



Big Tree News

The world gets better when we do.....

Big Tree Herb Farm

Big Tree News
December 2024

Happy New Year Everyone!

Hope this finds you all well and safe. I am looking forward to a new year since 2024 has been a very challenging year for our family, farm and me personally with the death of two cherished pets, weather challenges for our farm, and an arm injury for me that caused me to miss several farmers markets. However, there have been some wonderful things that happened this year—farmers markets have been fantastic with lots of new vendors and customers, which is always exciting. We also participated in a new summer market this year in Hampton Falls NH. It was a fabulous experience for us and also brought the addition of my younger son and daughter-in-law as helpers at my market booth since they live in Hampton and that was so nice to be able to share that experience with them.



December's newsletter is Part Two of the exploration of culinary herbs with this month featuring Oregano and Marjoram. One of the things I love about working with herbs is the wonderful aromas they bring into our home once we harvest them. These two are particularly aromatic and delightful to handle and work with, as well as adding such deliciousness to our cooking! I hope you will enjoy these hearty winter dishes with the addition of these two herbs!

Inside this issue:

Big Tree News	1
Cooking w/Herbs # 2	1
Oregano	2
Marjoram	3
Recipes	2-4
Farmers Markets and Events	4

MARJORAM AND OREGANO

Marjoram and Oregano are both herbs in the mint family with similar flavors and uses, but there are some key differences between them:

FLAVOR: Marjoram has a more delicate, sweeter flavor with more complex notes, while oregano has a spicier, more pungent flavor.

LEAVES: Marjoram leaves are usually smaller and more gray-green than oregano leaves. Marjoram leaves also tend to cluster at the tips

SPECIES: Marjoram is usually *Origanum majorana*, while oregano is usually *Origanum vulgare*.

USES: Marjoram pairs well with light dishes like fish, poultry, and vegetables. Oregano is often used in Italian cuisine and on pizza.

GROWING CONDITIONS: Both prefer warm climates with well-draining soil, but oregano prefers drier soil. Marjoram is more tender than oregano and may die if exposed to frost for too long.



THIS MONTH'S Featured Herbs are Oregano And Marjoram

**Culinary and
Medicinal Favorites!**





Did you know...

Oregano can be administered in a variety of ways to receive the medicinal benefits:

1) A tea can be made by steeping the dried or fresh leaves in boiling water for 10-15 minutes. 1-2 tsp per cup of water and drink three times per day.

2) Oregano Oil can be applied topically for microbial infections such as athlete's foot—apply 2x/day.

3) Also Oregano capsules are available to be taken internally



Oregano: Scientific name is *Origanum Vulgare*, also known as "mountain joy" is used for the following:

- Contains terpenes and thymol which fight off viral infections, it is primarily used for respiratory tract infections (cough, bronchitis, croup, asthma, cold, flu)
- Antiseptic, anti-inflammatory, anti-bacterial, antioxidant and anti-fungal. High in vitamins + minerals.
- Helps gastro-intestinal ailments (indigestion, heartburn, menstrual pain, bloating).
 - Oregano Tea for sore or scratchy throat.
- Can be used to relieve nervousness, anxiety, irritability and insomnia
 - May help lower cholesterol
 - Rich in antioxidants, which could lower your risk for cancer
 - Could ease muscle pain, and headaches
- Anti-fungal properties to inhibit the growth of candidiasis or *Candida Albicans*
 - Anti-microbial properties to help treat E Coli, Salmonella and Staph infections

Can you substitute marjoram for oregano?

