



**NEWSLETTER
NUMBER 1
February/March 2019**



Mentha piperita
Peppermint

**OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF
THE HERB SOCIETY OF
SOUTH AUSTRALIA
INCORPORATED**

THE HERB SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA INCORPORATED

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The membership year begins from 1st July this year to 30th June next. Members who have not renewed their Membership fees by the 1st October will cease to be a Member of the Society.

Fees are payable to the Membership Secretary at meetings or posted to the Secretary at the Society address, or by Electronic Funds Transfer. Bank Details: BSB 105 142, Bank SA: Account Number 537176940

Single \$12, Single Concession \$10,
Family \$17, Family Concession \$14.50,
Group \$12

The Herb Society meets on the first Monday of each month from February to December (no meeting in January). Located in the Findon Community Centre,

222 Findon Rd, Findon, at 7.30pm for an 8.00pm start.

Members can borrow newsletters and use the library, sell and purchase plants, seeds, books and other herbal items. Visitors are most welcome. Basket supper is served at the conclusion of the meeting.

Disclaimer: The information contained in “Herb Thymes” is for general interest only. The views expressed may not necessarily be those of the

Editor or The Society. The Herb Society of SA Inc. accepts no responsibility for any inaccuracy or in the use of any herb/s by any individual. For the medicinal use of herbs, The Society recommends the use of a suitably qualified practitioner.

For next edition, deadline for Herb Thymes is March 20th.

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Hello Herb lovers

The die is cast; after much deliberation I've decided to run with the genus "Mentha" mints for 2019.

The focus will be on those species of mint grown and used commercially. Alongside, in each edition will be a herb with the common name of mint

to emphasise the importance of knowing a plants botanic name.

The study of mints has so far fascinated me and I hope you too will be intrigued after you've read this newsletter. Then, when you next buy toothpaste, mint chocolate or chewing gum, like me, you'll visualize the hectares of peppermint needed to flavour these products.

Don't forget this is your newsletter; I'd love to hear from you
Contact me on 8682 6752 or mobile 0408023524.
or at medley0246@gmail.com

Hand written letters and interesting articles cut from magazines may be sent to 12 Hamp St. Port Lincoln 5606

Chris Houweling.

Fun facts about mint.

- One drum of oil (weighing about 400 pounds) can be used to flavour approximately 5 million sticks of chewing gum or 400,000 tubes of toothpaste.
- Recent research conducted at the University of Cincinnati has shown that sniffing mint improves concentration.
- Several Japanese companies now pipe small amounts through their air conditioning systems to invigorate workers and improve productivity.

Ref; *The Wisconsin Mint Industry, US growers of M. spicata, M piperita.*

Kingdom - phylum - class - order - family - genus - species - sub-species - Kingdom - phylum - class - order - family -

herbancestry.com: *Mentha*

The origin of the family Lamiaceae or **Labiatae** is from the Mediterranean basin. Basil, sage, rosemary, marjoram, lavender,

pennyroyal and thyme all belong to this family. They're lovely sweet smelling and tasty herbs used frequently in cooking. The early Romans believed eating mint could increase their intelligence and that its scent could stop a person from losing his temper and sweeten the often rank smell of medieval halls.



Symbol of planet Pluto. Circle represents Pluto's shield of invisibility and the Bident (line underneath) represents a pitchfork.



Proserpine symbol

The history of *Mentha*, mint dates back to 1000 BC but was used even before that time by the Chinese pharmacopoeia. Naturally there's a mythical story attached to the genus "*Mentha*".

When Proserpine, saw the Greek nymph Minthes flirting with her husband Pluto, God of the underworld she got angry, mad and turned Mintha into a herb with eternal freshness and fragrance so people would be trampled on Mintha forever.

The family Lamiaceae is divided into genera, species and subspecies.

If genera are regarded as siblings, species could be first cousins and subspecies, second cousins. Sub and sub, sub species could be thought of as distant cousins by marriage or cultivar hybrids how they are

often referred now. This is a way to remember who is related to who.

(In the late sixties and seventies, the population of Darwin consisted of people from many different countries and all states of Australia. Each state had their own common names for herbs, plants and it was out of this confusion that botanic names became commonly used in the NT).

COMMERCIAL GROWN VARIETIES OF MINT.

