

“Earth’s Rich Bounties: The Shakers and Their Herbs”

Herbs for a Shaker Medicinal Garden

Blue Flag, *Iris versicolor*
Boneset, *Eupatorium perfoliatum*
Catmint, *Nepeta cataria*
Chamomile, *Anthemis nobilis*
Cohosh, Black, *Cimicifuga racemosa*
Comfrey, *Symphytum officinale*
Elecampane, *Inula helenium*
Feverfew, *Chrysanthemum parthenium*
Foxglove, *Digitalis purpurea*
Hyssop, *Hyssopus officinalis*
Meadowsweet *Eupatorium purpureum*
Motherwort, *Leonurus cardiaca*
Mugwort, *Artemisia vulgaris*
Mullein, *Verbascum thapsus*
Peppermint, *Mentha piperita*
Rue, *Ruta graveolens*
Scarlet Bee Balm, *Monarda didyma*
Southernwood, *Artemisia abrotanum*
Tansy, *Tanacetum vulgare*
Thyme, Common, *Thymus vulgaris*
Valerian, *Valerian officinalis*
Wood Betony, *Betonica officinalis*
Yarrow, *Achillea millefolium*

Herbs for a Shaker Tea Garden

Boneset, *Eupatorium perfoliatum*
Borage, *Borago officinalis*
Catmint, *Nepeta cataria*
Chamomile, *Anthemis nobilis*
Comfrey, *Symphytum officinale*
Feverfew, *Chrysanthemum parthenium*
Goldenrod, *Solidago odora*
Horehound, *Marrubium vulgare*
Lavender, *Lavandula vera*
Lemon Balm, *Melissa officinalis*
Scarlet Bee Balm, *Monarda didyma*
Peppermint, *Mentha piperita*
Rhubarb, *Rheum palmatum*
Sage, *Salvia officinalis*
Spearmint, *Mentha viridis*
Strawberry, *Fragaria virginiana*

Herbs for a Shaker Culinary Garden

Borage, *Borago officinalis*
Caraway, *Carum carvi*
Chicory, *Cichorium intybus*
Coriander, *Coriandrum sativum*
Dill, *Anethum graveolens*
Fennel, *Foeniculum vulgare*
Garlic, *Allium sativum*
Horehound, *Marrubium vulgare*
Horseradish, *Cochlearia armoracia*

Lemon Balm, *Melissa officinalis*
 Peppermint, *Mentha piperita*
 Rosemary, *Rosmarinus officinalis*
 Saffron, *Crocus sativus*
 Sage, *Salvia officinalis*
 Savory, Summer, *Satureia hortensis*
 Savory, Winter, *Satureia montana*
 Spearmint, *Mentha viridis*
 Sweet Basil, *Ocimum basilicum*
 Sweet Marjoram, *Oreganum marjorana*
 Thyme, English or Common, *Thymus vulgaris*

Herbs wild-gathered at Pleasant Hill KY (small sample)

Alder	Cleavers (Goose grass)	Mulberry
Boneset	Dandelion	Mullein
Black Birch	Elder	Nettle
Bloodroot	Yellow dock	Plantain
Burdock	Dogwood	Sarsaparilla
Butterfly weed	Juniper	Sassafras
Cedar, red	Lady Fern	Walnuts (dye)
Cherry, wild	Life everlasting	Willow
Chickweed	Lobelia	Witch hazel
Chicory	Milkweed	

Shaker Herb Recipes

Ginger Beer (Canterbury NH)

To one gallon water, put 1 lb. loaf sugar, 1 oz. ginger, 1 oz. cream Tartar; and juice of two lemons with the peel grated into it. Boil it and when cold, add a little yeast; and after standing 12 hours, bottle for use.

Rose Water (New Lebanon NY)

Take of roses freshly gathered 6 pound, water 2 gallon. Distill off 1 gallon. Put this into glass bottles. Cover them with so many pieces of paper. Prickle full of holes & set them upon a table which is placed before a window where the sun will shine in upon them. After one Month it will be fit for use. The first that blow out might be chilled down in some vessel until you get enough to distill.

Hand Cream (Hancock, MA)

Take house leek, sweet balsam, Healall, blue balsam blows, coolwort, rock liverwort, water scabish, red plantain, red clover heads, chamomile flowers, catnep blows, white poppys, Kings clover, ground ivy & put them all in an iron vessel that will hold 6 qt add 3 pints cold water—simmer gradually until it boils—strain off the liquor & add 8 oz fresh butter & 1 oz beeswax to it & simmer till the liquor has evaporated then strain through thick cloth. Anoint the hands with this ointment.

For a Cough (Hancock, MA)

Dried Hoarhound Leaves 1 oz, Dried Mullein Leaves, 1 oz. Marsh Mallow Root 1 oz. Boil in one gallon of water half hour, strain add two pounds of sugar, boil down to a quart, bottle, cork tight & keep in a cool place. Dose from one half to one teaspoonful every two hours.

Ginger Pound Cake (from Marty Witcher’s Shaker House-Keeper, 1882)

Three large loaves of excellent cake can be made of two cupfls of butter, two of sugar, two of molasses, nine of flour, two teaspoonfuls of cinnamon, two of saleratus [baking soda], two tablespoonfuls of ginger, three eggs, and a nutmeg.

Books About the Shakers

The Believers: A Novel of Shaker Life, by Janice Holt Giles. The University Press of Kentucky, 1957.

The Earth Shall Blossom: Shaker Herbs and Gardening, by Galen Beale and Mary Rose Boswell. The Countryman Press, 1991.

The Kentucky Shakers, by Julia Neal. The University Press of Kentucky, 1982.

Pleasant Hill and Its Shakers, by Thomas D. Clark and F. Gerald Ham. Pleasant Hill Press, 1968, 1983.

The Shaker Cookbook, by Caroline B. Piercy. Gramercy Books, 1953.

Shaker Medicinal Herbs: A Compendium of History, Lore, and Uses, by Amy Bess Miller. Storey Books, 1998.

Simple Gifts: A Memoir of a Shaker Village, by June Sprigg. Alfred A. Knopf, 1988.