

Lochac

Herb & Garden Guild



Guild Journal, Volume 4, No. 2. March 2008.

*** Guild AGM: At Rowany Festival, some where, some time ***

From the Head Gardener

Greetings all,

Last year saw the guild submit its request, created by Mistress Marit whom I thank for her hard work, and the petition to become formally recognised at the court of Jarl Alfar and Queen Gudrun at Rowany festival in A.S. XLI (2007).

The Herb and Garden guild submission was returned accepted to myself, unexpectedly, at the court on Flametree Ball on 26th May in A.S. XLII (2007).

Along with the seal of Lochac being affixed, it was signed in Runic. The words are simply "Petition Granted Alfar Gudrun".

This very pretty submission and the accompanying petition from guild members now forms the cornerstone of the regalia of the guild, for which I am currently custodian of the regalia as Head Gardener and will try to make available to the guild members to see in person wherever possible. Images of the regalia are, however, available on the guild's posting board (see below).

Although the guild isn't running a specific competition for gardens this year, the Kingdom Arts & Sciences Competitions often have competitions related to gardening, and I encourage all to enter them.

A thank you to Belissario Lascaris who has promoted the guild in his home shire of Arrowsreach . And I was very pleased to announce that he accepted appointment as the deputy of the herb & garden guild administrator in the Southern mainland state.

And a final thankyou to those who helped create the festival garden last year, which won the Stonehenge prize for constructions on site also at last year's festival.

Yours in Service

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Herb & Garden Guild posting boards

Website: www.sca.org.au/herb/

Email list: go to www.sca.org.au/mailman/listinfo/garden

Send Garden mailing list submissions to garden@sca.org.au

Cristoval Asks ...

Does anybody know where one would find a consolidated list of plants, with their earliest known dates in Western Europe?

A bottle of mead to the first person who can furnish such a list, at least covering most herbs and fruit trees.

SCA Celebrity Gardens

Do you know anybody 'famous' in Lochac who has an interesting and reasonably medieval garden? Please recommend them to Cristoval, who would like to do such an article with each future issue.

Herb & Garden Guild Competition – Festival 2007

In honour of its applying to become a guild, the Herb and Garden guild in consultation with all its members, ran an arts and science competition advertised throughout the Kingdom in respect of a garden ornament.

Judging of the competition for which multiple entries were received was performed at Rowany festival AS XLI (2007) by Master Crispin Sexi, and Lady Marie de Lyon.

Starting from the next page of this newsletter. is the text of the winning entry submitted by Brian le faucheur, the pictures accompanying the entry being removed from the text which follows for copyright (and space) reasons. In addition to the article itself, a small clay bas relief decoration of a lion formed part of the entry.

Of particular interest to the author was the notion of what constitutes a garden. I am sure articles and opinions of what is and what is not a garden would be welcomed in future herb and garden newsletters.

Lions - Winged, Walking and Rock - Garden Ornaments with Panache.

by **Brian le fauchéeur**

Abridged from an article by Brian le fauchéeur (Brian Pinch) for the Herb & Garden Guild Arts & Science Competition for Rowany Festival ASXL1 (2007).

Popular tradition has it that Saint Jerome (341 - 420) once plucked out a thorn from a lion's foot, and that afterwards the grateful beast followed him everywhere as a tame pet.

This detail of a painting from Venice shows him walking through a garden with his lion. There are three aspects here which are relevant. The image of a Venetian garden, the lion in the garden, and the Venetian fascination with Lions.



St Jerome and his Lion at the Monastery, Vittore Carpaccio c1500 (detail)

Medieval painters included many strange and exotic animals in their paintings, and it is only expected that a painting of a person include their symbol or favourite animal even though you didn't necessarily see these creatures on a day to day basis.

The Venetian fascination with lions rather than being caused by Saint Jerome and his grateful lion, is more to do with Saint Mark, though no doubt Saint Jerome also picked up some collateral kudos because of his kind act.

In 829 the supposed relics of Saint Mark (? - 74) were transported (taken) from Alexandria to the original church of St Marco (and its successor churches) and is

often regarded as the patron saint of Venice. Saint Mark's emblem in art is a winged lion, often shown holding his Gospel as a book or a scroll, and occasionally as a bishop on a throne decorated with carved lions. (*The Wordsworth Dictionary of Saints*).