Oregano and marjoram are very closely related and thus make perfect replacements for one another-- both fresh and dried. Marjoram is slightly sweeter and a bit milder than oregano, so use equal amounts to swap and then add in a pinch more to get as close to oregano's pungent flavor as possible. *Marjoram is a bit more citrusy than oregano, it also has a slight anise flavor to it.*



PIZZA PASTA

- 1/2 box penne pasta
- 1 pound spicy pepperoni, chopped in 1 inch pieces
- 4 pints (or so) Cherry Tomatoes
- 2 large onions cut in 8
- 1 head garlic cloves, peeled and halved
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 3 tablespoons or so dried oregano
- 4 ounces cream cheese
- 1-2 sprinkles salt and lots of freshly ground pepper
- 3 cups or so mozzarella cheese, shredded

Preheat your oven to 400 °F (200 °C). Toss pepperoni, tomatoes, onions, garlic, oregano and olive oil in a large bowl. Turn into a 9- X 13-inch (3.5L) ovenproof casserole or baking dish. After 30 minutes or so stir the works once or twice then keep an eye on things. Bake until the tomatoes soften and the pepperoni and onion lightly brown, about 1 hour. Remove from the oven and set to broil. Meanwhile cook your pasta in lots of boiling salted water. Drain it well but do not rinse or you'll drain away the surface starch that helps the sauce cling to it. When the roast tomato sauce has finished cooking toss it with the pasta and stir in the cream cheese. Top with the mozzarella. Broil until the cheese is golden brown and bubbly, about 5 minutes or so. Your hearty pizza pasta is ready! .

EGGPLANT PARMESAN

Recipe: (makes 4 generous servings)

- 1 large eggplant, sliced
- 1 cup Egg whites
- 1 cup breadcrumbs
- Dried oregano
- Dried basil
- Salt and pepper
- 1 cup no sugar added marinara sauce
- 1 cup or shredded low fat cheese
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Directions:

1. Dip the eggplant in egg whites
2. Then dip the eggplant in breadcrumbs + sprinkle if Parmesan + oregano + salt and pepper
3. Layer eggplant, then marinara sauce, then sprinkle of cheeses and keep going until you have 3 layers of each.
4. Bake on 375 for 45-50 minutes or until crispy.

MARJORAM CHICKEN:

You should first and foremost consume marjoram because it's delicious. But it doesn't hurt that it's touted for having antimicrobial properties and anti-inflammatory benefits too. In its fresh or dried form, sweet marjoram contains antioxidants, essential oils, and flavonoids associated with fighting free radicals and toxins.



INGREDIENTS:

2 TB Coconut or Avocado Oil
1.5 lbs chicken thighs
1 tsp Oregano
1 tsp garlic powder
1 tsp Thyme
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp Marjoram

3 cloves Garlic (minced)
1 small yellow onion (minced)
1 14 oz can artichoke hearts
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup Chicken Bone Broth
1 TB fresh lemon juice
1 lemon sliced (seeds removed)
Sea salt and black pepper to taste

- Preheat oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Place large cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat and add oil.
- Mix all spices together, then season chicken thighs with spices on both sides.
- Once oil is heated add chicken thighs skin side down, sear for 2-3 minutes, flip, and sear for another 2-3 minutes, then set aside.
- Add onion to the skillet and cook for about 2 min, add garlic and cook for 1 minute. Add chicken back into the skillet, then add the artichoke hearts, pour in bone broth, add in lemon juice, then lay $\frac{1}{2}$ of the lemon slices over the chicken.
- Cover cast iron with foil and put into the preheated oven for about 20 minutes or until chicken is cooked through to an internal temp of 165 degrees.
- Once chicken is cooked, remove from the oven, uncover and let cool. Add the rest of the lemon slices on top, and serve over cauliflower rice, mashed potatoes, or roasted potatoes.

Marjoram: *Origanum majorana*



-Culinary and medicinal uses, and citrus flavors.

-Helps lower blood sugar and improve digestion by increasing digestive enzymes.

-Enhances the functioning of the cardiovascular system.

-Helps remove toxins from the body.

-Its tea can also help in fighting food poisoning.

-Helps with insomnia, stress and anxiety (inhaling the essential oil).