1. *Mentha spicata* (Spearmint): Flavour stronger and less sweet than peppermint. It has been used to make traditional mint sauce.
2. *Mentha piperita* (Peppermint): A hybrid mint with strong mint flavour. Widely used in the flavouring industry in candies, chewing gums, toothpastes, etc
3. *Mentha arvensis* (Japanese mint/Corn mint/ Menthol mint.): Sweet, strong mint flavour. It is extensively used in food and flavourings.
4. *Mentha citrata* Bergamot mint oil or lemon mint oil is mainly used in the perfumery industry.

Production status

The United States of America is the world's main producer of peppermint oil, accounting for half of the world trade. Production in the United States is generally around 3,000 tonnes of oil per year. India has become a significant peppermint oil producer in recent years with production levels rising to around 450 tonnes a year.

Tasmania began production of Peppermint Oil in early 1970. By the late nineties Tasmania and Victoria were farming 250 HA however their yield was 60kg/HA whereas US produced 80 kg /HA.

Australian import and export prices for peppermint oil have generally been declining over the past 20 years. Australia Peppermint oil is a relatively small maturing industry and its interests are represented by The Essential Oils Producers Association of Australia

Species	Area (ha.)	Production (tonnes of Oil in India)	Total world production in tonnes	Major Producing Countries
Japanese mint	60,000	12,000	16,000	India, China, Brazil
Peppermint	2,500	200	4,000	USA, France, former USSR, Brazil, India
Bergamot mint	1,200	150	200	USA, Brazil, Thailand
Spearmint	3,000	300	2,000	USA, China, former USSR, India

Source: Essential Oils Association of India (2001), Vision 2005 (although this is old data it gives an idea of the distribution and vol. of mint in the world).

Growing regions in Australia

Most of Tasmania is suitable for production and in Victoria, the agricultural areas close to the Great Dividing Range in the state's north east are suitable.

Within the mint family, peppermint is the most dependent on growing conditions in order to produce good quality oil. The species requires long day lengths, with warm to hot day temperatures and cool nights, to produce the right balance of oil compounds.

Grown for Flavour:

Commercial mint is cultivated for the flavourful oils produced in glands on the underside of the plant's leaves. The bulk, about 90% of commercially grown mint is used for flavouring chewing gum and toothpaste. The remainder of these oils are used as flavouring

agents in a variety of confectionery, pharmaceutical, and liqueurs. Mint is a highly-concentrated essence so that the percentage of oil used in mint-flavoured products is extremely low. One drum of mint oil, weighing about 400 pounds, can flavour more than 5 million sticks of chewing gum or 400,000 tubes of toothpaste.

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PROFILE: Peppermint
Labiatae (Lamiaceae)
genus *Mentha*
species piperita

Peppermint (***Mentha* × *piperita***, also known as ***Mentha* balsamea** Wild.) is a hybrid mint, a cross between **watermint** and spearmint.

DESCRIPTION:

Peppermint, as with other mint-type plants, is a summer-growing perennial plant. It is a low-growing plant that readily sends out stolons (runners), which develop new roots and shoots at the nodes. Under good growing conditions, the square-shaped stems generally reach 1m in height at maturity.

COMMERCIAL CULTIVATION:

Peppermint is a perennial, herbaceous plant and can produce up to two harvests in a season under good growing conditions.

A major cost in the establishment of a peppermint crop is the purchase of stolons needed for planting.

Soil needs to be rich, moist and well-drained with a pH of 6.0–6.5.

Temperate climate, 600-800 mm of rain though irrigation is generally needed for a good crop. Frost tolerant.

Weed control necessary to eliminate any contamination of the peppermint oil with oils from other herbage.

Mint rust (*Puccinia menthae*) is the most significant disease problem of all the mint plants, which, if left unchecked, will totally defoliate the plants.

Pests of peppermint include cut worms, two-spotted mite, brown vegetable weevil and wingless grasshopper.

Harvesting requires a mower or windrower, and the wilted plant material is gathered and chopped with a conventional forage harvester, and fed into tubs to be transported to the distillation plant.

