



Cooling Herbs For
**HOT SUMMER
DAYS**





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INTRODUCTION

While the hustle and bustle of daily life continues throughout summer, we often find ourselves relaxing our schedules a bit and trying to fit in more time for play and enjoyment. With longer daylight hours, we may either welcome earlier mornings or embrace later nights, and we often spend more time outdoors enjoying nature.

From the herbalist's perspective, summer often finds us busy gardening, foraging, and preserving the best of the season's bounty before it's gone, while at the same time trying to stay cool in the heat! Fortunately, there are a number of herbs with cooling properties that are at their prime during summer months. From exotic hibiscus (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*) calyx to backyard plantain (*Plantago* spp.) leaf, the following herbs (and recipes!) are our go-to allies when we need a reliable herbal cool-down.

Cooling Benefits of Herbs

While we're outside soaking up the sun, watching the kids play, or gathering herbs, our goal during this hot season is to keep the body cool. While summer's heat can be particularly brutal for individuals experiencing hormonal changes, such as those common during pregnancy and menopause, excessive heat can create imbalances that impact energy levels and emotions for anyone—particularly those of us with a fiery nature and hot constitution!

Eating seasonal foods that are cooling and hydrating—and incorporating cooling herbs into our wellness routines—can help us to move past the uncomfortable heat that comes with summer. Ancient and wise, herbs work in the body through myriad channels to move heat, encourage hydration, and maintain a general sense of temperature balance.

How Herbs Cool

Herbs and foods can be cooling to our bodies in multiple ways.

One way herbs can cool is through their diaphoretic action. This particular action stimulates the pores in the skin to open so heat can be released, thus cooling the body. Herbs with this action include cayenne (*Capsicum annuum*) pepper, yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) aerial parts, and elder (*Sambucus nigra* or *S. canadensis*) flower.

Many cooling herbs have a demulcent or moistening property, which helps to ward off the dehydration that can occur in the heat of summer. Cooling demulcents include marshmallow (*Althaea officinalis*) root and hibiscus (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*) calyx. Some astringent herbs also cool the body in this way—this may seem counterintuitive, as we often think about astringent herbs as drying, but as astringents work to tighten and tone tissues, they also help to preserve water inside the tissues. Thus, astringent herbs can also help to offset heat by keeping the body hydrated. Cooling astringents include rose (*Rosa* spp.) petal, raspberry (*Rubus idaeus*) leaf, and linden (*Tilia* spp.) bract and flower.

Speaking of hydration, foods like watermelon, cucumber, and many salad greens are also considered cooling to the body due to their high water content, making these foods perfect for hot summer days.

One way to spot cooling herbs and foods is by their flavor. While cooling herbs can vary in flavor, many of them have a sour taste. Sour-flavored herbs that are cooling include lemon balm (*Melissa officinalis*) leaf, rose (*Rosa* spp.) hip, hibiscus (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*) calyx, and sour fruits like lemon, lime, blueberry, and more.

Degrees of Herbal Cooling

According to ancient Greek medicine, energetic qualities such as warm, cool, dry, and damp vary by degrees. When it comes to how cooling a plant or food is, its degree of cooling depends on how the cold energetic manifests in the body.

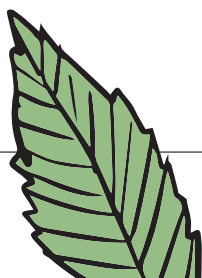
The degrees or levels of cooling can be considered refreshing (cooling to the 1st degree), anti-inflammatory or refrigerant (cooling to the 2nd degree), thickening (cooling to the 3rd degree), and anodyne (cooling to the 4th degree) (Wood, 2008).

An herb or food that is cooling in the 1st degree, such as lettuce, cucumber, peach (*Prunus persica*) fruit and leaf, and lemon, is considered *refreshing* and particularly helpful when heat has not yet settled in the body, such as environmental heat on a hot summer day (Wood, 2008; Wood, 2012).

An herb or food that is cooling in the 2nd degree, such as elder (*Sambucus nigra* or *S. canadensis*) flower and berry, lemon balm (*Melissa officinalis*) leaf, hibiscus (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*) calyx, and rose (*Rosa* spp.) hip and petal is called an *anti-inflammatory* or *refrigerant* and is ideal for heat manifesting as inflammation or internal heat, such as emotional stress, irritability, anger, or fever (Wood, 2008; Wood, 2012).

An herb that is cooling in the 3rd or 4th degree is used for more severe manifestations of heat. An herb that is cooling in the 3rd degree, such as lavender (*Lavandula* spp.) flower bud, yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) aerial parts, and California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*) whole plant, is considered *thickening* and is used to reduce perspiration or to astringe tissues to slow fluid loss (Wood, 2008; Wood, 2012).

Herbs in the 4th degree are considered *anodyne* and affect consciousness. These herbs are only used in extreme circumstances; opium is considered cooling in the 4th degree (Wood, 2008; Wood, 2012).





7 COOLING HERBS OF SUMMER

These seven herbs are commonly found during the summer months—stretching for the sky, showing off their colorful flowers for all to see, or sunning their leaves in the sun’s rays. These herbs are physically and energetically cooling, and they have many uses during the hot days of summer.

The following herbal monographs are excerpted and adapted from the Herbal Academy’s [Introductory Herbal Course](#), [Intermediate Herbal Course](#), and membership website, [The Herbarium](#). The Herbarium boasts one of the most complete and extensive plant monograph databases available online to-date!



BEE BALM



Monarda spp. (Lamiaceae)

Aerial parts

Bee balm, also known as monarda, bergamot, lavender bergamot, and sweet leaf, is not the same plant as the bergamot used to flavor Earl Grey tea (that's bitter orange, *Citrus x aurantium*). Bee balm grows wild in the United States and Canada and may have lavender-colored flowers and a pungent taste (*Monarda fistulosa*) or red flowers and a slightly less pungent taste (*M. didyma*); both are favorites of bees and other pollinators. Both *Monarda* species can be used in a similar way, but have slightly different tastes and qualities.