People in Venice with their fascination of lions, those of the winged emblem of St Mark, or other lions created, and brought in sculptures, and even live lions into their city. In addition to lions being recorded in paintings, these lions also decorated Venetian gardens and plazas as statues or bas relief.

Shakespeare in his Merchant of Venice Act 2, Scene 1 (Morocco speaking to Portia, Nerissa and train), and Act 5, Scene 1 (Jessica speaking to Lorenzo) even has lions mentioned but in respect of their fearsomeness as live beasts rather than as decorations in Venice.

But lions were and are literally represented everywhere in Venice. From statues, bas reliefs to door knockers, and even new lion statues are being created after the fall of Venetian Republic.



For example the 19th Century statue of Minerva riding a lion in the public gardens in the eastern end of the Riva deli Schiavoni. There are also the 18th Century red marble lions of the Piazzetti dei Leoncini

which appear designed to let children ride them (*A Venetian Bestiary*).

There are also the quartet of sculpted lions outside the Arsenal, the fortress of Venetian naval power until the republic fell in 1797.

The Piraeus Lion once stood at the ancient harbour serving Athens, and gave it the ancient name of Lions Port. Water previously gushed from this lion and it still bears some runic graffiti, believed carved by Norse mercenaries employed by the Byzantine emperor. (*A Venetian Bestiary*).

Piraeus Lion outside the Arsenal

The Arsenal protected the arts and crafts of Venice from rival city states and nations. And a winged lion is also upon the arsenal.

Lions were not exclusive to Venice.. They featured elsewhere such as in the Loggias of Villa Medici, Rome (1560, by architects Pirro Ligorio and Annibal Lippi) and the Borghese gardens in Rome. The Borghese villa was, however, laid out early in the 17th Century. Villa Borghese and the garden was built around 1620 for cardinal Scipione Borghese and these gardens were also stocked with lions, live and statues.

The Moorish Alhambra court of the lions (where the lions are either 11th or 14th century) are so called because of the central fountain where twelve lions have water gushing from their mouth.



Lion Court, Alhambra

But the combination of lions, being winged, walking and rock were in Venice. The rock lions took all different shapes and forms. Sometimes this was to fit on currency and also hide difficult anatomical details for how wings are on a lion.



Of special note is St Mark's square (the Piazza San Marco). Prominent lions are the Winged Lion of the Campanile and the Pillar Lion.



Pillar Lion in the Piazza

Lions were everywhere in Venice. Citizens kept live lions in their gardens. A State Lion even lived in a golden cage in the Piazza, said to have died by guilt poisoning after licking the bars. Captive lions were then forbidden in the city for several centuries until the Venetian carnival of 1742. The Napoleon ordered them destroyed but the order was not carried out by the Venetian employed to do the job. (*A Venetian Bestiary*)

The longer article, and the full list of references, is available from Brian

The Cultivation of Alliums

(or 'How to grow more garlic than you know what to do with')

by Maelmuire ingen Alpin

The alliums are a family of bulb-forming plants which contain strongly-smelling sulfur based compounds. They include onions, spring onions, shallots, eschallots, chives, leeks and of course garlic.

What a lot of people do not realise is that Alliums are wonderfully easy to grow. They are reliable, reasonably water-hardy, suffer from very few diseases and insects don't like them.

They can be grown from seed, but even easier still, a single bulb placed in the ground will sprout, split into multiple bulbs which will grow each as big as the parent bulb, and then die back.

They can then be lifted and used, and they also store very well. Anyone who lifts their daffodil bulbs will be familiar with this cycle.

What this means in practical terms is that you can buy your 'sprouting stock' from the supermarket, or the farmer's market. It also means that if you happen to find a particularly tasty variety of onion or garlic you needn't despair of ever finding it in the shops again. Just plant some and you can have it forever.

As to when to plant your alliums, they are spring bulbs just like your daffodils. If you plant them to come up in spring they will have the longest growing time and produce the most and biggest bulbs. However, I have found that I have the greatest sprouting success rate if I wait until the bulbs have already begun to sprout (usually in the bottom of my veggie box). They tell you when they want planting.