USES:

Peppermint oil has a long tradition of medicinal use, with archaeological evidence placing its use at least as far back as ten thousand years. Peppermint continues to be a popular and important ingredient in toothpaste, mouthwash, chewing gum and as a flavouring agent in food. The oil is also used in aromatherapy

MEDICAL:

Peppermint oil is under preliminary research for its potential as a short-term treatment for irritable bowel syndrome, and has supposed uses in traditional medicine for minor ailments. Peppermint oil and leaves have a cooling effect when used topically for muscle pain, nerve pain, relief from itching, or as a fragrance. High oral doses of peppermint oil (500 mg) can cause mucosal irritation and mimic heartburn. As an aroma, peppermint may have memory- and alertness-enhancing properties.

CULINARY and OTHER:

Fresh or dried peppermint leaves are often used alone in peppermint tea or with other herbs in herbal teas (tisanes, infusions). Peppermint is used for flavouring ice cream, candy, fruit preserves, alcoholic beverages, chewing gum, toothpaste, and some shampoos, soaps and skin care products.

CHEMICAL CONSTITUENTS:

Peppermint oil has a high menthol content. The oil also contains menthone and carboxyl esters, particularly menthyl acetate with small amounts of many additional compounds including limonene, pulegone, caryophyllene and pinene.

Peppermint contains terpenoids and flavonoids.

Peppermint oil has a high concentration of natural pesticides. It is known to repel some pest insects, including mosquitos, and has uses in organic gardening.

The chemical composition of the essential oil from peppermint (*Mentha x piperita* L.) was analysed by GC/FID and GC-MS. The main constituents were menthol (40.7%) and menthone (23.4%).

REF: Wikipedia, <https://www.agrifutures.com.au/researchers/>

ALIAS MINTS

Profile: Summer savory mint

Family: Lamiaceae

Genus: *Satureja*

Species: hortensis

(this is the name I've heard it called for years however during my final proof read, when I looked it up to check I found it wasn't listed as a common name. editor).

Herbancestory.com

Summer savoury mint

Ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans called summer savory the love herb and considered it an aphrodisiac and associated it with supernatural beings and male spirits. The Druids used it in their rituals celebrating the fertility of the summer season.

During the Middle Ages, European monasteries prohibited growing this risqué herb so as not to tempt monks to break their vows of chastity!

ORIGIN:

Native to the eastern Mediterranean and the Caucasus, (a mountain range and also a regional term used to describe an area situated between the Black Sea and the Caspian which has historically been considered a natural barrier between Eastern Europe and Western Asia).

It's a highly aromatic herb and features a hot, peppery flavour with notes of marjoram, mint and thyme. Its flavour is also

similar to that of its perennial cousin, winter savory – although the winter variety has a slightly more bitter, earthy taste. The word “savory” comes from the old Latin word *sapor*, which means “taste” or “flavour.”

DESCRIPTION:

Summer savory is a fast growing annual. It grows upright, 12 to 18 inches tall as a loose bushy plant. It has needle-shaped leaves to about 2.5cm on four-sided, grey-green stems and with flowers light purple to pink.

Summer savory is sweet flavoured compared to its cousin Winter savory that has a piny, sharp flavour.

CULTIVATION:

Summer savory prefers a rich, well-drained organic soil with a pH 6.7 to 7.3 and full sun. Sow in spring after last frost.

Companion plants. Beans, tomatoes.

Summer savory grows quickly, trim back regularly. It’s okay grown in a container and has no serious pest or disease problems. Grow one savory plant per household.

HARVEST:

Harvest both leaves and stems and use fresh. Maybe frozen or dried and stored in an airtight container.

USES:

Culinary:

The oil is used commercially as a flavouring, as is the leaf which is an important constituent of salami.

A delicious addition to marinades or dry rubs for grilled meats, particularly chicken, lamb, and pork. It combines well with

basil, bay leaves, cumin, garlic, marjoram, mint, oregano, parsley, rosemary, and thyme.

Young shoots add a peppery zest to salads, sandwiches and when teamed with chervil or parsley make a tasty herb butter.

Medical:

It contains many antioxidants and the intense essential oils cymene and carvacrol*. This tangy herb has long been used to treat a variety of ailments.

Steeped leaves are sometimes used to ease a sore throat, or as an antiseptic gargle. It is also reportedly used to enhance appetite, as a remedy for stomach and digestive disorders, and to help alleviate symptoms of asthma and colic.

*This site REF: monq.com/eo/terpenes/carvacrol is worth looking up.

Carvacrol. The most common use is in alternative medicine due to the antibacterial, antiviral, and anti-fungal properties that make it effective for the treatment of diseases such as: Flu and fever. Common colds.

