

VEGAN



STYLE

ISSUE 28

**WHICH COUNTRY
SEARCHES 'VEGAN'
ON GOOGLE MOST?**

PANA BARBOUNIS

a multi-million dollar
vegan chocolate empire



THE POWER OF PLANTS:

Adventures in Plant-Based Nutrition



By Emma Levez Larocque, RHN

Healthy Herbs – Are You Growing Your Own Yet?



I have, admittedly, a bit of a “brown thumb.” We have very few house plants, and the ones we do have look something like scraggly, emaciated, long-forgotten weeds. Every year I still pretend to my lazy gardening self that I am going to have a big, amazing edible garden. Sadly, my best garden yet was small and my husband planted and tended to it – i.e. it was *his* garden! Usually I get all excited and plant a whole bunch of stuff, and then over the course of the spring and summer my attention gets diverted to other things and my poor garden suffers. However, I discovered a few years ago that one thing I CAN grow successfully is herbs – and oh what a thing to grow!



We live on the west coast of British Columbia, Canada in a mild climate, so though my herbs go dormant in the late fall, most of them survive the winter and come back full force in the spring. Now THAT’s my kind of plant. As a chef, I LOVE having fresh herbs available outside my door, so I have them arranged in pots just off of my front step. Need some mint for smoothies? Head outside with scissors. Oregano or chives for a sauce? Presto! Basil for pesto? You get the picture. And I love watching them come back in the spring. A little trim, a few replacement plants, some organic compost, and I’m totally set.

Not only are herbs delicious and easy to grow, they are packed full of nutrients. If you’re not already growing herbs, do it! It doesn’t take a lot of space – like I said, I have mine in pots on my porch. It’s low maintenance, cost

effective, fresh, and GOOD FOR YOU! Here are a few of my favorite herbs, some of their health benefits, and ideas for using them in cooking*:

Mint

There are hundreds of varieties of mint, and I grow a handful. Right now I’ve got Chocolate Mint, Peppermint, Spearmint and Apple Mint peeking their heads over the sides of my pots. Mint can be invasive, so it’s best to grow it in containers, unless you want it to take over your garden (which I actually have never thought would be such a horrible thing). Mint is hardy and comes back every year without any effort from me. It’s amazing in smoothies and juices, tea, salads, as a garnish, and even to flavour desserts. It helps to ease insomnia and nervous tension, and promotes good digestion.

Parsley

One of my favorite ways to use parsley is in a great big tabouleh salad, or in a serving of garlic fried rice. It's also great in bean, grain or leafy salads, smoothies, soups, and as a garnish for many savory dishes. It's helpful for detoxification and indigestion and has strong diuretic properties (so beware of using it in large quantities). Usually some of my Italian parsley survives over the winter, but I usually add a few plants every spring as I love parsley and use a lot of it. You can also dry and store it to use over the winter months.



Oregano

Oregano is another herb that overwinters well here. I have a couple of plants that I have used for the past couple of summers. At the end of the season I cut them right back, dry and store whatever is left, and it comes back in the spring like an old friend. Oregano is a delight to use on pizza or in tomato sauces. I also love using it in salads, salad dressings, and as a flavour boost in tofu scramble. It is a known digestive aid and is thought to help get rid of intestinal parasites. Additionally, it is a powerful antioxidant and cancer fighter.



Rosemary

A friend gave me a tiny rosemary plant about 10 years ago, and today that tiny plant is a monster rosemary bush that now takes up a substantial part of my front garden. It's one of the few herbs that grows outside of a pot in my garden. Rosemary is a strong herb with a powerful flavor profile that goes well in most savoury dishes, especially sauces, bean dips/spreads or salad dressings. I also love it in mashed potatoes, soups, stews, or as part of a balsamic-olive oil bread dip. It has a strong flavour, so it's a good idea to use it sparingly until you know you love it! Rosemary is a powerful antioxidant and antiseptic, helping to stimulate the appetite, aid circulation and promote good digestion.

Thyme

Thyme is another herb that I have grown several varieties of in my garden. They all taste slightly different, but they're all delicious! I love using thyme to flavour vegan cheeses, soups, salad dressings and pasta salads. It is also great in potato dishes.



Thyme is antifungal and has traditionally been used as a digestive aid, a cough remedy and an antiseptic. It also has anti-cancer, antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties.

These are just a few fresh herbs that are easy to grow and incorporate into cooking, but there are so many more, and they all have their own health benefits. Basil, lemon balm, tarragon, sage, cilantro, marjoram, dill, fennel, chives...include a variety, and include them regularly for a health boost, a treat for your palate, and a boost to your kitchen creativity too.

*Note: Herbs are wonderful used as a seasoning for food. Before using them medicinally, be sure to check with a knowledgeable practitioner since herbs can be potent medicine and some are not advised for people with certain conditions, e.g. pregnancy or in conjunction with certain prescription medications.



Emma Levez Larocque is a Registered Holistic Nutritionist and a Certified Plant-Based Chef. She has been vegan for 7 years, and veg for more than 20. She is passionate about sharing the benefits of plant-based eating and living with others, and working to make the planet a kinder, more compassionate place for all who share it.

Garlic Scape and Basil Pesto



My husband's favorite thing to grow is garlic – lucky me! So there comes a certain time of year when we have garlic scapes coming out of our ears. Which means...it's time for garlic scape pesto! This is a wonderful way to get basil into your life too (in case you're looking for more ways – personally, I can't get enough basil).

Ingredients:

- ½ cup lightly toasted sesame seeds
- 2 tbsp nutritional yeast
- 10-12 large garlic scapes (bulb removed)
- 1 cup clean, dry basil leaves, lightly packed
- ½ - 1 cup organic olive oil
- ½ tsp sea salt (or more, to taste)
- ½ cup walnuts

Directions:

Toast your sesame seeds, then add them to a high-speed blender with the nutritional yeast and process until seeds are broken down and a paste-like texture has been achieved. Transfer to a food processor.

Roughly cut garlic scapes and add them and the basil to the food processor. Pulse a few times, then start adding oil slowly, scraping down the sides of the bowl as necessary. Now add salt and process until smooth. Add the walnuts and pulse until they are chopped and fully mixed in (but leave some chunks for texture). Enjoy on crusty bread, pizza, crackers or anything you like to use pesto on!