

# Beverages from the garden July 9, 2023

“Tea” specifically refers to the tea plant, *Camellia sinensis*. Today’s talk is focused on tisanes. The definition of “tisane” (French word) is an infusion or decoction of leaves, seeds, fruits, flowers or roots. Infusion is using hot water over the tea material for a short time: up to five minutes or so, Decoction refers to putting hard material such as roots in a pot and simmering for 15 minutes or more.

Cautions: Before diving into a lot of unfamiliar plants, identify the plant and be certain it is edible/not toxic for human consumption. You can research specific herbs at the National Institute of Health website: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed>.

When trying a plant for the first time ever, be aware that some cause allergic reactions in susceptible people. Website for identifying some toxic plants:

[https://ucanr.edu/sites/poisonous\\_safe\\_plants/files/154528.pdf](https://ucanr.edu/sites/poisonous_safe_plants/files/154528.pdf)

This afternoon we are going to focus on plants for tisanes that are easy to grow in our climate and from whose leaves or flowers we make tisanes.

## Mints, lemon balm

- Mint spreads easily because of rhizomes. A rhizome is a large stem which grows underneath the ground and which propagates lateral shoots.
- Not everything that smells like mint is safe for tea

Common perennial culinary herbs (flowers as well as leaves):

Sage, Rosemary, Thyme, Oregano/marjoram, Lavender

Less common perennial herbs

- Anise Hyssop *Agastache foeniculum*
- Bee Balm (Bergamot) (Oswego tea) *Monarda didyma* sample (all *Monarda* can be used)
- Lemongrass *Cymbopogon citratus*
- Lemon verbena

Scented Pelargonium/Scented Geranium

Flowers

- Calendula
- Chamomile
- Hibiscus
- Jasmine *Jasminum officinale* hardy to 23 degrees

Basic steeping method: three or four leaves or sprigs (1-2 teaspoons dried) pour boiled water over for 2-5 minutes. Boiled water (bring to boil, then let cool for two minutes). Quantity of material is matter of taste.

References:

Homegrown Tea, Cassie Liversidge St. Martin’s Press, 2014

California Master Gardener Handbook, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, edited by Dennis Pittenger, UCANR 3382

Golden Gate Gardening, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Pam Peirce, Sasquatch Books, 2010