



Garden Herbs: Their Cultivation, Cookery, Cures, and Caveats

Plants offered the first effective cures for disease, and the history of herbal medicine is defined by lore and science—in equal measures. The European herbal tradition is reflected in the medicinal plants carried by early settlers to the New World; many of these species escaped dooryard gardens and naturalized in our local flora, which now includes many plants with legitimate or presumed curative properties. Historic lore and the Doctrine of Signatures document herbs in fanciful ways that reflect human dependence on these essential plants. Many of these same medicinal herbs were used in cookery and food preservation, revealing the ethnobotanical wisdom of herbal antibiotic properties. Join us for this intriguing overview of medicinal and culinary plants—from ancient traditions to gourmet cookery, military history, and modern medicine.

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Judith Sumner specializes in ethnobotany, flowering plants, plant adaptations and garden history. She is a graduate of Vassar College and completed her graduate studies in botany at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. She studied at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, and at the British Museum, and did extensive field work in the Pacific region on the genus *Pittosporum*. In addition to writing, her projects include field studies in the Great Smoky Mountains and work with the United Nations developing petroleum-rich plants in the Caribbean. Judith has taught for many years at the college level and at botanical gardens, including the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University. She served as a visiting scientist for several summers in the Harvard LEAP (Learning about Plants) program for Boston school teachers and has volunteered as a National Public Radio Science mentor. She has spent summers working with teachers at the Museum Institute for Teaching Science program and conducting professional workshops on science writing.

Sought after as a speaker, Judith Sumner has been the scientist-in-residence at the Star Island Natural History Conference and a guest on the “Martha Stewart Living” TV show, the PBS program “Cultivating Life,” and various other PBS and educational programs. She lectures widely at botanical gardens, universities, and various symposia. Her column “The Gardener’s Kitchen” (under the pseudonym Laura Craig) appeared in *Horticulture* magazine and is currently being republished in *The Herbarium* by the Herbal Academy of New England. In 2007 she was awarded the Gertrude B. Foster Award for Excellence in Herbal Literature by the Herb Society of America, primarily in recognition for *The Natural History of Medicinal Plants* (Timber Press); *American Household Botany* (Timber Press) earned the American Horticultural Society Book Award in 2005. Judith’s newest book *Plants Go to War: A Botanical History of World War II*, will be published by McFarland during the spring of 2019. It is the first plant-centered history of the war, aimed at understanding the essential roles played by plants on the home front and in the military—in victory gardens, agriculture, drugs, timber, paper, coal, fibers, resins, camouflage, survival, internment, botanical collections, and the landscape of war.