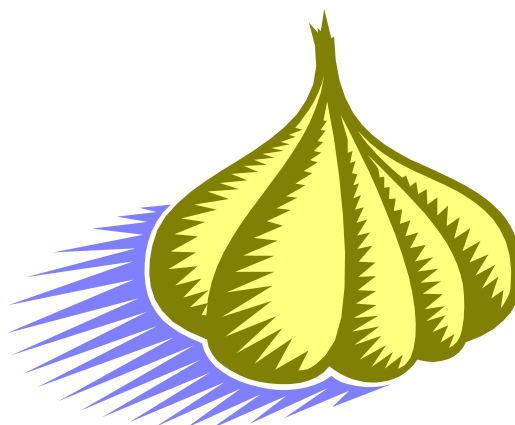
They will grow long strappy leaves that may look untidy, and they may flower. If they set seed, collect the seed and plant it out next year.

As Autumn gets colder, the leaves will start to brown off. This is the time to lift them. Don't wait until the leaves have died completely or they may drop off and you won't be able to find your bulbs. I still have feral garlic in amongst my roses from lost bulbs.

The other reason for lifting them when the leaves are still partially green is that they are stronger. You can then braid the leaves together in the traditional manner, and hang your string of garlic or onions up proudly (like you see in the deli) which keeps them off the floor where they can get damp and go mouldy. Then use them as you need them, pulling them off their dried leaves one at a time, and when the last few begin to sprout, repeat the process!

Garlic

Love it or hate it, garlic is one of the fundamental culinary ingredients in many food cultures throughout the world. It has one of the most distinctive flavours, and is also very useful medicinally, as it contains the compound Alicin, which has anti-viral, anti-bacterial and anti-fungal properties. The basis for the old wives tale that chicken soup is good for a cold is that the traditional recipe uses lots of garlic. (See end of article for a period recipe).



Be careful with the garlic you purchase.

The imported garlic (usually bleached white) is both irradiated and treated with Methyl Bromide to kill off any microorganisms before it is allowed into the country. It doesn't always sprout if you plant it. But if it's sprouting in your veggie box, it's obviously fine.

Home grown garlic doesn't have this bleached white look and often the paper is pink in parts.

When you want to plant (or when the garlic begins to sprout), separate the cloves individually from the parent bulb. Dig a hole about a finger deep and drop the clove point end up into the hold. Cover it over and wait (you won't have to wait long).

You can plant the bulbs quite close together, because you can use garlic greens. You don't have to wait for your garlic to die back to start using it.

The garlic will grow into a long-stemmed plant that looks like a skinny leek, or a flat-leaved spring onion.

At this point it can be lifted and used, diced like a spring onion, in place of a garlic bulb. It has a slightly gentler flavour than the bulb and also tastes slightly of spring onions. I use every second plant this way, and then harvest the rest in the Autumn.

Your garlic may flower (or it may not, mine usually doesn't). Most of the time the flower head produces not seeds, but tiny bulbils.

These can be collected, planted and grown up into adult garlics the next year, just remember to plant them early. They're tiny so they need a longer growing time.

Onions

Onions can be planted either from seed or by planting an onion. If you plant an onion, it will produce a bunch of onions (see the Eschallots section). I would recommend planting seeds or seedlings for onions, especially if you like nice round ones.

You can usually buy a punnet of onion seedlings (usually lots of seedlings) for very

little at your nursery, or a packet of seeds for even less. Plant out the seeds or seedlings in rows with a reasonable amount of distance between them (at least a hand-length). Again, harvest when the leaves start to turn brown. Store in a cool, dry place, off the floor.



If you want onion seeds, you are more likely to get them if you plant a whole onion or two. For spring onions, just pull up onions while they're still growing and use!

If you want lots of spring onions, plant the onions close together and use every second one as a spring onion.

Eschallots

Eschallots (and I've seen multiple different spellings) are those small, funny brown onions that look more like a flower bulb, also go under the name 'french shallots' and have a mild, pleasant flavour. They are the best thing for making French onion soup, nothing else compares.

They are usually quite expensive, but if you go to your veggie shop and rootle around in the bottom of the box, you can pull out a handful (or two) of the small bulbs that no one wants to buy. This will only cost a few dollars, but will provide you with lots of bulbs to plant. Separate any that are still stuck together before you plant them.

Plant the bulbs out with at least foot between them, the plants get quite big. As they grow the leaves will split off into bunches of leaves as the bulbs below divide. Don't worry if it looks like they've been sat on, or if the bulbs start to show at the surface, they're fine.

