

Belle Vie

Gardens & Nursery

August 2002 Newsletter

My favorite time of the year . . .

Everything in our U-Pick garden is producing at a fantastic rate, offering a wonderful variety of veggies for your summer meals. The cool morning weather during most of July had the tomatoes and peppers in a holding pattern, but now that August has started out with a heat wave, watch out!. Nothing like "home grown" and vine-ripened for the freshest taste. Cucumbers, tomatoes, tomatillos, edamame, squash, romano-type green beans, Malabar spinach, peppers, melons, basil, lemon verbena, rosemary and other herbs are crying out, "pick me". Come and answer their call. Mix or match: All veggies only \$1 per pound, and all herbs still \$1 per ounce.

Our summer hours are:

Thursday & Friday	9:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Saturday	9:00 AM to 1:00 PM (at the Farmers' Market)
	1:30 PM to 4:00 PM (after the Farmers' Market)

Mark your calendars now with the date of our 2nd Annual "Herbs in the Garden" Event scheduled for Saturday, September 28th. We'll have seminars on companion planting, container gardening, organic pest & disease control, as well as garden tours & discussions. It should be a fun-filled, entertaining & educational day. Final details with schedule of events and times will appear in our September Newsletter.

Herb(s) of the Month: Oregano & Its Cousin, Sweet Marjoram

The name Oregano comes from the Greek oros, "mountain", and ganos, "joy", or "joy of the mountains", and a more descriptive name for this herb could not be chosen. It so gaily adorned the hilly Mediterranean countryside that the herb became a symbol of happiness. At both Greek and Roman weddings, the couples would wear oregano and marjoram wreaths to symbolize the joyful event.

Greek oregano (*Origanum vulgare hirtum*, aka *heracleoticum*) is the popular culinary herb. It is aromatic and pungent. **Italian oregano** (*Origanum vulgare majoricum*) is a cross between Greek oregano and sweet marjoram. It combines the pungency of Greek oregano with the sweetness of marjoram. **Sweet marjoram** (*Origanum majorana*) is similar to oregano, but sweeter and not as bold. The flavors of the "oreganos" are similar, with subtle differences--taste them and you'll recognize the variances. They all require plenty of sun to reach their peak of flavor.

Both the Greek and Italian oreganos are great either fresh or dried, and sweet marjoram is best used fresh. Here's a recipe to try:

Ogliata

Ogliata is an easy, olive-oil-based sauce used in the Calabria region of Southern Italy. It is poured over many types of fish, and is especially tasty with broiled snapper, halibut or tuna.

1/2 cup olive oil	1 tbsp fresh oregano , chopped
1/4 cup water	4 tbsp fresh parsley , chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced	salt & pepper to taste

Combine all ingredients & whisk until the water and oil are combined. The sauce will appear cloudy. Pour over broiled fish as soon as it comes off the heat and marinate 10 to 15 minutes before serving.

More recipes from Belle Vie over . . .

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We are located East of 101 between San Martin Ave. and Middle Ave.

<http://www.belleviegardens.com/>

More recipes from your friends at Belle Vie Gardens & Nursery . . .

Mediterranean Salad

(Here's a chance to enjoy all those heirloom tomatoes with their vibrant colors from yellow to red-striped to purple)

1/4 cup olive oil	8 oz Feta cheese, crumbled
2 tbsp fresh marjoram , chopped	3 – 4 large tomatoes, sliced

Arrange the sliced tomatoes on a platter along with the crumbled Feta cheese. Drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle the freshly chopped sweet marjoram over all. The flavors of the tomatoes, oil, cheese & sweet marjoram are perfect complements.

Greek Stuffed Tomatoes & Peppers

(Domates ke Piperies Yemistes)

4 firm ripe tomatoes	1/4 cup fresh parsley , finely chopped
4 large sweet peppers	2 tbsp fresh oregano , finely chopped
1 onion, finely chopped	1 cup rice, uncooked
1 cup tomato juice	1/4 cup olive oil
4 tsp sugar	salt & pepper to taste
1 1/2 cup water or chicken broth	

Wash the tomatoes & peppers. Slice off the tops and retain (they will be used as lids). Remove the seeds from the peppers and the pulp from the tomatoes, being careful not to puncture the skin. Sauté the onion in half the oil until slightly softened, then add the rice and sauté until transparent. Chop the pulp from the tomatoes and add the pulp and its juice to the rice mixture, along with salt & pepper to taste. Add the water (or chicken broth) and cook until most has been absorbed. Arrange the tomatoes & peppers in a baking dish, season each with a little salt, pepper and about 1/4 tsp sugar. Fill each about 3/4 full with the rice mixture (allowing room for expansion). Sprinkle another 1/4 tsp sugar and top with the reserved "lids". Pour the tomato juice over the peppers & tomatoes and drizzle with the rest of the olive oil. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes to 1 hour.

Happy Gardening (& Good Eating),
Donna Ahern and Kathy Nolan