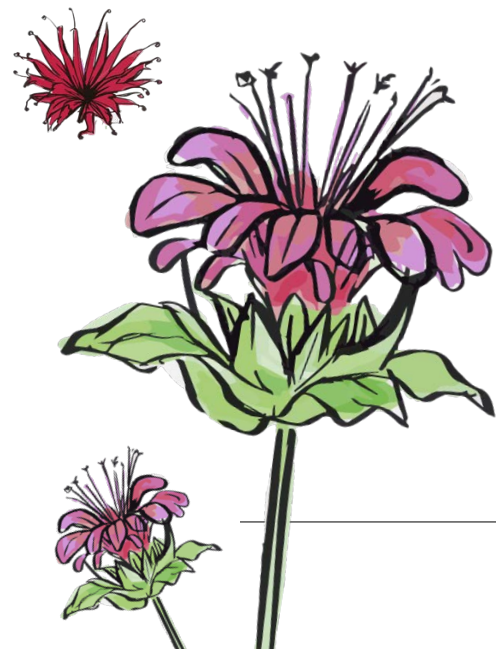
Actions Antimicrobial, antispasmodic, carminative, diaphoretic, emmenagogue, expectorant, nervine

Energetics Cooling to warming, diffusive, stimulating, and relaxing

Use Bee balm is one of the many highly aromatic Lamiaceae (mint) family herbs and is curiously considered both cooling and warming. This is due to its dispersive nature; bee balm encourages blood and heat to move from the core to the extremities, and perhaps even makes you sweat a little bit, with the ultimate effect of cooling the body.

Herbalist Matthew Wood (1997) asserts that bee balm has a soothing, calming, and cooling effect on the organs of the solar plexus region, including the stomach, liver, gallbladder, and intestines. As a diffusive, aromatic carminative, bee balm is also useful for flatulence, bloating, rumbling in the tummy, diarrhea, nausea, and upset stomach.

Wood (1997) writes that bee balm has the ability to “draw out fire” (p. 366) from internal organs due to its highly diffusive and diaphoretic qualities. Bee balm is also used to “draw out fire” from topical “hot” conditions, such as sunburn, eczema, and acne. Wood (1997) describes using a poultice for sunburns and explains that the best method of preparation is simply chewing the plant's flowers and applying this simple poultice to the affected area. Herbalist and author Susun Weed (2015) describes using the same poultice method to ease the pain and inflammation of bee stings—bee balm lives up to its name in another way!





Bee balm can be infused in an oil or made into a tincture or tea. Vinegar infused with bee balm is one of Weed's favorite ways to imbibe the plant. She uses the delicious, aromatic vinegar on salads and beans (Weed, n.d.). Bee balm is considered a culinary herb that is similar to oregano, and it combines well with sweet marjoram in cooking (Wood, 1997). (Don't miss our Refreshing Monarda-Mint Ice Pops recipe on Page 36!)

Safety Avoid using bee balm in pregnancy due to its emmenagogue action related to its high volatile oil content (Gardner & McGuffin, 2013).

Dose 2-6 g dried aerial parts/day divided into 1-3 doses; Tincture: 1-2 mL (1:2, 40%) 1-3x/day (Moore, 2003).



CALENDULA



Calendula officinalis (Asteraceae)

Flower

Calendula is an annual herb native to south central Europe and North Africa. Today, calendula is planted throughout the world. It has sunny yellow and orange flowers that open in the morning when the sun rises and close as it sets, inspiring Culpeper (1653) to call it “an herb of the sun” (p. 114). Indeed, calendula holds the spirit of the sun in its flowers. Note that calendula is sometimes called marigold, or pot marigold because it was dedicated to the Virgin Mary in the Middle Ages (McIntyre, 1996); however, it is a different species than the marigold in the genus *Tagetes* that is commonly sold in garden nurseries today.

Actions Anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, antispasmodic, cholagogue, hemostatic, lymphatic, vulnerary

Energetics Warming

Use Calendula is a powerful wound and tissue vulnerary used both externally and internally. Its mucilage content is part of what makes it wonderfully soothing to irritated tissues. Culpeper (1653) suggested that “the juice of marigold ... and any hot swelling bathed with it, instantly gives ease, and assuages it” (p. 114). This incredible ability to soothe hot, itchy irritations is why we’ve included calendula here as a cooling summer herb despite its warming energetics.

Externally, calendula has long been used to soothe and mend cuts, burns, bites, sprains, bruises, rashes, sunburns, and abrasions due to its anti-microbial, anti-inflammatory, hemostatic, and vulnerary actions. You’ll often see calendula included as an ingredient in herb-infused oils that serve as the base for first-aid and wound salves. (See our Simple Bug Bite Salve recipe featuring calendula on Page 38.)

Internally, calendula is taken to soothe inflammatory conditions of the digestive tract, such as ulcers (Hoffmann, 2003), esophageal irritation from gastric reflux, and inflammatory bowel disease (Blankespoor, 2012).

Research has shown that calendula is also effective against flu and herpes viruses (McIntyre, 1996). A hot calendula infusion acts as a diaphoretic,



moving energy outward by stimulating circulation and promoting sweating. This action helps kill the infectious pathogen and subsequently reduce fever and cool the body.

Cheerful calendula petals can be used in oil infusions, tea blends, tinctures, and more. As an edible flower, they can even be sprinkled on salads and cooked dishes to bring seasonal beauty to your table.

Safety Those with sensitivity to other plants in the Asteraceae (daisy) family may be sensitive to calendula.

Dose Infusion: 3-12 g dried flower/day divided into 1-4 doses; Tincture: 0.5-1 mL (1:5, 75%) 3x/day (Mills & Bone, 2005).



HIBISCUS

Hibiscus sabdariffa (Malvaceae)

Calyx

Hibiscus is an herbaceous shrub in the Malvaceae (mallow) family. It is native to North Africa and Southeast Asia and is cultivated as a perennial throughout tropical and subtropical regions and as an annual in temperate regions. There are hundreds of species of hibiscus, including the many ornamental garden hibiscus species with large, colorful blossoms; however, *Hibiscus sabdariffa*, which is the species discussed here, has smaller, less showy blossoms.

