




NATURE NOTES' Co. HERB GARDEN



ALL INSECTS
ADVISED TO
KEEP OUT



WARNING!
ENTER AT
OWN RISK



OCTOBER Vol. 21 No. 8 1984

EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

There has been a renewed interest in the use of herbs in medicine, cooking and cosmetics. Herbs have been used for centuries in these areas and many herbs are supposed to have magical qualities. (Certainly many can be dangerous). Scientists are gradually exploring the herbalist's claims to discover the truths.

However, superstitions are hard to overcome, and there are many about herbs. For example, the god, Hercules is said to have chosen Parsley for his garlands. The Greeks consequently thought highly of it and wove it into the crowns for victors in the athletic games.

Parsley is very slow to germinate, and the magical explanation for this was that before it came up it had to go to the devil and back seven times. Once planted, parsley was not to be moved. Change displeased it and that could bring misfortune to the household.

We've brought you lots of ideas for growing and using herbs in this issue.

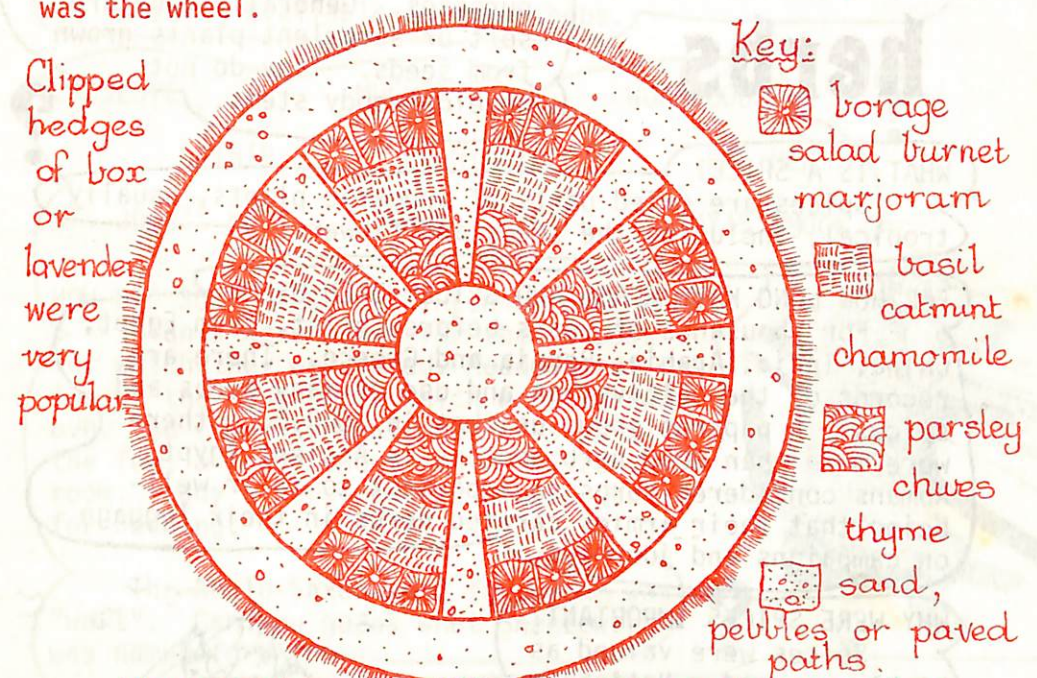
Happy Reading,

Rosalie Collie
Editor.



Planning a Herb Garden

The first planned herb gardens were in the castles and monastery courtyards. They were very beautiful and attracted bees which produced honey, the only sweetener in those times. The formal patterns of herb gardens were designed to be seen from the first floor windows or terraces. The simplest of the Knot Garden designs was the wheel.



Whatever shape you choose for your garden, remember that you need to be able to reach each plant to pick it. It will be easier if you plant the tall growing plants at the back of the bed.

Most herbs come originally from the sunny Mediterranean countries, so choose a sheltered, sunny, north-facing plot and make sure that the soil is well-drained. The soil should be well dug, forked and raked over.

