



# January Newsletter

## Inside this issue:

<i>Next meet</i>	1	Welcome to the first new issue of The North Shore Herb Group Newsletter.
<i>Welcome</i>	1	
<i>Happy New Year</i>	1	
<i>In the Garden</i>	1	Besides keeping you up to date on the goings on of our Herb Group, the aim of this newsletter is also to keep you informed on all the herb happenings in the area, the country, and even t h e w o r l d .
<i>Herb of the Year:</i>	1,2	
<i>Recipes</i>	2	

## Next Meet

Monday, 9 Feb, 7.30pm

Milford Primary  
30 Shakespeare Rd  
Milford

Helen: 479 7344

**Topic: Herbal Salts**

## Welcome

Welcome to the first new issue of The North Shore Herb Group Newsletter. Besides keeping you up to date on the goings on of our Herb Group, the aim of this newsletter is also to keep you informed on all the herb happenings in the area, the country, and even t h e w o r l d .

As herbs are our passion and our focus, we're going to bring you some interesting tidbits on growing and using these amazing plants with each installment of the newsletter.

But ultimately it is YOUR newsletter, and we welcome your thoughts, suggestions and ideas on how to make it something you cannot wait to receive each month.

## Happy 2015

The North Shore Herb Group wishes you and your dear ones a very happy New Year and hope that 2015 will bring happiness and prosperity to everyone.

## In the Garden

With summer in full swing, it is a month of

abundance in the herb garden! There are so many herbs that are at their peak and can be harvested at leisure—especially the more common culinary herbs such as parsley, sage, rosemary, thyme, oregano and basil.

Bulb fennel might also now be ready to harvest and you should do so before they start flowering and setting seed.

Almost all herbs can still be sown as there are many weeks of warm weather lying ahead, try more basil, chives, oregano, parsley.

Remember to water regularly, especially if your herbs are potted.

## Herb of the Year 2015: Savory

The International Herb Association (<http://www.iherb.org>) has announced Savory (*Satureja spp*) as the Herb of the Year™ for 2015.

I must confess to not having used this herb to its potential before, even though I grew both Winter Savory (*Satureja Montana*) and Summer Savory (*Satureja hortensis*) in my herb garden before. It is not, despite its ease of growing, drying, and using—and it's lovely flavour, a very common household culinary herb. Once it was though—much prized by the Greeks and Romans, and holding a place of importance in Saxon recipes of old.

I'm always very interested in the nomenclature, or naming of herbs, and Savory does not disappoint—the Latin name *Satureja* comes from the belief that in ancient days,

### Special points of interest:

- There are over 30 species of *Satureja*
- Great for use in salt-restricted diets.
- Particularly suited to pulses, especially lentils and white beans.
- One of the five herbs in Herbes de Provence
- Some salami is commercially flavoured with Savory.

## Herb of the Year 2015: Savory

the savouries belonged to the Satyrs—and it was reputedly by eating this herb that they gained their astonishing sexual stamina! There are many beliefs that pair savory with sexual prowess—from being blended into a French love-potion wine, to being included in a back-massage oil for ‘unromantic’ women, and Italian daughters being fed savory for a month prior to their wedding so they are not returned to their mothers after consummating their marriage.

### Plant profile

Winter Savory (*S. Montana*) is a small evergreen perennial sub-shrub growing up to 40cm with a 20cm spread. The leaves are linear-lanceolate, pointy, glossy and bright green. In the summer whorls of pink-white, mauve or purple flowers appear.



Summer Savory (*S. Hortensis*) is a bushy annual with linear-oblong leaves that are slightly larger and a bit more rounded than those of winter savory. Flowers are white, lilac or purple.

**Site:** Sunny and sheltered.

**Soil:** Prefers well-drained, poor soil.

**Water:** Favours dry conditions.

**Propagation:** Sow in early autumn or spring (Winter Savory) or early spring (Summer Savory).

Perennial savouries can be propagated by taking new growth cuttings in the summer.

**Growing:** Prune in late spring, protect *S. Montana* in winter.

### Uses—Culinary

Strongly aromatic, reminiscent of thyme with a peppery undertone, savory is a great addition to the culinary herb cupboard.

Particularly well suited to beans and other pulses, vegetable

stews, and for flavouring marinades, stuffing and sausages.

### Uses—Medicinal

With its antibacterial, antifungal and antiseptic properties, savory can be used as a gargle for sore throats, a tonic for after fevers, and as a facial steam for oily skin. Crushed leaves bring relief to insect bites and stings. It is also carminative, easing digestion and reducing flatulence.

### Uses—Household

Attracts bees.



### Polenta with Sweet Pepper and Savory

- \* 1 Tbsp olive oil
- \* 1/3 cup minced onion
- \* 1/3 cup minced red sweet pepper
- \* 1 large clove garlic, minced
- \* 2 Tbsp minced winter savory or 3 Tbsp minced summer savory
- \* 3½ cups stock or 1 cup milk and 2½ cups water
- \* 1 cup coarse-grind polenta
- \* ½ cup freshly grated Parmesan
- \* salt and freshly ground pepper

In a heavy saucepan over medium heat, warm oil. Add onion and sweet pepper, cover, and cook until onion starts to soften (about 3 minutes). Add garlic and savory and cook 2 minutes. Add stock, bring to a boil, and gradually stir in polenta. Bring back to a boil, lower heat, and cook, stirring, until mixture begins to thicken (about 10 minutes). Continue cooking on low heat, stirring often and keeping mixture at very slow boil, until polenta pulls away from the sides of the pan and is thick and creamy (about 30 minutes). Add cheese, remove from heat, and stir until cheese melts. Season and serve.

### References

- Cooking from the Gourmet's Garden, Coralie Castle & Robert Kourik, Cole Group, 1994, ISBN: 1-56426-563-3
- The Encyclopedia of Herbs, Spices and Flavourings, Elizabeth Lambert Ortiz, DK, 1992 ISBN: 0-86318-982-2
- New Book of Herbs, Jekka McVicar, DK, 2004 ISBN: 1-4053-0579-7
- The Complete Book of Herbs, Lesley Bremness, DK, 1988 ISBN: 1-86812-152-6
- The Royal Horticultural Society Encyclopaedia of Herbs, Deni Brown, DK, 2002 ISBN: 978-1-4053-3238-5
- The American Herb Growing and Marketing Network  
Photos by Nova and Desjodor—Wikimedia Commons