Actions Anticatarrhal, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, antioxidant, astringent, cardiogenic, demulcent, diuretic, hepatic, hypocholesterolemic, immune stimulant, refrigerant, reproductive tonic

Energetics Cooling and drying

Use Traditionally, hibiscus calyces have been used throughout the world as “refrigerants” to cool the body (Engels, 2007). In Egypt, hibiscus has been used as a diuretic and for cardiac and nerve diseases; in North Africa for coughs and sore throats; in Europe for colds and upper respiratory tract congestion, sleeplessness, and as a laxative and diuretic; and in Iran for hypertension (Engels, 2007).

The sour, astringent, cooling nature of hibiscus helps to cool and regulate the body’s temperature, as well as tone and cool irritated tissue and mucous membranes throughout the digestive tract and genitourinary system. This is particularly indicated in the case of overheated states and inflammation in the body, such as irritation in the liver, stomach, bladder, urinary tract, uterus, or colon. Hibiscus is also clearing, helping to move stuck mucus in the lungs and energy in the digestive, respiratory, circulatory, and reproductive systems.

On an energetic level, hibiscus is a very sensual, pleasurable plant. Its diuretic properties encourage movement and release in the sacral region while its pleasurable nature encourages receptivity and helps one open to intimate connection.

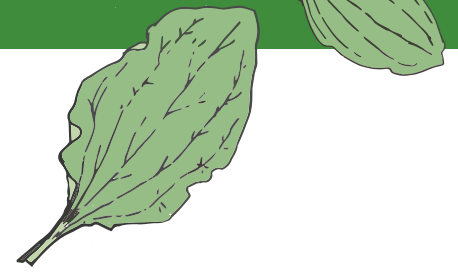


The luscious, deep red calyces are harvested and used fresh or dried to make tea, tincture, glycerite, syrup, infused honey, or jam. Hibiscus tea is a beloved drink in many cultures throughout the world, often prepared sweetened and with cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, ginger, lemon juice, or mint. It is called “sorrel” in the Caribbean, “agua de Jamaica” in Latin America, “karkade” in north Africa, Italy, and Russia, “arhul ka phool” in India, and “sour tea” in Iran. (For our version of this classic and refreshing beverage, see our Hibiscus and Raspberry Leaf Sun Tea recipe on Page 32.)

Safety Most hibiscus species are considered safe. Hibiscus is considered an emmenagogue in some traditions, so avoid large doses during pregnancy as there are some reports of it stimulating menstruation.

Dose Infusion: 3-9 g dried calyx/day (Tierra, 1988) divided into 1-4 doses.

PLANTAIN



Plantago spp. (Plantaginaceae)

Leaf

Plantain has literally followed on the heels of colonization around the world, earning common names such as Englishman's foot or white man's footsteps, owing to its broad dispersal and naturalization concurrent with colonization, as well as its resilient ability to thrive despite being downtrodden. There are more than 250 species within the *Plantago* genus around the world, and all are said to be edible or safe for consumption if not always palatable (American Botanical Council, 2000; Blair, 2014; Scott, 2010).

The common name plantain may refer to several species—in herbalism, the most commonly used species are *Plantago major* and *P. lanceolata*, which are widely naturalized. Many herbalists use these two species interchangeably, for the most part, although some say *P. major* may be a stronger diuretic (Mars, 2014).

Actions Antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, antiviral, astringent, demulcent, vulnerary

Energetics Cooling

Use Plantain is a premiere vulnerary herb valuable for soothing both internal and external tissues of the body. It is a must-have for any herbal first-aid kit for its use in cooling the inflammation and sting of bites, cuts, and scrapes, as well as to help to draw out slivers, splinters, and stingers. As one herbalist notes, “[Plantain’s] medicine is like a lance that penetrates and opens the wound to draw out the poison” (Scott, 2010, p. 248). Plantain may also be used to soothe and cool the pain, itching, or burning symptoms of poison ivy, nettle stings, and sunburn.

A field preparation of a “[spit poultice](#)” for direct topical application for any of the above indications is an easy option, or one can opt to use a mortar and pestle to mash up plantain with a little water to make a poultice. Plantain leaves can also be mashed with a small amount of water and worn in a sock for hotspots, blisters, or plantar fasciitis, or made into a wash, compress, infused oil, salve, or cream for a variety of skin conditions.





Like calendula, plantain is often used in herb-infused oils that serve as the base for skin-soothing salves and lotions (see our Simple Bug Bite Salve recipe on Page 38). Taken internally, plantain can be used as a tea, succus, or syrup for coughs, congestion, bronchitis, or laryngitis. The young leaves may be added to salads or used as cooked greens. The young flower stalks are also sometimes sautéed and eaten, and the seeds from mature seed stalks are edible as well, either raw, ground into flour and baked, or prepared as a beverage or porridge (Blair, 2014; Scott, 2010).

Safety Plantain leaf is generally regarded as safe (Gardner & McGuffin, 2013).

Dose Infusion: 3-4 g dried leaf/day divided into 1-3 doses; Tincture: 3-6 mL (1:2, 30%) 3x/day (Kuhn & Winston, 2008).

ROSE

Rosa spp. (Rosaceae)

Petal, flower bud, and hip

A common garden flower, rose has origins in ancient Persia, though the genus *Rosa* now boasts over 100 species and more than 18,000 cultivars growing all over the globe (Boskabady et al., 2011). Choose fragrant, organically grown roses for herbal preparations, as conventional roses may be heavily sprayed with chemicals, and not all varieties of rose are as characteristically aromatic as you might expect.

Actions Anti-inflammatory, astringent, cardi tonic, euphoriant, relaxing nerve

Energetics Cooling and drying

Use In Ayurveda, rose is considered balancing to all doshas and is especially helpful for cooling high *pitta dosha*. Its astringent action helps to tone tissues and preserve water in the tissues. It is said to open the heart *chakra* and encourage feelings of patience, compassion, and love. A special ayurvedic preparation known as *gulkand* (rose petal jam) is used as a cooling heart tonic (Pole, 2012).

A symbol of love and beauty, rose has been enjoyed by many generations of herbalists the world over. Rose has a gentle, calming action and is associated with soothing vulnerability, anger, grief, broken-heartedness, and lack of self-love. Roses are often invoked to promote healthy spiritual and emotional boundaries and protection. The open flowers of the rose correspond to a strong and vulnerable heart, yet thorns provide protection. While using rose in this way, it can be helpful to visualize the strong, thorny branches of a wild rose protecting the boundaries of our energetic heart.

