

GARDENING

Spice up flavors of backyard barbecues

GARDEN SPOT



MARTY FIGLEY

Herbs and spices can add a lot of flavor to foods without adding calories. Backyard barbecues can use them in several ways to add flavor to a dish. Here are a few suggestions.

Soak bay leaves in water until softened (or pick them directly from a plant if you have it—these won't need soaking). When softened, skewer them in between cubes of meat for a splash of flavor.

Melt a mixture of 1/4 cup melted butter and 1/8 teaspoon

ground allspice. Thread cut-up chunks of fresh fruit on skewers. Cook just until the fruits are warm, brushing them with the mixture. Turn often.

The flavor of ribs or pork cubes will be enhanced if you brush the following over them before grilling: Mix orange juice with ground cumin (about 2 teaspoons per 1/3 cup) and ground red pepper to taste.

Pierce the skin of each chicken part several times. Rub the following mix into the meat, as much as you can get to stick: 2 teaspoons each curry powder and lime juice to 4 ounces of plain yogurt.

Sprinkle chicken, steaks, fish, burgers and spareribs with lemon juice. Combine 1-1/2 teaspoon onion powder, scant 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder and 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper.

Rub the dry spices into the meat on all sides, and grill as usual. For a taste variation, add 1 tablespoon chili powder, 1 teaspoon crushed oregano leaves and 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin.

For onion lovers, completely coat each hamburger with instant minced onion, pressing it in firmly to make it stick. Broil as usual.

Grilled red onion with fresh thyme will be a hit. Peel, then cut onions in half lengthwise (they'll hold together better). In a shallow dish, marinate onions in 3/4 cup vegetable oil and 1-1/2 tablespoons chopped fresh thyme (or two teaspoons dried) for at least one hour, turning once or twice to coat. Place directly on grill, cut side down, over medium coals. Grill 10 minutes. You can also broil them in an oven, cut side up on a sheet of foil, 4 to

6 inches from element, for 10 to 15 minutes.

Flavored vinegars

While one person is busy with the grill, another can gather herbs for vinegars. Here are some of the recipes I use to make flavored vinegars.

Use white vinegar for those herbs that color it, such as opal basil or chive blossoms, or if you plan to put a sprig of fresh herb in the finished vinegar, such as tarragon. For all others such as regular basil, mint, etc., I use regular cider vinegar. Both should be 5 percent acidity. Wine vinegar adds its own special flavor.

Wash the herbs, spin dry in a salad spinner. Fill a clear glass jar at least 2/3 full of the preferred fresh herb, twisting it as

you put it into the jar so the oils start to be released. Fill the jar with vinegar, cover with a non-metallic lid and set in the sun for five to seven days.

Set the jar in a cool, dark place for several weeks. To bottle, strain the vinegar through a coffee filter into clean, pretty bottles. An attractive label adds a nice touch.

You can also combine several herbs. For instance, 1/2 cup each of savory and basil, and 4 cloves garlic, into 1 quart red wine vinegar. Crush herbs before adding vinegar, then set in sun and store as above. Sometimes the vinegar needs to be heated.

■ Tarragon-Lemon Balm Vinegar - 1/2 cup each of the herbs, and 2 shallots to 1 quart white wine vinegar. Make as above.

■ Garlic vinegar - 8 to 12 garlic cloves, peeled, to 1 quart red or white wine vinegar. Thread garlic onto skewer and insert into glass bottle. Bring vinegar to simmer, pour into bottle. Cap and seal. Let stand in cool, dark area for about 10 days to infuse before using.

You can also skewer a clove of garlic to other herb vinegars, but remove the garlic before the storage period.

■ Mint vinegar - 1 cup spearmint leaves and 1 cup sugar into 1 quart white vinegar. Boil all 5 minutes, crushing mint. Strain and bottle white hot.

Marty Figley is an advanced master gardener based in Birmingham. You can leave her a message by dialing (734) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone. Her fax number is (248) 644-1314.

GARDENING CALENDAR

Does your garden club have an upcoming event or meeting you want publicized? Send items for consideration in *Gardening Calendar* to Ken Abramczyk, *Observer* Newspapers, 36361 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150 or e-mail kabramczyk@ae.com. To send a fax, call (734) 591-7279.

Saturday, July 21. Tickets at Garden City Hall, 6000 Middlebelt; Rocky's Flower & Gift Shop, 32917 Ford Road, and Barson's Greenhouse, 6414 Merriman, Westland.

WAYNE

The Wayne Garden Club hosts a garden walk at Goudy Park, off Wayne Road between Michigan Avenue and Glenwood, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, July 21. The \$5 tickets can be purchased at the park or at several other locations, including Norman's Market (next to Day's on Wayne Road), Wayne Library and Keller & Stein's Florist on Michigan Avenue in Canton.

YPSILANTI

The Ypsilanti Garden Club's third annual Heritage Garden Tour is scheduled 1-5 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 18, during the Ypsilanti Heritage Festival. View six local gardens, plus a bonus garden, the newly planted re-creation of what might have been planted from 1837-1880 at Ypsilanti's Historic Tower House. Tickets are \$7 per person, available in

Depot Town end at each garden on the day of the event. For information, call (734) 485-7339 or visit <http://community.mlive.com/cc/ypsigardenclub>

NURSERY SCHOOL

ARRANGEMENTS

Several workshops, including one on water plants on Saturday, July 21, are scheduled at Keller & Stein Florist and Greenhouse, 42158 Michigan in Canton. Reservations are needed for the workshops. Each workshop costs \$10 per person and is nonrefundable. Classes are scheduled at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Call (734) 397-0800.

GREAT LAKES ROSES

Attend a workshop at Great Lakes Roses, 49875 Willow in Belleville. Sessions include Japanese Beetle Control for Roses, Sunday, July 15. Call (734) 461-1230.

GARDEN WALKS

CANTON

"Petals and Paths," 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, July 14. Tickets \$6 in advance, \$7 day of walk, available at Keller and Stein, 42158 Michigan Ave.; Grayes' Greenhouse, 882 Lilley; Vanessa's Flowers, 545 W. Ann Arbor Road, Mary's Farm Market, 47453 Ford Road. For information, call Judy Bloomquist at (734) 455-8283. No strollers, please.

GARDEN CITY

Walk hosted by the Garden City Garden Club, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

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