You can grow most herbs in pots if a garden plot is not available. Some 'easy to get' herb seeds or seedlings are - parsley, chives, basil, lavender, thyme, dill, sage, marjoram, rosemary and shallots.

QUESTIONS

about herbs

WHAT IS A HERB?

Herbs are fragrant plants whose leaves, stems, flowers, seeds and roots are used for flavouring food, or for medicinal purposes. Generally they are soft or succulent plants grown from seeds. They do not develop woody stems.



WHAT IS A SPICE?

Spices are dried parts of aromatic plants, usually tropical, including the seeds and flowers.

FOR HOW LONG HAVE HERBS AND SPICES BEEN USED?

For thousands of years before Christ, from Egypt, China, India, Arabia, Persia and Greece. There are records of the cultivation and use of many herbs and spices. A papyrus shows us that in 2000 B.C. there were more than 2000 herb doctors in Ancient Egypt. Romans considered herbs so important to their well-being that their armies carried herbs in their luggage on campaigns and journeys.

WHY WERE SPICES IMPORTANT?

Spices were valued as highly as gold. Nations fought wars over the occupation of the "Spice Islands", slavery followed and seafaring nations gradually built up rich powerful empires by trading in spices and precious metals.



ARE HERBAL MEDICINES USED TODAY?

In China, old traditional herbal treatment is used side by side with modern medicine. In the "West" people often use 'natural' cures and herbal medicines.



& ANSWERS

WHEN WAS THE FIRST HERBAL (BOOK ABOUT HERBS) PRODUCED?

In 1475, Konrad von Megenberg brought out "Das Buch der Natur". Others were written by John Gerard (1597), John Parkinson (1640) and Nicholas Culpeper (1649). Culpeper's Colour Herbal has been updated and reprinted. It is still available in book shops.

LADSGLOVE

MUGWORT

WORMWOOD



CATNIP

PENNYROYAL

FAT HEN

ST. JOHN'S WORT

LADY'S MANTLE

LADY'S SMOCK

HOW DID SOME HERBS GET THEIR UNUSUAL NAMES?

Plants were named for the purpose for which they were used. Meadowsweet was one of the many herbs which were strewn over the floor so that when crushed with the feet a fresh sweet smell filled the room. Lady's Bedstraw was a herb used for bedding.



The Anglo-Saxon word for plant was "wort". Can you guess what Sneezewort was named for?



WHICH HERBS ARE POISONOUS?

Have you ever heard of Hemlock? Every part of this plant is poisonous. Great care must be taken not to confuse it with parsley or carrot tops. Other poisonous herbs are Henbane, Foxglove, Bryony and Belladonna, which you know as Deadly Nightshade.

NATURE ROWS

GREAT FUN.

At the Patch School we have a Junior School Council. In one of our meetings we brought up the subject of making a garden because we had just had a lady to our school talking to us about nature.

Some girls from grade five and six showed her around the school. She said that it would be a good idea to have a garden.

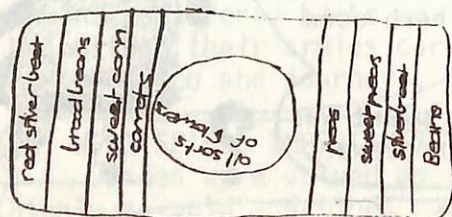
We all brought tools along to school. We chose who we wanted to have our garden with. Amy and I started to dig our garden. There were rocks, weeds and worms. After we dug our soil, Amy had brought some seeds, corn, carrot.

We planted them.

That night I told my mum all about it. She said that the seeds will not grow because the ground is too cold. So the next day at school I told Amy.

I said that we have to buy seedlings. The next day Amy had brought some seedlings. Polyanthis, yellow and red, Mint and Parsley, Lavender.

We had our garden divided up into two sections. On the left side we planted all of them.



Lucy Byrne. Year 6.

This is a diagram of one of the gardens, by

Michael Dawson
Year 5.

THE PATCH SCHOOL GARDEN PLOTS

The garden plots were elected to be made by the Junior School Council. The grade five and 6 kids worked in twos, threes, and single groups to make them.

They were made to help the kids learn more about gardening and improve the school ground.