Rose petals can be made into cosmetics, oils, teas, elixirs, vinegars, honeys, glycerites, and tinctures. Rose hips can be made into powder, tea, jellies, jams, and syrups. Using only organic, fair-trade, homegrown, or foraged roses is crucial because commercial roses are notorious for chemical contamination and unfair trade practices. A sprinkling of rose petals makes a great addition to an uplifting tea—not only for the energetic effect, but also to add color and beauty to the tea blend! (Don't miss our Cooling Rosy Spearmint Foot Soak and Rose Petal Elixir recipes on Pages 30 and 42!)

Safety Rose petals may reduce iron absorption (McIntyre & Boudin, 2012). Take rose preparations 2 hours apart from iron supplementation or iron-rich food.

Dose Infusion: 1-10 g dried petal/day divided into 1-4 doses; Tincture/Glycerite: 1-3 mL (1:2, 50%) 1-3x/day (Pole, 2012).



SPEARMINT



Mentha spicata (Lamiaceae)

Leaf

Spearmint was introduced into Britain by the Romans, and has been grown in English gardens since at least the 9th century (Grieve, 1931/1971). It was strewn in churches, chambers, banquet halls, and other gathering places both for its enlivening scent as well as to avert troublesome mice (Grieve, 1931/1971). In both ancient and modern times, this plant has been lauded as a harmonizer in infusions, improving tolerance of other herbs and bringing pleasure to those who drink it.

Actions Analgesic, aromatic, carminative, diaphoretic, diuretic, nervine, refrigerant, relaxant

Energetics Cooling and drying

Use As a refrigerant, spearmint cools and refreshes the body, and with an almost universally enjoyed flavor it is a fantastic addition to summer tea blends. Spearmint has cooling diaphoretic qualities and opens the pores, which can be helpful for reducing fevers in adults and children when the tea is consumed or added to a bath.

Spearmint is perhaps best known for its ability to soothe the stomach; its gentle carminative properties are used to ease gas and bloating (Cook, 1869; Frawley & Lad, 1988). Spearmint can also relax muscles in the gastrointestinal tract and ease nausea and vomiting (Bove, 2001; Cook, 1869).

Western practitioners describe spearmint's actions as calming and relaxing, which benefit those prone to anxiety, stress, or insomnia. Spearmint can be combined with ginger (*Zingiber officinale*) rhizome for sudden onset of anxiety that affects the belly or "nervous forms of fever" (Cook, 1869, pg. 479).

A gentle herb tolerated by most people, spearmint is commonly found in pregnancy teas, and is particularly suited for children (Keville & Green, 2009; Ody 1993). A spearmint tea or bath can be employed for colicky babies and children's fevers, tummy aches, or irritability (Sinadinos, 2008).

Start enjoying spearmint's refreshing properties today with our Cooling Rosy Spearmint Foot Soak recipe on Page 30 and our Refreshing Monarda-Mint Ice Pops recipe on Page 36!

Safety The herb is generally recognized as safe. Mothers experiencing low breast milk production may need to avoid spearmint in high doses, as it may further decrease milk flow (Tierra & Tierra, 1998).

Dose Infusion: 0.5-6 g dried leaf/day (Tierra, 1988) divided into 1-4 doses; Tincture/Glycerite: 1-2 mL fresh herb (1:2, 50%) or dried herb (1:5, 20%) 1-4x/day (Sinadinos, 2008).





ST. JOHN'S WORT

Hypericum perforatum (Hypericaceae)

Aerial parts

St. John's wort is an herbaceous perennial native to Europe, but it has become naturalized in Asia, Africa, North America, and Australia (Foster, 1993). It grows in fields and meadows and along roadsides and forests. It is deemed an invasive weed in the rangelands of western North America and Australia due to its aggressive growth (Foster, 1993).

St. John's wort's genus name, *Hypericum*, comes from the Greek *hyper eikon*, meaning "over an apparition," referencing its power to protect against evil spirits due to their utter disdain for its smell (McIntyre, 1996). Its common name is Christians' tribute to their beloved St. John the Baptist, as the plant blooms at midsummer near his birthday (June 24th) and its red oil is said to represent the blood spilled upon his beheading.

Actions Analgesic, antidepressant, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, antispasmodic, anxiolytic, astringent, emmenagogue, nervine relaxant, nervous system trophorestorative, vulnerary

Energetics Cooling to warming and drying

Use St. John's wort (SJW) helps soothe the hot pain associated with damaged nerves and neuralgia and is used for painful sciatica, shingles, and rheumatism. It can even help restore nerve sensation in nerves damaged by traumatic injury or other causes (Bennett, 2014). This ability to ease "hot pain" is partially why SJW is categorized as energetically cooling.

SJW's anti-inflammatory, vulnerary, astringent, and antimicrobial actions make it a powerful ally for wounds, bruises, burns, sprains, and muscle pain. SJW is also frequently featured in post-sun skin-soothing recipes, due to its anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects. St. John's wort does contain the constituent hypericin, which may cause sun-sensitivity reactions in some, however there's no problem with using St. John's wort oil after sun exposure. (Don't miss our After-Sun Oil recipe on Page 40 featuring St. John's Wort!)

SJW is also a relaxing nervine well known for its ability to ease anxiety and tension and uplift the spirit. It has been researched extensively as an antidepressant, and is used throughout the world for mild to moderate depression.





The open flowers, flower buds, and leaves from the top 2-3 inches of the SJW plant are harvested during full bloom from June through August and are extracted in a tincture or oil—or dried for tea or powdered extract. Note that fresh SJW preparations are preferred over dried herb preparations as they capture the potency of the red pigment hypericin, one of SJW's active constituents.

Safety St. John's wort should not be used in pregnancy due to its emmenagogue properties. It is also not recommended during lactation or prior to surgery (it may interact with some anesthetic drugs) (Brinker, 2010). It also interacts with a number of other drugs, particularly blood thinners and antidepressants, and should generally be avoided while taking any pharmaceutical drug (Brinker, 2010; Gardner & McGuffin, 2013). St. John's wort may increase skin photosensitivity. Extended use should be avoided—there is a link between St. John's wort use and cataract development (Holmes, 1989).

