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## The North Shore Herb Group

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# August 2016 Newsletter



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### Last meet

We discussed herbs for liver health during our July meeting (read more about it in this newsletter). We had some delicious “Kapow” Tea which warmed us up nicely while members tried our first Herb Quiz.

### In the Garden

August is abuzz with newly released seed catalogs, just to get us in the mood for planning our new season gardens. So get those pencils and papers ready to draw up some great new plots of herbal bounty!

Sow amaranth, fennel, oregano, rocket (salad rocket and wild rocket) as well as chives, chervil, dill, marjoram, thyme and epazote. Veges such as artichoke, kohlrabi, peas, lettuce, radish, beetroot and silverbeet

can also be sown. Although it is really early, and still a bit on the cold side, especially with possible cold snaps at the end of winter, if you have a warm and protected spot, some seed companies even suggest you can start warm weather crops like tomatoes, eggplants, chillies and zucchini in August!

Flowers for the herb garden such as calendula, marigolds, cornflowers, borage, sunflowers and violas can also be sown now.

### Next Meet

Monday, 8 Aug,  
7.30pm

Milford Primary

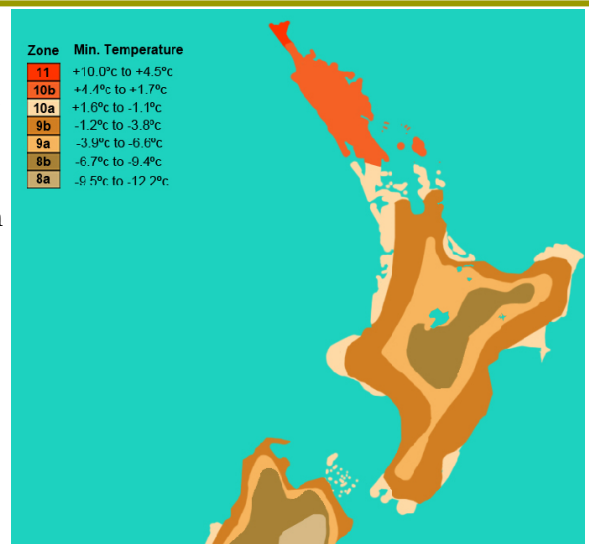
Herbs for kidneys.  
FOOT SPA DAY!



## Hardiness Zones

If you have ever read a planting book, or perused catalogs on the internet, chances are that you have encountered “Hardiness Zones”, most commonly USDA Hardiness Zones - a list of numbers from 0-12 which are linked to the climatic conditions in which a plant is said to survive and thrive. E.g. a plant that is hardy to zone 12 cannot survive temperatures colder than 4.4°C while a plant that is hardy to zone 9 can live where winter temperatures get as low as -6°C. First developed by the USDA (United States Department of Agriculture), it is widely adopted worldwide with many countries having their own “version” of it.

New Zealand has zones ranging between USDA defined ranges of 8 and 11. Remember that these should only be used as an indication and that every garden can be in a micro-climate of its own and that you will always have warmer and colder spots through your garden. But it is good rule of thumb when deciding whether a plant can be grown where you live.



## Herbs for Liver Health

The liver—the largest solid organ in the human body and responsible for digestion, metabolism, immune function, storage of nutrients and vitamins, as well as all important detoxifying of the blood.

The liver is easily overburdened in today's stressful and toxin-laden world and it can suffer ill health easily. Support your liver health naturally by investigating and using some of these herbs:

### **Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*)**

Rich in vitamins and minerals, all parts of this common weed is beneficial, but it is mostly a root tincture that it is given as liver remedy. Naturally diuretic, it increases the removal of toxins from the system and it increases the production and flow of bile.



### **Yellow dock (*Rumex crispus* and other species)**

Another common weed that can be used to great effect in improving liver functions. Again, root tincture is the preferred method of taking this herb. It is diuretic, improves bile production, cleanses the blood and supports digestion.

### **Milk thistle (*Psyllium marianum* or *Carduus marianum*)**

Probably the most well known herb for the liver, it is widely recommended for anyone who has

any kind of liver problems. It is the seed of the plant that is used to make the herbal remedies. Research indicates that it not only protects liver cells from damage, but encourages the formation of new liver cells too.

### **Burdock (*Atrium lappa*)**

Helping the purification of blood and restoring damaged liver cells, burdock root is generally made into a tea (decoction).

### **Turmeric (*Curcuma longa*)**

Helping with any inflammation in the body, Turmeric is ideally suited to helping with inflamed liver

conditions too.

### **Other herbs**

Other herbs mentioned as beneficial to liver health include:

- Chicory
- Greater Celandine
- Peppermint
- Astragalus
- Artichoke

As always, a good healthy lifestyle is important for optimal functioning of body systems—ensure you eat good food, exercise enough, relax and drink enough water.

### **A herb poem from Dittany 1983 (by Rosslyn Johnston)**



Ahh..... herbs,  
Where would I go,  
To find alternatives,  
I'd like to know.

Here's' a list of my favourite plants,  
Which I use to scent, to taste, enhance.



In veges and salads you'll find a hint,  
Of chives and parsley and some mint.  
On roasts and meat dishes every day,  
Rosemary, Garlic, Hyssop, and Bay.

In chutney and pickles with a will,  
I always add some tasty dill.

For my son if his temper is vile,  
A tea of honey and chamomile.

To crystallise flowers in weeds I forage,  
For beautiful stars belonging to borage.  
Be it Lemon or Gilead or whatever balm,  
The fragrance to soothe you, and keep you calm..

Cure those migraines with a brew,  
Of the common feverfew.

If to colds and such you have an aversion,  
There's vitamin C in your nasturtium.

To staunch slight bleeding I've been told,  
Use the leaves of marigold.

Against ulcers and sore throats a war I'd wage,  
And cure them quick with leaves of sage.

I could go on forever but I'll finish my rhyme,  
I'm always s using up all my thyme.