Again, harvest when the leaves begin to wilt, and each little onion that you planted will have turned into five or six cooking-

sized onions. I found it easiest to separate the bulbs before hanging them up, because the bulbs in a bunch grow at different angles to each other.

Chives, Shallots and Leeks

These alliums are used when they are still green and growing, rather than waiting for them to finish their life cycle and die back, like an onion.

The best way to grow these is to plant from seed in rows (or clumps in the case of chives), and use as needed. As they grow, use every second plant to thin them.

When you get to the end of the row, use every second plant again. This gives the others room to grow.

They don't all have to be large to be used. A leek that is only as thick as a finger still tastes like a leek, you just need more of them! Some people will tell you that the younger plants have a more delicate taste and texture.

A few companion planting notes

Alliums do not like the company of potatoes, especially in our dry climate, as potatoes are very thirsty and will steal water from the alliums. I have had them kill my garlic, and I thought nothing killed garlic.

Allium will however impart a certain amount of insect and disease resistance to other plants grown nearby.

Spring onions grown in alternating rows with carrots will keep the carrot fly away. Grow them near your roses and you will have fewer aphids and stronger-scented roses.

Garlic Soup

Below is a period soup recipe, with thanks to the Gode Cookery website. (www.godecookery.com)

A soup of chicken broth, garlic, & herbs - contributed by Earl Bless

- 6 TBS extra virgin olive oil
- 6 cloves of garlic chopped
- 10 1/2 ounces of bread cubed
- 1 tsp paprika
- 3 pints chicken broth
- chopped parsley

Heat oil in a soup pot, and fry the garlic gently. Add cubed bread and cook until golden brown. Add paprika and then the chicken broth.

Simmer 5-10 minutes until the bread dissolves; you can put the soup in a blender or food processor if you would like to make smoother. Serve with chopped parsley on top.

Garlic Soup is featured in [Springtime in Seville](#)

Sourcing Plants: Web and Mail Order

From Guild Member contributions

Otway Herbs

www.otwayherbs.com.au



Suggested by Hana

One of my personal favourites, just out from Apollo Bay off the Great Ocean Road in Victoria.

Julie is knowledgeable and very very helpful. They mail order their range of herbs and food plants all over mainland Australia (she has permits to send to WA, not sure about Tas).

Frogmore Gardens

www.frogmoregardens.com.au



Suggested by Hana

Just outside Trentham in Vic. They mail order lovely perennial specimens, including a good selection of Geum varieties (Field and Water Avens)

Lambley Gardens

www.lambley.com.au

Suggested by Hana

Just outside of Daylesford, Victoria. Another good range of interesting drought-hardened perennials.

Diggers Club

www.diggers.com.au



Suggested by Cristoval

The usual way to interact with Diggers Club is becoming a member. You get a quarterly magazine with their seasonal offerings.

The trick with Diggers Club is buying things when you see them – most of their offerings are new each year.

Be sure to order soon after you get the catalogue, or they will run out of the most popular items.

Their autumn catalogue is just out, with great fruit trees. This includes quince, medlars and almond trees (all \$24). Also on offer right now are kale seeds, which I have grown with great success, and a variety of lavenders.

Their winter catalogue always has the farm trees, always with a good selection of medieval type trees. These are a bit cheaper than the fruit trees. For the past few years I have bought a selection to plant at Crossroads.

Country Herbals

LOT 8 Yumali Road, Meningie SA 5264
Phone: (08) 8575 1790

Suggested by Hana

At Woodchester in South Australia. Very good range of plants grown under "real" conditions. They are expensive and do mailorder.

Daley's Fruit Tree Nursery

www.daleysfruit.com.au



Suggested by Rose of Northgate

I just received my order from Daley's Fruit Tree Nursery in Kyogle, NSW. They were recommended by the Diggers Club when I needed a pear that would grow in Gladstone. I've got two that you grow together for cross-pollination.

Anyway, they were very helpful on the phone and you order on-line. You pre-order if they haven't got any in stock and they will e-mail you when it becomes available. This may take a couple of months though. They charge a single amount for freight per box no matter how much is in it so its worth getting together with a friend and splitting the freight cost.