Dose Infusion: 8-14 g dried aerial parts/day divided into 1-3 doses (Holmes, 1989); Tincture: 2-4 mL (1:5, 40%) 3x/day (Hoffmann, 2003).



Foraging Summer's Cooling Herbs

The seven plants listed above can be grown at home, purchased through online suppliers, and in many cases, foraged! Summer is one of the best times to forage herbs, and by now, most plants are fully grown, making them easier to identify. They're also in their prime and ready to be harvested and preserved for future use.

The following herbs are all cooling in nature and widely available for those who enjoy foraging. You may recognize a few of them from the monographs above, and others are additional options to keep your eyes open for and learn about. So grab a basket and some harvest shears, because these cooling herbal beauties may be just the thing for your next summer recipe!

Cooling Summer Herbs to Forage

Bee balm (*Monarda* spp.) aerial parts

The volatile oils in bee balm can help to break a fever and ease coughs, making this pollinator-friendly herb particularly useful for cooling fevers and soothing respiratory infections.

Bee balm is ready to harvest when the flowers are in full bloom, and it has a somewhat strong, peppery flavor that combines well with the sweet, tart nature of vinegar and oxymels.

Chicory (*Cichorium intybus*) root and aboveground parts

Chicory is cooling and moistening and often used as a gentle digestive bitter. The mild-tasting leaves and flowers make lovely garnishes, and many herbalists roast the root to use as a coffee substitute.

Harvest leaves and flowers in spring or summer and the root in fall.

Jewelweed (*Impatiens* spp.) aerial parts

The most common folk use of jewelweed is to soothe areas affected by poison ivy. It's most commonly used as a fresh poultice or infused in water or witch hazel.

To harvest jewelweed, clip the smaller branches with a pair of sharp scissors.

Mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*) flower and leaf

Mullein is a cooling expectorant, anti-inflammatory, and antispasmodic herb useful for bronchitis and dry coughs, and as a general tonifying herb for the respiratory system (Hoffmann, 2003; Hardin, 2009). Mullein flowers are a traditional ingredient in herbal ear oil and the leaves are often used in lung tonic teas.



Harvest mullein leaves before the flower stalk forms. Mullein flowers are typically harvested as they begin to bud and open. To harvest, gently pull the mullein stalk down to your level, being careful not to break it, and pull individual buds and flowers from the flower spike.

Peach (*Prunus persica*) leaf, bark, and pit

The leaf, bark, and pit of peach are often turned to for their cooling nervine effects. Peach leaves can be used fresh or dried in poultices, teas, syrups, and tinctures.

Peach leaves may be clipped sparingly in spring or more heavily when fruiting is over in late summer and early fall. Harvest peach leaves by clipping those free of blemishes with a pair of sharp scissors.

Plantain (*Plantago* spp.) leaf

After you learn how to identify plantain, you'll start seeing this common backyard herb everywhere! It's often used topically to soothe bug bites and stings, and for this purpose it shines as a key ingredient in herb-infused oils and salves.

Harvest healthy plantain leaves by snipping them at the base.

Red clover (*Trifolium pratense*) blossom

Energetically, red clover is cool, sweet, and salty. It has an uplifting, joyful nature that is opening to the heart and helps release grief. Its sweet taste and gentle nature is especially nice for children, and you'll often see it as an ingredient in gentle, mineral-rich infusions.

To harvest red clover blossoms, simply pinch the blossoms off between your thumb and forefinger. Like many plants, harvesting flowers encourages new growth, which means you can get multiple red clover blossom harvests in 1 year!

Red raspberry (*Rubus idaeus*) leaf

Berries aside, the leaves of the red raspberry plant are also commonly foraged during summer. The leaves are cool, dry, and bitter, and they contain tannins that have an astringent (toning) action on tissues in the body, helping to retain moisture. Raspberry leaf infusion is an excellent nutritive tonic, and it particularly shines when used for the reproductive system.

Harvest the young leaves from each cane in early summer, before the blossoms open. To harvest, simply snip leaves with sharp shears or scissors on a dry day. The leaves can be a little sticky or prickly feeling, so feel free to wear gloves if you wish. The leaves can be used fresh but are more commonly dried and prepared as teas, syrups, and tinctures.



Rose (*Rosa* spp.) petal and flower bud

How joyful it is to find wild roses on a summer's day! With an abundance of uses—from teas to syrups and even herbal bath soaks—this cooling, heart-opening herb is truly a foraging gem.

Harvest rose petals on a dry morning just after their blooms open, as this is when they are at their most fragrant. Beware of thorns!

St. John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*) aerial parts

Sunny St. John's wort is often used topically to cool the hot, prickly sensations of nerve damage or skin abrasions. Internally, it can help ease symptoms of seasonal or mild depression.

Harvest the open flowers, flower buds, and leaves from the top 2-3 inches of the plant when it's in full bloom from June through August. Hold the leaves up to the sun to see the tiny perforated dots that are the plant's oil glands!

Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) aerial parts

Yarrow is cooling and drying. It's perhaps best known for its wound-healing properties, although it's also a great herbal ally for colds and the flu due to its antiviral action and its ability to help break a fever.

Harvest yarrow as soon as the flowers have bloomed. They are ideally harvested mid-morning after the dew has dried and before the sun's heat evaporates lighter volatile oils. To harvest, use sharp scissors or shears to remove the flower head and the fresh, tender leaves from the top of the plant.

Foraging Tips To Get You Started

Before heading outdoors to forage for these summer herbs, it's always important to review some basic foraging tips. Let's get started!

The first and most important thing to keep in mind is proper plant identification! One of the best ways to learn how to properly identify herbs in your area is to go on a plant walk with someone knowledgeable about the plants in your area. You could also take a local or online course that will teach you about plant identification, such as Herbal Academy's [Botany & Wildcrafting Course](#) or [The Foraging Course](#). In addition to these options, it's always important to have some [foraging field guides](#) on hand to help you identify plants in your area. If you come across a plant in the wild, but you're not sure whether you've properly identified it, then a local field guide can be a great way to help you figure it out. If you find yourself stuck when it comes to plant identification, it can be helpful to take several photos of the plant from different angles and compare them to additional field guides, share them in an online plant identification group, and/or share them with an herbalist or naturalist you know personally.