Cymene is another compounds found in nature that is thought to be hugely beneficial to our wellbeing.

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SPELLS:

Here goes, for abundance, Rub the notes in your wallet with fresh mint leaves and this will help your money multiply.

To encourage good luck, wealth and abundance wash down your front door with warm water and a little essential mint oil. The sweet smell welcomes luck, wealth and abundance. (Peppermint tea maybe used.) *Spells back by popular request. Editor*

RECIPES:

What mint will you use for the first three recipes listed below?

No one recipe is specified.

What mint do you grow in your garden? Do you know its ancestry? Or just know that it's been there as long as you can remember or is it just the local variety? 🤔

Mints cross breed readily so is a DNA test needed

For us it's no concern, the taste is what matters. Buy a small plant of Spearmint and Peppermint. Have a chew on a leaf and you might be in for a nice surprise.

Anna's Cucumber pickle:

1 kg of finely sliced continental cucumber

400 g of finely sliced onion

1/4 cup of salt and 1/2 a cup of water

2 cups of white vinegar

2 cups sugar

1 tablespoon of mustard seeds

1 teaspoon of fresh dill all dry

1/4 teaspoon Turmeric

1/4 teaspoon of cayenne pepper

Layer cucumber and onion in a large bowl. Dissolve salt in water and pour over the finely sliced onion and cucumber and stand for three hours.

Place remaining ingredients in a large saucepan and bring to simmer. Strain vegetables and add to saucepan.

Stir for 2 to 3 minutes over a high heat.

Cool in saucepan and then bottle and seal.

Easy, tasty and made from Australian grown cucumbers.

Generally, all cucumber pickles are imported.

Mint Sauce:

Strip off ½ cup mint leaves, sprinkle with salt and chop finely. Place into a jug, add the sugar and pour over the boiling water, stir and leave to cool.

Stir in the vinegar and adjust seasoning to suit your taste.

Melon, tomato and mint salad:

225g rockmelon.

225g tomatoes cut in thin wedges.

175 g cucumber, peeled, sliced finely or grated depending on type of cucumber grown..

½ cup finely chopped mint.

275 ml yoghurt

salt and pepper with mint leaves to garnish.

Dice melon or cut into balls with a ball cutter.

Combine melon, tomato and cucumber in a large salad bowl.

Stir the mint into yoghurt and then pour over the salad.

Season to taste and garnish with mint leaves.

Ref; Herbs Lesley Bremness

Zucchini Cake:

500g grated zucchini

1 cup vegetable oil

1 ½ cups brown sugar

3 eggs beaten

2 ½ cups plain flour

2 ½ teaspoon baking powder

1 teaspoon carb soda

1 ½ teaspoon cinnamon

1 teaspoon nutmeg

½ cup sunflower seeds

1 cup sultanas

In large bowl combine all ingredients. Bake in a ring tin, 1-7inch tin for 45 – 50 mins at 150 C. Cool in tin.

Sandra Stuart.

Kingdom - phylum - class - order - family - genus - species - sub-species - Kingdom - phylum - class - order - family -

MINUTES IN BRIEF:

A concise outline of points of interest to those who did not attend the following meetings. The full minutes are available at General meetings.

Committee Meeting held 15/10/18

GROUP REPORTS:

FINDON GARDEN:

Anthony has purchased three bags of cow manure and eleven pots of herbs for the garden.

The salvias propagated by Anthony and Sandra are ready to plant.

HERB DAY:

There will be 21 stalls.

TRIPS:

The Port Lincoln trip will be from 20th – 22nd September.

Chris Houweling has booked 7 units for Friday – Sunday.

Those attending can drive or fly.

Need to know participants by March.

GENERAL BUSINESS:

Di and Sandra spoke to Willunga Garden Club.

It was agreed that we should ask members to put their mobiles on silent during general meetings and that all attending should remain quiet while the speaker is talking to us.

SEED SAVERS GROUP:

Numbers were down at last meeting due to illness, but members processed lemon verbena, geranium Mabel Grey and lavender. Jim Mitchell has generously donated herbs to the group.

GENERAL BUSINESS:

Stan Briggs turning 90. Sandra to find a gift from the herb society.

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Outline of Herb Profiles for Herb Thymes for 2019.