They do nut trees, herbs, perennial vegetables as well, but specialise in fruit trees. They do native fruits as well as more traditional varieties. They do some items you would have trouble getting elsewhere (especially if you live in a regional area) such as pomegranate, cinnamon tree, various figs, lots of olive varieties, tea plant and tumeric. These examples are from the sub-tropical catalogue, but they have plenty of plants for cold places too.

Eden Springs Nursery

www.greenearthherbnursery.com.au



Suggested by Hana

In Western Australia, well worth a visit. (AKA green earth nursery)

Renaissance Herbs

www.renaissanceherbs.com.au



Suggested by Brian, written up by Cristoval

This is a group of growers, with a highly informative website. However you can't order from their website – it does mention a grower in each state, but it seems they mainly operate as a wholesaler with a "Renaissance Herbs" brand.

Medicine Garden Australia

Warning by Hana

AVOID. In Lismore NSW.

"They once sent me Lovage labelled as Mandrake... and invoiced me \$48. It took 12 months to sort out and I've heard similar horror stories from others who have dealt with them.

Lovely people, but couldn't organise a pissup in the tavern."



Suggested by Maelmuire

"If all else fails, try Ebay!

It never ceases to amaze me what you can buy on Ebay. Just type whatever you are looking for into the search engine, and I would be very surprised if something doesn't come up.

I have been able to purchase woad, madder, weld, and gypsywort (all dye plants) on ebay. I have seen seeds advertised for mandrake (and womandrake), Myrrh (three different varieties), witch hazel, elder, frankinsense, and more varieties of popular fruit and veg than you can poke a stick at."

Sourcing Trees: Raiding Streets in Canberra

By Cristoval

Introduction

So where do you get Rowan trees from, anyway?

I discovered that they were once planted as street trees in Canberra, at one site. So I have been there and collected rowan berries for propagation.

It so happens that for many years each new Canberra street was planted out with a particular street tree, and for the most part they have survived. Some were experimental, like the rowan trees, and never used again.

These plantings were written up in a book, "Trees and shrubs in Canberra", by LD Pryor and JCG Banks. It was published in 1991 and I imagine it's out of print.

Here's a few of the plantings of most interest to medievalist gardeners.

Medjeeval street trees in Canberra		
Sycamore	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	Furphy Place, Garran (Canberra is a bit dry for this tree)
Alder, Black	<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	Lake edge of Yarramundi Reach
Birch, Silver	<i>Betula pendula</i>	Belmore gardens, Barton Dutton street, Dickson
Chestnut, Spanish	<i>Castanea sativa</i>	Bourke street, Barton
Hawthorn/May	<i>Crataegus laevigata</i>	Flinders Way West, Red Hill (seeds can be spread by birds)
Ash, English	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Pullen street, Narrabundah (Canberra is a bit dry for this tree)
Crabapple	<i>Malus ssp.</i>	Eggleston road, ANU Fisher street, Ainslie
Mulberry, White	<i>Morus alba</i>	Buxton street, Deakin Bayley street, Narrabundah
Mulberry, Black	<i>Morus nigra</i>	Gillen street, Ainslie
Poplar, Black	<i>Populus nigra</i>	The upright 'Italica' form is at Jerrabombera Avenue, Narrabundah, also Parkes Way
Almond	<i>Prunus dulcis</i>	Quiros street, Red Hill
Oak, Holm	<i>Quercus ilex</i>	Bonney street, Ainslie Torres street, Red Hill
Oak, Lusitanian	<i>Quercus lusitanica</i>	Booroondara street, Reid Suttor street, Ainslie Ijong & Ipama streets, Braddon (Looks like English oak, but better in Canberra climate)
Oak, English	<i>Quercus robur</i>	Macquarie street, Barton Doonkuna street, Braddon
Oak, Cork	<i>Quercus suber</i>	Plantation at Glenloch Interchange
Rowan	<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	Butler place, Campbell Also Officer's Mess, Duntroon
Service tree	<i>Sorbus domestica</i>	Gormanston crescent, Deakin Sydney avenue, Barton
Elm, English	<i>Ulmus procera</i>	Benjamin way, Belconnen

What Sigurd's been doing

By Sigurd

What have I been up to? I was going to leave the page blank, but didn't think I'd get away with that.

We had the wettest and coolest Christmas holidays for years. So despite the drought still being around everything has been growing, we had to mow the grass and weed for the first time in ages.