Be mindful of local plants that are at risk of becoming endangered. The easiest way to do this is to check out the [United Plant Savers](#) (UpS) website to see which plants are on the “At-Risk” list. UpS is an organization that works to protect [at-risk plants](#) so we can keep them around for future generations—it’s important that we are responsible with the gifts of nature! If a plant is on the “To-Watch” or “At-Risk” list, try to find a cultivated source to use, grow it in your own herb garden, or find an alternative herb instead of harvesting it from the wild.

Be sure to harvest plants growing in clean soil. This means staying away from roadsides, places treated with chemicals or impacted by animal feces, and areas close to city buildings and businesses. These places could possibly be contaminated with toxins you don’t want in your plants, and ultimately, in your body. When it comes to the places where you harvest herbs, it’s also important to have permission to harvest if you are on someone else’s property, and to be familiar with the regulations governing any public land.

The last thing to consider when it comes to foraging herbs is not to harvest all of the plant in one given area. Harvesting 10% or less of a given plant stand is a good general rule, even for plants that are abundant, as this leaves most of the population behind to reproduce and meet the needs of local wildlife. Of course for some plants, even 10% is too much, so it’s important to adjust this rule based on each individual foraging situation you encounter.

For more information on the ethics of wild foraging, check out our blog post, [10 Tips for Wildcrafting Medicinal Herbs](#), or [The Foraging Course](#), an in-depth guide to foraging and using wild plants throughout the seasons.

Now that you’ve learned about the many cooling herbs of summer—and how to safely forage them—it’s time to transform your seasonal bounty into delicious recipes for the entire family! From a rejuvenating spearmint foot soak to a refreshing hibiscus iced tea, these recipes will help you feel calm, cool, and collected during even the hottest days of summer.

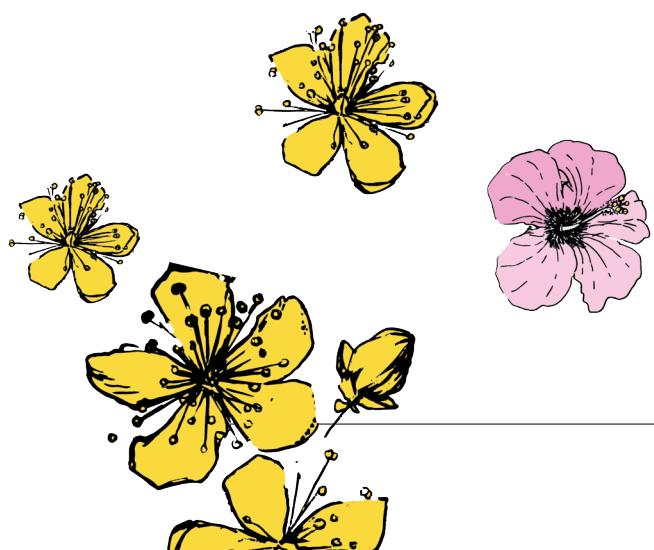
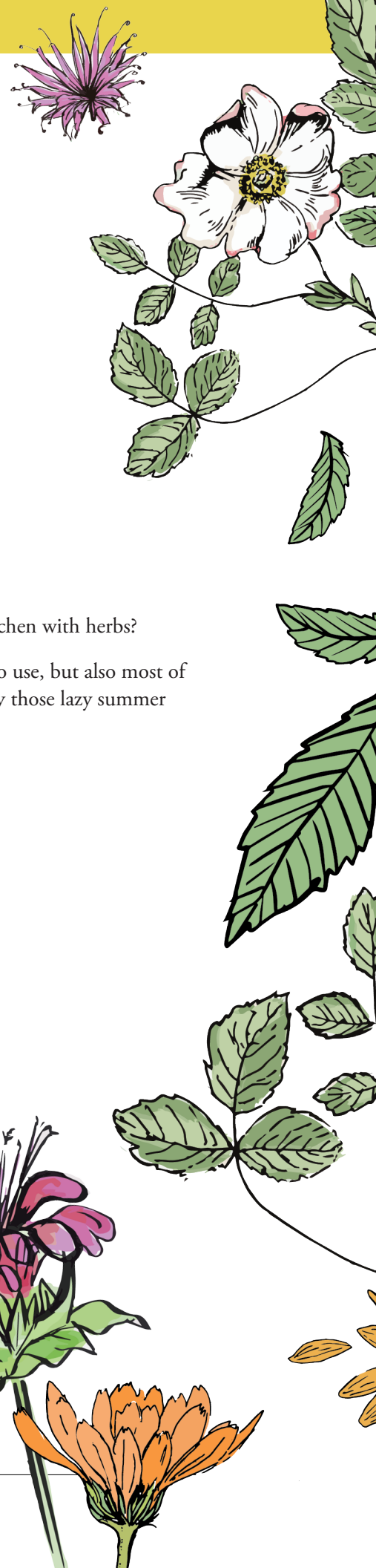




7 HERBAL RECIPES TO HELP YOU STAY COOL

What better way to stay cool than getting creative in the (air-conditioned!) kitchen with herbs?

Below you'll find seven herbal recipes that are not only easy to make and fun to use, but also most of them won't take up too much of your time, leaving you plenty of time to enjoy those lazy summer days by the pool (or at least in the shade!).





