours a berry smoothie
- Coriander is loved by chefs. Gets same amount of sunlight in Summer and Winter on the Equator grown under shade cloth. Here, Coriander has a short life cycle. A bunch of C is comprised of 6-8 plants used for leaves, flowers, seed and roots – whole plant is edible. Best C is that grown from self sown seeds. Never buy a C punnet with only 1-2 seedlings per cell. C is the only herb that does not attract bugs in the garden

- Turmeric rhizomes are laden with nutrients
- Comfrey overload in diet can cause liver issues. Has huge tap root which creates great leaves that break down well in compost heaps
- Feed and replenish soil to keep it healthy to produce healthy plants
- Companion planting is a fallacy – brings bugs in as well as repelling. Need a sacrifice plant – 1 for them, 1 for me and 1 for us. Sarah practises spray free farming
- Jeremy Coleby-Williams successfully planted a bed of Basil seeds surrounded by Amaranth as the sacrifice plant and harvested 10kg of unaffected Basil
- Perennial Basil flowers all year and is a landing pad for bees to pollinate. Sarah has 3 hives on her ¾ acre block at Burpengary and hopes to have a unique flavoured honey
- Beware of bringing rust into the garden via Mint as there could be a link to Basil Mould
- Lovage is a cross between Celery and Parsley – wonderful for seasoning

The Herb Society of Queensland published two books which are available for sale at Sarah's farm-

"101 Herbs to Grow in South East Queensland" \$15. "Cooking with Herbs" \$15.

Also available are – "Working with Weeds" by Enid Wall \$35. "A Delicious Bunch" Edible Flowers by Linda Brennan \$35.

CONTACT : SARAH HEATH, BASILEA FARM, 135 HAWTHORN ROAD, BURPENGARY QLD 4505.

PHONE : 0413 241 576. INTERNET :< <https://www.basilealivingherbs.com> >

FARM OPEN DAY 9AM TO 1PM THIRD SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH. AT 9.30AM & 11.30AM MEET THE GROWER TALK (10 MINUTES) BRING A HAT, SUNSCREEN, A MUG FOR HERBAL TEA AND A BAG OR BOX FOR PLANTS TO TAKE HOME.

2021 OPEN DAY DATES – JANUARY 16; FEBRUARY 20; MARCH 20; APRIL 17; MAY 15; JUNE 19; JULY 17; AUGUST 21; SEPTEMBER 18; OCTOBER 16; NOVEMBER 20; AND "MINI CHRISTMAS MARKET" DECEMBER 18.

END.