Gardening in the drought is an interesting learning experience. A lot of what I've learnt has gone out the window, especially mulching. Mulching still works, but its hard to find affordable mulching materials. Lucerne hay is almost impossible to buy and even sugar cane mulch has risen in price. This has led to some interesting experiments in mulching.

Using grass and shrub cuttings "enriched" by the chooks works fairly well, so does planting everything closer together. But what seems to be working really well is a living layer of mulch. I've been using white clover for anything which grows over 10cm, like cos lettuce, which seems to work excellently. I can't vouch for the periodness of living mulch but the use of straw as mulch is mentioned in Leonard Mascall's 1592 book on grafting and fruit culture.

Growing older and unusual vegetables is always fun, even if you have no idea if you'll like the end product. This summer I grew edible gourds for the first time and definitely enjoyed eating them.

Carrots have been high on my agenda this year. Carrots mentioned in period documents are usually red/purple, although yellow carrots and white carrots are mentioned. So far I have been unsuccessful in getting Flemish white carrots but have found a purple variety called "Dragon" and a yellow heirloom variety from Slovenia called Lubyana, both of which are tasty.

November crown last year was hosted by my local group Castellum Montanum, so I decided to try and grow a significant portion of the salad vegies we would need. Finding appropriate varieties didn't work as well as I'd hoped so, I ended up growing a mix of lettuces, mignonettes, cos, general loose leaf types, which seemed to handle the hot spell better. I also grew spring onions, salad burnette, Lebanese cress, parsley, chives and sorrel, and ended up providing the ingredients for two of the salads and a few of the other herbs that I was happy with.

What's next? Well I've just finished a new garden and am slowly filling it up, the plan is to try and find a lot of period varieties to grow and hopefully have enough to pass on to cooks and others.



My new garden, complete with wattle fence and a low bench under the Mulberry tree.

Sekanjabin

By Alys Dietsch

Concerning Sekanjabin, aka Mint cordial.

Once upon a time not so many days ago, my Lord and I were preparing to feed a picnic event in Politarchopolis. We rushed and rushed and made lovely food. Just as we were nearly finished our creating we realised we had nothing to drink!

Tragedy! Horror! My good Lord leapt to the rescue and taking his Lord sized hands he raced out to the mint patch, grabbed a fistful and we began to follow the recipe you will find below.

One of the gentles who had the good fortune to share in some of the resulting mix was heard to proclaim, "it's better than sex".



That mix, made whilst we weren't really watching or paying any kind of attention has turned out to be the very best batch. Other batches have merely been heavenly.

So how can you enjoy a heavenly mix in the comfort of your own castle?

The recipe as listed on this page will make a 'heavenly' mix reliably if followed exactly. However, we have now begun experimenting to see if we can get the mix reliably back to 'better than sex' standard.

We have noticed that:

- Different kinds of mint give different flavours.
- Whether you have old or young leaves makes a difference to taste; we prefer the older leaves.
- Spearmint, Apple mint and Peppermint all give you distinctive different flavours.
- We are even coming to the opinion that the time of day the mint is picked will make a difference to the flavour; morning being best. (It's not easy to tell when the mint was picked if you are reduced to buying it – having already stripped your own patch as bare as you dare!)
- If you send a mighty Lord with mighty hands to get the mint you get a different flavour than if you send a Lady with delicate hands.
- If you simmer the mix for exactly 10 minutes at a fast simmer it's a different flavour to a slow simmer.

There are so many variables!

The recipe is listed exactly as we found it and I really don't have any idea what the author meant by Middle Eastern kind of mint. Our own garden mint is the common variety.

As for our wondrous Polit cordial, and that Lord's assessment of it. Some kind people have since explained to him what he was doing wrong, so he should now be fine.

A nice compliment anyway.

Sekanjabin

From Cariadoc's Miscellany

- * 4 cups sugar
- * 2½ cups water
- * 1 cup white vinegar
- * 1 bunch mint, pref Middle Eastern type with long leaves

Bring the sugar, water and vinegar to boil, stirring. Lower heat and simmer 10 minutes. Strip the leaves from the mint.

Remove the sugar syrup from heat, add mint leaves and stir. Cover and cool.

Bottle when cold. Dilute 1:4, decorate with mint leaves.