Herb, Feta, and Quinoa-Filled Frittata

- 4 eggs or 3 whole eggs and 2 whites
- Small pinch of freshly grated nutmeg
- 2 tsp butter, melted
- 1 medium shallot, thickly sliced lengthwise
- 1 TB chopped fresh herbs, like marjoram and thyme, or oregano and basil, or rosemary and sage, etc.
- 2 TB coarsely chopped or torn Italian parsley leaves
- 1 to 2 TB crumbled feta cheese, to taste (or any other similar cheese)
- 1 TB finely grated Parmigiano Reggiano, Pecorino Romano, or Asiago
- Salt and Freshly ground pepper
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked quinoa
- 3 TB fresh bread crumbs
- Olive oil for the pan

Crumble bread crumbs into a small bowl and drizzle the melted butter over them with a tiny pinch of salt and some freshly ground pepper. Toss gently to coat. (If your bread crumbs are a bit moist, toast them first briefly in a skillet over medium heat.) Turn on broiler.

Beat the eggs with the quinoa. Add the nutmeg, a pinch of salt, and freshly ground pepper to taste.

On the stove, drizzle a teaspoon or two of oil into a medium-sized oven-proof skillet, and sauté the shallots over medium heat to soften, about one minute.

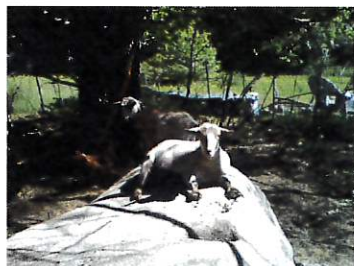
Still using medium heat, pour the eggs and quinoa into the skillet. Sprinkle on the herbs. Use a spatula to lift the edges, tilting the pan to allow the uncooked egg to flow into the exposed areas under the lifted edges. As soon as the eggs begin to set on the stove, remove the pan from the heat.

Sprinkle the cheeses on top. Put under the broiler for 30 seconds, remove, sprinkle on the buttered crumbs, and put back under the broiler for another 30 seconds, or until the crumbs and cheese are nicely browned.

Big Tree Herb Farm

If anyone has any herbal questions,
please let me know.
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<https://www.bigtreeherbfarm.com>



Next month's newsletter will Feature Immunity - Garlic and Elderberry



**We will be at the following
Farmers Markets this
Winter:**

**Berwick Town Hall
10am to 1:00 pm
Sundays**

**1/12/25, 2/9/25, 3/9/25,
4/13/25**

**Stratham
Cooperative Middle School
10am—2pm
Saturdays**

**1/4/25, 2/1/25, 3/1/25,
4/5/25**

**Wentworth Greenhouse
in Rollinsford:
10am 2pm
Saturdays**

**1/11, 1/25, 2/8, 2/22, 3/8,
3/22/25**

Herbal Classes For Winter 2025

**Saturday, Jan 18 at 10am
Herbal Skin Salve Making—
Essential Oils + Lip Balm
At The
Gathering Place Studio
154 High Street
Somersworth NH**

**We will be holding other
classes this winter on
Feb 15th, March 15th,
and April 19th
Topics to be determined
Cost for each will be \$40
and for that you will re-
ceive not only the class but
a sample bag with remedies
and herbal teas and an
Information Booklet which
includes many Recipes.
Also herbal teas and re-
freshments will be served.**

**Please sign up on our
Web-site:
www.bigtreeherbfarm.com**

Hope to see you there!

GARLIC LEMON POTATOES

Ingredients

- 1½ lbs mini yellow potatoes
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp oregano
- 1 tsp paprika
- 1½ tsp salt
- 2 lemons, juiced
- ½ lemon, sliced
- 1 head broccoli, broken into florets
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 handful parsley, chopped
- 1 cup whipped feta dip, optional

Instructions

Preheat the oven to 425F.
Add the potatoes to a baking sheet. Drizzle on olive oil, along with the oregano, paprika, salt and lemon juice. Using your hands or a spatula, toss the potatoes until evenly covered in the lemon juice, oil and spices. Place in the oven for 20 minutes. After 20 minutes, remove from the oven and toss. Add the broccoli florets, minced garlic, parsley and sliced lemon. Once again, using a spatula, mix until the potatoes and broccoli are evenly dispersed and coated in the garlic and parsley. Add more oil or salt as desired at this point. Place in the oven for an additional 20 minutes until the potatoes are crispy and the broccoli is cooked through. Enjoy with vegan whipped feta dip or as a side dish as desired.



HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!