We planted flower seeds many kinds of vegetable seeds and herbs.

Kevin Heinze also came up to school to give us some tips on keeping our gardens and we also planted some trees with him. It was a great success. Everyone dug their plots and planted

from The Patch P.S.

their seeds and some even put a fence around it to keep out dogs and intruders.

Now we are helping the other grades make their plots.

Anonymous.

Thank you to all the children from The Patch Primary School who wrote stories and drew pictures for Nature Notes.



Hi! I'm Nadine Gleeson and I'm from the Patch Primary School. Our school is situated on 13 acres of land so you can imagine we have plenty of land to spare.

It was because we had so much land that we decided to make a school garden. We brought along our garden tools and gumboots and tramped up the hill to our garden site. We pegged out our land and the measurement was roughly 1½ metres in length and ½ metre in width.

After we had broken the surface of the ground we began some real digging. The soil needed to be soft so the roots of our plants grow easily. I dug down about 30cm. beneath the ground and I also dug out a gutter around the outside for the water to run into.

Then it was time for planting. My friend and I planted chives, rosemary and other herbs and plants. We water our plants every two days and we get a lot of enjoyment out of it. Our plants are flourishing and we look forward to the finished product at the end of the year.

Nadine Gleeson. Year 6.

Ours looked like a grave.

Finished



Before.



Picture by
Sean Harris
Year 6.

Answer to the
puzzle on the
back page:

CLOVER

LAST STOP...

at MACQUARIE
ISLAND

FOR GREEN SCENERY

Wendy Wombat tells us that Macquarie is the most southerly island in the world to support a continuous plant cover throughout the year.

Last week Wendy's mother found she had to travel to Melbourne and go into the library at the * Herbarium to find out exactly what the plants and flowers looked like on Macquarie Island.

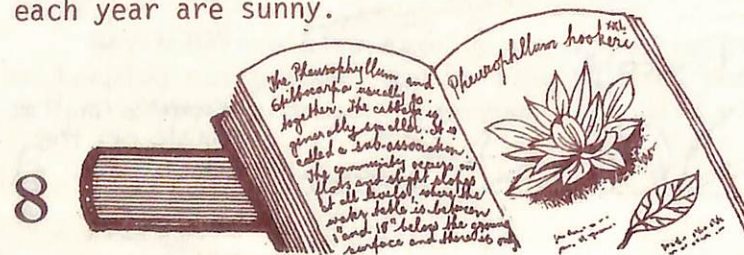
Imagine her dismay, when she found that on looking through 2 old, beautifully leather bound books, that so many of the lovely native plants are no longer on the island.

Rabbits and cats that were introduced by sealers early last century must surely be the culprits.

The large books printed in 1840 contain the original drawings by botanists who went with the explorers around the Sub-Antarctica regions at the beginning of the 1800's.

Although there are no TREES on the island, there are a number of grasses and some flowering plants, mosses and lichens. In fact Macquarie is a green lush island.

Wendy reminds us that they do have rain, mist, fog and frost about 350 DAYS in the year, sometimes it snows but only a few days each year are sunny.



Wendy says that there is a place not far from the * isthmus, where the * A.N.A.R.E. expeditioners station is situated, called the 'Featherbed'! Isn't that a strange name? It covers large areas of flat land along the rugged windswept west coast.



It is a soggy greenish-brown stretch (covered with a lawn like mass) of mosses, sedges and tiny minute plants and can be a hazard for the unwary.

In places it is actually matted plant growth floating on water. Probing with a 6 metre pole has failed to reach the bottom!! Perhaps a waterbed would be more appropriate!

See if you can get your tongue around these tongue twisting names. They are the botanical names of some of the plants that grow on Macquarie Island.

You know, each one has a family name, (the first name) then the families are broken up into different species so the species is the second name.

Most of these here have a 'common name' which is easier to remember, but some just don't have one.

