



August 2011

The Good Herb

A monthly newsletter with ideas for using the bounty of the garden!

Grand Shire Farm
9881 Summit Ave. NE,
Rockford, MI 49341
616-866-1963 or
connie@grandshirefarm.com

Basil

I seldom come across a person who doesn't love basil! This annual herb is very easy to grow from seed and comes in a variety of "specialty" flavors including lemon, lime, cinnamon, licorice and of course traditional sweet basil. With the heat of summer basil is now thriving and ready to pick and add to all sorts of great Italian dishes. You can also snip fresh basil onto your favorite grilled meat or vegetables, add to unsalted butter for a wonderful herbal butter to freeze for the winter, and of course make pesto!

As you harvest your basil, remember that the majority of the flavor is in the top 4-5 inches of the plant, so those are the leaves you should be picking. At this time of the year we usually see basil starting to flower. When an herb does this, it is forming seeds which can be collected for next years planting. However, when a herb starts to flower it puts it's efforts into the flower and less into the flavor (or essential oils) in the leaves. I usually snip most of the flowers off at this point, so that the plant will continue producing flavorful leaves. I'll share some seasonal recipes as well as my favorite herbal butter recipe.

Zucchini and Tomato Salad

2 cups halved cherry tomatoes
2 cups small zucchini, halved and cut in ¼ inch slices
1 cup mozzarella cheese, cup in small cubes
Combine salad ingredients in a bowl and set aside.
Dressing: ½ cup prepared Italian salad dressing, 2 T. chopped fresh basil leaves
Mix dressing and pour over salad ingredients. Makes 8 servings.

Corn Cakes with Herbs

Makes 8 cakes

½ cup white whole-wheat flour
½ cup milk
3 large eggs
2 Tablespoons canola oil (divided)
½ teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon pepper
1 clove minced garlic
2 cups fresh corn kernels (about 2 large ears or use frozen)
½ cup chopped fresh basil
¼ cup chopped fresh chives

Whisk flour, milk, eggs, 1 Tablespoon oil, baking powder, salt and pepper in a medium bowl until smooth. Stir in corn and basil.

Brush a large nonstick skillet lightly with the remaining 1 Tablespoon oil; heat over medium heat until hot (but not smoking). Cook 4 cakes at a time, using about ¼ cup batter for each, making them about 3 inches wide. Cook until the edges are crispy, about 2 minutes. Flip and cook until golden brown on the other side, 1 to 3 minutes more. Repeat with the remaining oil and batter, making 8 cakes total. Reduce the heat as necessary to prevent burning.

Fresh Herb Butter

2 sticks unsalted butter at room temperature
1 T. chopped sweet basil
1 T. chopped fresh marjoram
1 T. chopped fresh chives
1 t. chopped fresh rosemary
1 t. lemon juice
Chop herbs fine with a knife or kitchen scissors. Blend all ingredients. (Do this by hand – a mixer turns the butter green!)
Line a cup or mold with cheese cloth or saran wrap and fill. Chill butter for 24-48 hours to enhance flavor. Use within 2 weeks or put in freezer for winter use (for up to one year.)
Serve with fresh bread, potatoes, sweet corn, winter squash, brussel sprouts, etc. or use when roasting vegetables.