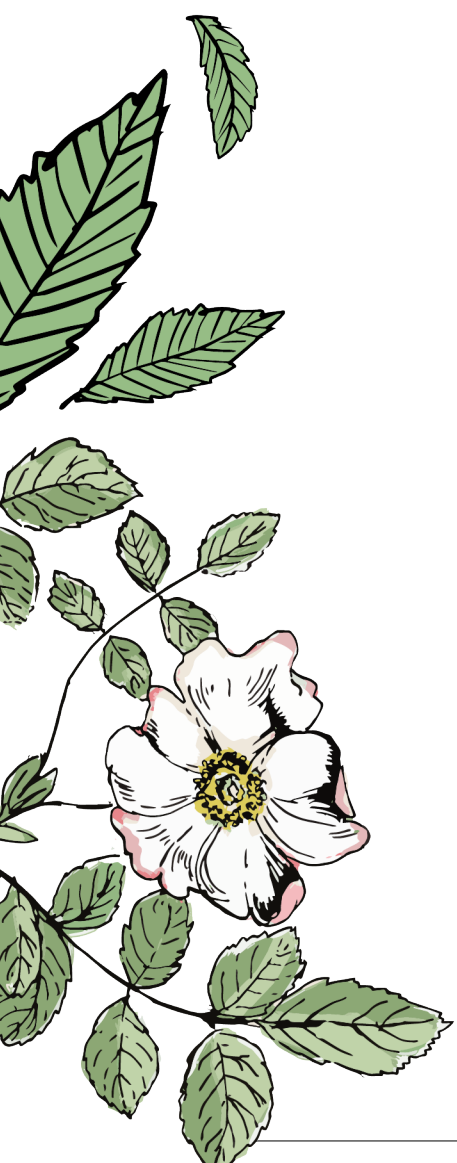
Cooling Rosy Spearmint Foot Soak

Cool your hot, tired feet after a long day in the sun with this soothing foot soak, excerpted from our blog post, [Summertime Foot Care Tips for Kids](#). Ready in minutes, this is a lovely way to relax at the end of the day!

Ingredients

- ½ cup dried spearmint (*Mentha spicata*) leaf
- ½ cup dried rose (*Rosa* spp.) petal
- ¼ cup Epsom salts
- ¼ cup baking soda
- 2 quarts (64 fl oz) boiling water

Directions

- Bring water to a boil in a stainless steel or enamel saucepan on the stove.
 - Place the spearmint leaves and rose petals in a heat-proof container that has a tight-fitting lid, like a half-gallon canning jar.
 - Pour the hot water over the peppermint and roses and cover. Steep for 20-30 minutes.
 - Strain out the herbs and pour the liquid into a basin or pot that is big enough for your feet.
 - Add the Epsom salts and baking soda and mix well to thoroughly dissolve. Top off with enough cool water to make the water temperature comfortable for your feet.
 - Sit with your feet comfortably submerged in the water for as long as you wish.
 - Finish with a nice massage using a [botanical salve](#), [foot butter](#), or lotion.
- 





Hibiscus & Raspberry Leaf Sun Tea



What better way to cool down during the hottest part of the day than with a sweet and tart sun tea? Prepare this tea in the early morning and by mid-afternoon it will be ready to drink! This recipe is adapted from [How to Make an Herbal Sun Tea](#) via the Herbal Academy blog.

Ingredients

- 1 cup dried red raspberry (*Rubus idaeus*) leaf
- ½ cup dried hibiscus (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*) calyx
- ½ cup dried rose (*Rosa* spp.) petal
- ½ cup dried marshmallow (*Althaea officinalis*) root
- ¼ cup dried orange (*Citrus* spp.) peel

Directions

- Mix the herbs together and store in a labeled, airtight container for up to 1 year.
- To make herbal sun tea, add ½-1 cup of the herb blend to a 1-quart glass canning jar.
- Add room-temperature water, covering the herbs and filling the jar to the top. Cap the jar and let it sit in the sun from morning until late afternoon.
- Strain herbs through a layered cheesecloth—composting the herbs and reserving the liquid in a clean jar.
- Sweeten tea if desired and enjoy! (Extra sun tea can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 24 hours.)







Soothing Sunburn Spray

Spent a bit too much time in the sun? If so, cool and soothe hot skin with this DIY sunburn spray from our blog post, [How to Soothe Sunburns and Stay Cool Naturally](#). Simply spritz this mixture onto reddened skin several times a day and allow it to dry. You'll be feeling better sooner than later!

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp fractionated coconut oil
- 30 drops lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*) essential oil
- 10 drops peppermint (*Mentha x piperita*) essential oil
- 3 tbsp aloe (*Aloe vera*) leaf gel
- 3 tbsp hydrosol, such as rose (*Rosa* spp.), calendula (*Calendula officinalis*), or witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*)
- 1 tbsp herb-infused or plain apple cider vinegar
- 4-fl oz glass bottle with spray top

Directions

- Combine the coconut oil and essential oils in the bottle and stir or shake to mix well. For adults, use up to 40 drops of essential oil to make a 2% dilution. For children, omit peppermint essential oil and reduce lavender essential oil to 20 drops for a 1% dilution.
- Add aloe gel, hydrosol, and vinegar and stir or shake to mix well.
- Label and store in the refrigerator for 2-3 weeks before making a fresh batch.
- Shake well before each use, and spray evenly over skin.




Soothing
Sunburn
Spray

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Refreshing Monarda-Mint Ice Pops


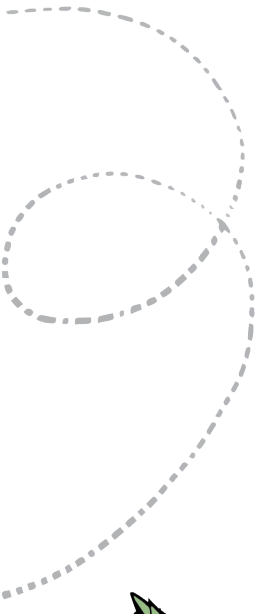


Craving a sweet treat on a hot summer day? If so, these cooling herbal ice pops are a healthy way to pacify your sweet tooth. Made with bee balm and spearmint, this tasty combination is sure to ease the heat of a summer's day! Since bee balm has a strong taste, feel free to increase the ratio of spearmint to bee balm to suit your liking. *Note: This recipe contains honey and should not be given to children under 1 year of age*

Ingredients

- 
- 3 tbsp dried bee balm (*Monarda fistulosa* or *M. didyma*) aerial parts
 - 3 tbsp dried spearmint (*Mentha spicata*) leaf
 - 1 quart (32 fl oz) water, just off the boil
 - Raw honey to taste
 - Ice pop molds

Directions

- 
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- In a quart-sized glass canning jar, steep herbs in hot water (just off the boil) for 15 minutes. Be sure to cover the jar with a lid or plate to prevent volatile oils from escaping.
 - Strain the infusion through layered cheesecloth—composting the herbs and reserving the liquid. Allow to cool slightly.
 - Add honey to taste. Pour into ice pop molds and freeze.
 - Enjoy healthy herbal ice pops on hot days!