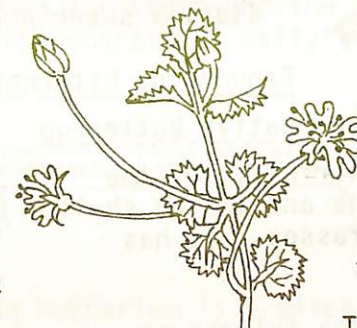
NEXT STOP
ANTARCTICA

Carex trifida or
Muttonbird sedge.

This grass has leaves from 30 cm to 90 cm long. It flowers from November to January and ripe fruits are shed from April to July.



Drawings not to scale.



Epilobium linnaeoides
or a Willow herb.

This miniature flower is a pale delicate pink. It is low growing and forms mats. The serrated leaves are a tiny 5 mm in length, normally green, sometimes purplish. Floweres from October to April and ripe fruits are found from November to June.

It is eaten by rabbits, but can quickly regrow in spring. It is one of the more important plants in rabbit grazing areas.

The seeds have a dense mass of silky hairs at one end. This facilitates wind and animal and bird (by fur of the rabbits and feathers of birds) dispersal.

LAST STOP...

Stilbocarpa polaris or Macquarie Island Cabbage.

It is a handsome plant, found all over the island in large patches. This leafy bright green plant grows where there is only moderate wind exposure. The sealers used to cook and eat the leaves and stems to prevent scurvy. It resembles a very fine rhubarb plant.



Blechnum penna-marina or Creeping hard fern.

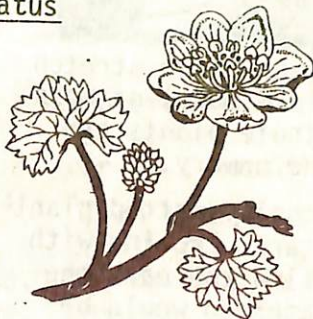
This small green fern grows from sea level to high up on the mountainous plateau in sheltered valleys. Its growth is limited by the gale force winds that constantly sweep across the island.



Ranunculus bitermatus

or Native Buttercup

It is found in the lower parts of the island in swampy places and in the shelter of the huge tussock grasses. It has bright yellow flowers.

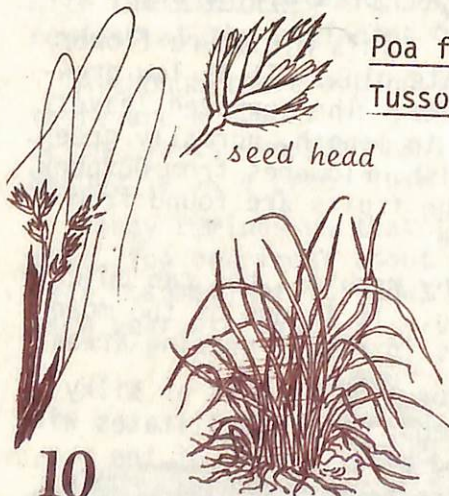


Poa foliosa or

Tussock Grass

seed head

This is one of the main grasses that grow on the island. Huge and tough, the leaves are long and wind bent. Clumps are common on well drained coastal terraces. Penguins shelter under the overhanging leaves and elephant seals slumber in the wallows between plants.



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Nature Notes ... October 1984

Macquarie Island by Wilma Prohasky.

Pheurophyllum hookeri

This very large plant does not have a common name. The size of the leaves varies from 12 cm to 50cm - that's a pretty big leaf! Normally they are about 24 cm in length and 8 cm in breadth. They grow in flat blue-grey rosettes approximately 60 cm apart.

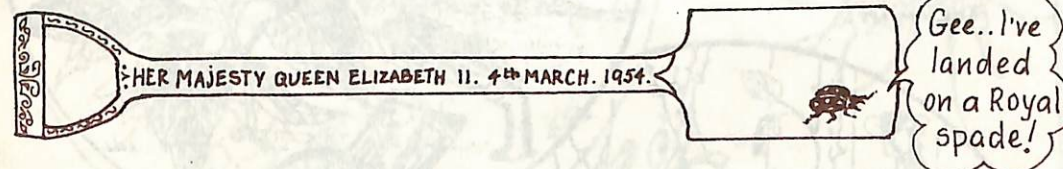


Drawings not to scale.