This year the plan is to profile commercially grown mints with our native *Mentha australis* being featured in HT no 6 2019. Alongside, in each edition will be a herb with the common name of mint to emphasise the importance of knowing a plants botanic name.

Program of Profiles for 2019	<i>True Mints Of Mentha genus.</i>	<i>Alias Mint, with the common name "mint".</i>
Feb/March	<i>Mentha piperita (Peppermint)</i>	<i>Satureja hortensis (summer savory)</i>
April/May	<i>Mentha spicata (Spearmint):</i>	<i>Persicaria odorata, Vietnamese coriander, Vietnamese mint</i>
June/July	<i>Mentha arvensis (Japanese</i>	<i>Catmint Nepeta mussinii</i>

	mint/Corn mint/ Menthol mint	
August/Sept.	<i>Mentha citrata</i> Bergamot mint oil or lemon mint oil	Catnip (<i>Nepeta cataria</i>)
Oct/Nov.	<i>Mentha pulegium</i> (Pennyroyal):	Winter Savoury <i>Satureja montana</i>
Dec/Jan	Lamiaceae, <i>Mentha australis</i> Native River Mint Aboriginal Poang-gurk	Oval leafed mint bush. (native) <i>Prostanthera ovalifolia</i>

General Meeting held 5/11/18

SALVIA GARDENING GROUP:

The treasurer gave results for the Spring Salvia Sale.

732 plants sold.

5 growers.

The Herb Society raised \$703.50 cents.

HERB SOCIETY EVENTS 2019-01-18

AUTUMN SALVIA SALE.

WHEN: Sunday April 28th 2019 - TIME: 8.30 to 12noon

**WHERE: Fullarton Park Community Centre,
Corner of Fullarton Rd and Fisher St. Fullarton**

For all those Salvia lovers and anyone who is looking for an economic & colourful way to add to your garden, come down

and choose from a large selection of Salvia's but be quick we do sell out! FREE ENTRY

SPRING SALVIA DAY.

WHEN: Sunday 27th October - TIME: 8.30 to 12noon

**WHERE: Fullarton Park Community Centre,
Corner of Fullarton Rd and Fisher St. Fullarton.**

For all those Salvia lovers and anyone who is looking for an economic & colourful way to add to your garden, come down and choose from a large selection of Salvia's but be quick we do sell out! FREE ENTRY

NOVEMBER:

HERB DAY MARKET:

WHEN: Sunday 3rd November 2019 TIME: 10.00am – 3.00

**WHERE: Fullarton Park Community Centre,
Corner of Fullarton Rd and Fisher St. Fullarton.**

Members and General Public Welcome.

The largest selection of potted herbs for sale, this is an event not to miss if you love gardening! Great selection of herb seeds and books. Wholesome and homemade meals using herbs available all day. Morning tea with homemade cakes & biscuits. Giant Raffle! Samples, tasting and free giveaways! Herb identification – bring your plant sample along and let our experts help you to identify. FREE ENTRY

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2019:

FEBRUARY:

Monday 4th General Meeting 7.30pm Anthony Medcalf will show pictures and talk about 2018 national conference in QLD.

MARCH:

Monday 4th General Meeting 7.30pm
Speaker Tracey Davis, Bee's allied use of honey.

APRIL:

Monday 1st General Meeting 7.30pm
Guest Speaker; Chris Day from Permaculture.
Thursday 4th, 7.30pm to 9.30pm Seed Group
Sunday 14th Propagating Day 2pm - 4pm Findon Community Centre

MAY:

Monday 6th General Meeting 7.30pm

JUNE:

Monday 3rd General Meeting 7.30pm
Thursday June 6th 7.30pm to 9.30pm Seed Group

JULY:

Monday 1st General Meeting 7.30pm
Trevor Scott, Cutabove the Secateur etc.

AUGUST:

Monday 5th General Meeting 7.30pm
Thursday August 8th 7.30pm to 9.30pm Seed Group

SEPTEMBER:

Monday 2nd General meeting 7.30pm.
Field Trip to Port Lincoln - Friday 20th to Sunday 22nd.
Sunday 15th Propagating Day 2pm - 4pm Findon Community Centre

All General meetings held Findon Community Centre, 222 Findon Rd. Findon at 7.30pm for an 8.00pm start. Unless otherwise stated, articles appearing in Herb Thymes may be reproduced provided that there is acknowledgement of the author and where the article originated from. Anthony Medcalf.