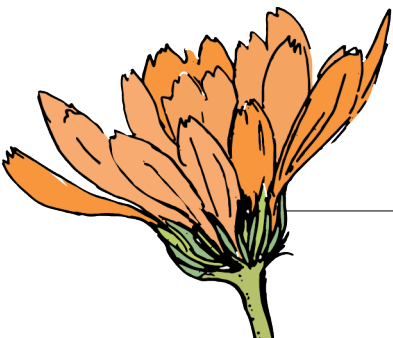
Simple Bug Bite Salve

With summer comes bugs and bug bites! Thankfully, herbal allies can come to our rescue and soothe itchy, and sometimes painful, summer bug bites.

Ingredients

- 
- ¼ cup dried calendula (*Calendula officinalis*) flower
 - ¼ cup dried plantain (*Plantago* spp.) leaf
 - 1¼ cup (10 fl oz) olive oil
 - 1 oz beeswax pastilles
 - 10 drops lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*) essential oil
 - 10 drops peppermint (*Mentha x piperita*) essential oil
 - Sterilized glass jar (1-pint or 1-quart) with lid
 - Natural waxed paper
 - Glass jars or metal tins to hold salve
 - Double boiler

Directions

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- Add calendula and plantain to a dry, sterilized glass jar.
 - Cover the herbs with oil, making sure to completely cover the herbs by 1 inch. Use a dry, sterilized spoon to mix thoroughly so all surfaces of the herbs are coated and no air bubbles remain.
 - Place a square piece of natural waxed paper on top of the jar (this protects the oil from any chemical coating that may be on the lid), then seal the jar with a lid.
 - Place the jar in a dark, warm spot, and let the mixture sit for 4-6 weeks. Every 1-3 days, roll the jar in your hands to help mix the contents and release the herbal constituents into the oil.
 - When time is up, strain the herbs through layered cheesecloth and reserve the oil.
 - Measure 1 cup of herb-infused oil and place it in a dry, sterilized double boiler (or a dry, sterilized glass or ceramic bowl or canning jar over a small saucepan of simmering water) over low heat.

- Add beeswax pastilles to the oil in the saucepan, stirring occasionally with a dry, sterilized spoon, until the beeswax has completely melted and combined with the herb-infused oil.
- Add essential oils. For children under the age of 3, omit peppermint essential oil.
- While the mixture is warm, pour individual portions into dry, sterilized glass jars or tins and allow to cool at room temperature.
- Once cool, put the lids on and label. Store in a cool location, such as a cupboard, for up to 1 year.





After-Sun Oil

Prepare to be delighted by the beautiful red hue that this oil takes on as the olive oil extracts the hypericin from the fresh St. John's wort. This infused oil is excerpted from Herbal Academy's [The Foraging Course](#) and can be used as-is for painful or sunburned skin or incorporated into an [After-Sun Cream](#).

Ingredients

- ½ cup fresh St. John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*) aerial parts
- 2 cups (16 fl oz) olive oil
- Quart-sized glass canning jar
- Natural waxed paper

Directions

- Place fresh St. John's wort on a drying screen and let it wilt for at least 24 hours to release some of the moisture before adding oil.
- Place wilted plant material in a sterilized, dry, quart-sized glass canning jar.
- Pour room-temperature oil over plant material, making sure herbs are completely covered and oil is at least 1 inch above the top of the herb. Use a sterilized, dry spoon or chopstick to mix thoroughly so that all surfaces of the herb are coated and no air bubbles remain.
- Place a square piece of natural waxed paper on top of the jar, then seal jar with a lid (this protects oil from any chemical coating that may be on the lid).
- Place the jar in a dark, warm spot, and let the mixture sit for 4-6 weeks. Every 1-3 days, roll the jar in your hands to help mix the contents and release the herbal constituents into the oil.
- When time is up, strain the herbs through layered cheesecloth and reserve the oil.
- Label and store oil in a cool, dark place.







Rose Petal Elixir

This delightful elixir, excerpted from [The Foraging Course](#), tastes delicious on its own or combined with ice and sparkling water for a refreshing summer drink. *Note: This recipe contains honey and should not be given to children under 1 year of age.*

Ingredients

- 2 cups fresh rose (*Rosa* spp.) petal, loosely packed
- 1½ cups (12 fl oz) raw honey
- 2 cups (16 fl oz) brandy
- Quart-sized glass canning jar

Directions

- Place rose petals in a clean, quart-sized glass canning jar.
- Pour honey over rose petals and stir with a clean, dry spoon.
- Pour brandy over honey-rose mixture.
- Shake well, cap tightly, and label.
- Let the rose elixir macerate for 1 month.
- Strain out rose petals and pour into clean, dark-colored glass bottles or jars.
- Label and store in a cool, dark place for up to 1 year.
- Take ½-1 teaspoon as needed. For a refreshing summer beverage, pour 1 teaspoon of rose elixir over ice and top with 1 cup sparkling water.





IN CLOSING

We hope you've enjoyed this ebook about cooling summer herbs and that it will serve as a guide throughout the summer season—one that encourages you to embrace the bounty of summer's herbal allies. As you create and use the herbal recipes in this ebook, we hope they help to make your days more enjoyable and filled with creativity, and that they help slow those quickly fading summer days so you can savor them to their utmost potential!

Some information in this ebook was adapted from Herbal Academy's [Introductory Herbal Course](#) and [Intermediate Herbal Course](#), as well as our membership site [The Herbarium](#), a vibrant collection of herbal resources including articles, podcasts, videos, and an extensive plant monograph database.

Want to Learn More?

To learn more about using herbs for wellness support, we encourage you to explore our online herbal courses. There are a variety of programs available for all levels and interests!

The following Herbal Academy courses are a great first step for budding herbalists:

[Making Herbal Preparations 101 Course](#) - Discover four basic categories of herbal preparations, 12 everyday safe herbs to use at home, and 33 DIY herbal recipes from teas and tinctures to salves and oils!

[Introductory Herbal Course](#) - Learn the properties of familiar herbs and spices and explore their uses in easing common imbalances and supporting body systems (such as the immune, nervous, respiratory, and digestive systems).

[Botany & Wildcrafting Course](#) - Learn the science of botanical identification and the art of wildcrafting through this captivating voyage into wild edible and herbal botanicals!

[The Foraging Course](#) - Discover commonly foraged edibles and wild herbs in this online class with 24 in-depth plant monographs, 48 recipes, and guided videos.



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