* Aquatic plants are capable of withstanding complete freezing over.

At the herbarium, Wally's mother looked at the row of beautiful small, shiny spades that had been used by Kings and Queens, Princes and Princesses and Governor Generals to plant trees on special occasions.

Each one had the name and titles of the person who used it, printed in black, down the shaft and the date and other details. Even the handles were decorated. Wally's mum was very impressed!



* Herbarium. The herbarium is a place that people can go to and take plant specimens, to be identified and to ask questions about any tree, shrub, flower or seed.

You will find the herbarium near the main gate that goes into the Royal Botanical Gardens, in Melbourne near the Shrine of Remembrance.

* Isthmus. An isthmus is a narrow strip of land connecting two larger bodies of land.

* A.N.A.R.E. Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition. See Vol 21. No 2. 1984 Nature Notes for map of the island.

* Aquatic. Growing or living near water.

Why do you think there are no trees on Macquarie Island? 11

COMPANION PLANTING



TOMATOES ARE THE BEST OF MATES WITH THE HERB BASIL BOTH GROWING IN THE GARDEN AND WHEN COOKED.



CABBAGES LIKE HAVING MINT ALONGSIDE. THE GOOD OLD GARDEN WORM ENJOYS THE SHADE UNDER THE MINT.

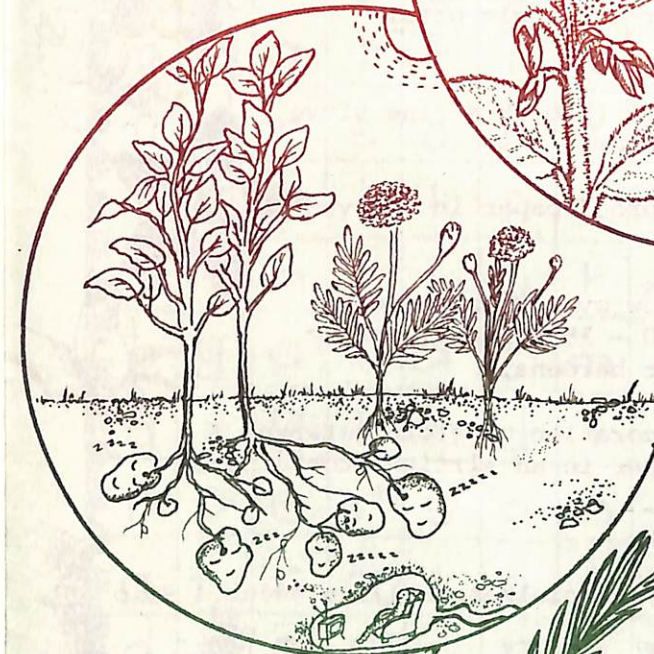


GARLIC GROWING NEXT TO ROSE-BUSHES DETER APHIDS. THE STRONG ODOUR OF GARLIC IS ENOUGH FOR KEEPING OFF MOST PESTS!

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THE HERB, BORAGE WITH ITS STARRY-LIKE FLOWERS, AND THE STRAWBERRY PLANT ENJOY EACH OTHERS COMPANY. THE BEE IS A FREQUENT VISITOR.



MARIGOLDS HELP TO KEEP AWAY BUGS FROM POTATO PLANTS.



MOSQUITOES FIND THE HERB ROSEMARY RATHER REPUGNANT (GOOD TO HAVE SOME GROWING NEAR YOUR FRONT OR BACK DOOR). SAGE PARTNERS WELL WITH ROSE.

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GIFTS TO MAKE

CRYSTALLIZED FLOWERS

Take small whole blooms of violets, rosemary, primroses, rosepetals and rosebuds or various scented mint leaves.

1. Put the white of an egg into a saucer, break it up with a fork, but do not whip.

2. With a small paint brush dipped in egg white, cover a dry flower or single petal completely.

3. Shake caster sugar through a fine sieve over all sides of the flower.

4. Spread on greaseproof paper in an oven dish.

5. Put in a very slow oven with the door open for approximately 10 - 15 minutes, gently turning them as the sugar hardens.

6. Use as a cake decoration or store between layers of greaseproof paper in an airtight container.

LAVENDER SACHETS

are useful to keep your clothes smelling sweet. Slip one into each drawer.

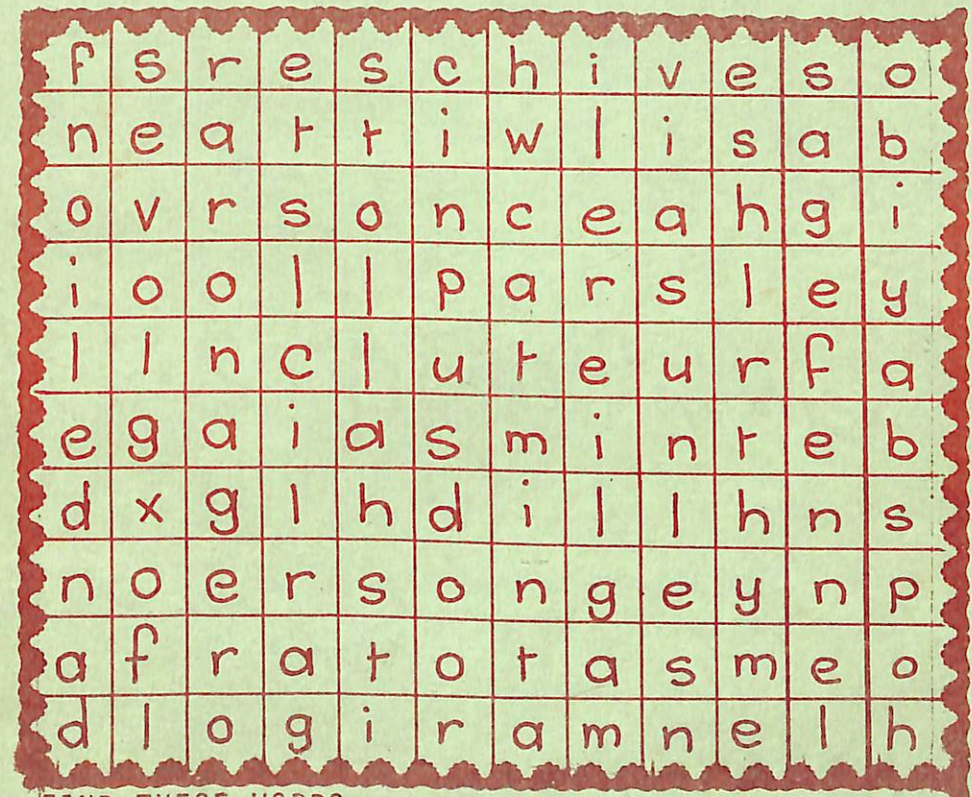
1. Cut a circle of pretty cotton material with pinking shears, 15 cms, in diameter.

2. Place several fresh lavender flowers in the centre of the circle of material.

3. Gather the edges together. Tie with a coloured ribbon.



'ERBIE 'ERB'S 'ERB WORD PUZZLE



FIND THESE WORDS:

parsley, thyme, sage, bay, chives, shallots, mint, foxgloves, basil, fennel, oregano, garlic, marigold, dandelion, catmint, dill, rue, hops.

You can go sideways, backwards, diagonally or forwards!

WINNERS!

WELL DONE

GREAT WORK

Thank you to all the people who entered our bushland campfire colouring competition. We would have liked to give you ALL a prize but there were just too many entries. Here are the names of the people whose entries were selected.

Emma Pattison
Michelle Otte
Cheryl Holmes
Jesse Crompton
Marcelle Shanman
Paul Tacey
Megan Hayden
Rachel Johnson

Kate Broadley
Shoko Nakagawa
Justine Clarke
Andrea Morrison
Nicole Bogart
Margo Steven
Sarah Jane Trimble
Samantha Rich

CONGRATULATIONS

PLANT LIFE

CATNIP
MYRTLE
BORAGE
ENDIVE
BARLEY
PRIVET

Answer on page 7

Take ONE letter only from each word (in the order they are given) and so spell out the name of ANOTHER plant.

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