

garden  therapy

HERB CRAFTING

3 Top Herbs for Wellness

18 Handcrafted Recipes



BY STEPHANIE ROSE

The Top 3 Herbs to Promote Wellness

Lavender, rosemary, and calendula: a perfect grouping of three herbs with a wide variety of uses. You are probably already growing at least one of these at home! They each have unique wellness properties and they balance each other out nicely.

This is nothing new. All of these herbs have been used for their healing properties since ancient times. They are simple to grow and harvest from your own garden, making them a convenient herbal ingredient to start crafting with.

This guide will give you an introduction to the wellness properties of each of these herbs, as well as instructions for growing, pruning, and harvesting and a selection of diverse projects that will get you started with herb crafting.

Not a gardener? No problem! You can easily buy the dried botanicals. There is a resource guide at the end of this book that will help you find what you need.



LAVENDER



ROSEMARY



CALENDULA



Lavender

HEALTH BENEFITS

Lavender has been used to cleanse and refresh since ancient times. The word “lavender” has its root in the Latin word “lavare,” which means “to wash.” Ancient Romans used the flower to perfume their baths, bodies, beds, and clothing.

Those Romans were on to something!

Not only does lavender leave linens smelling fresh and clean, but studies also suggest¹ that lavender possesses anti-fungal, antimicrobial, and antibacterial properties which may prevent common skin infections.

In addition to its cleaning and disinfectant properties, Lavender is widely known as one of the most popular scents used in aromatherapy to promote relaxation, and research has shown² that it helps to treat insomnia and encourage slow-wave sleep, which is the deep sleep when our brains organize data and refuel for the next day.

Lavender has been used in traditional medicine since ancient times³ and is gentle on skin, plus it smells wonderful, so adding it to recipes and projects can only be positive.



GROWING LAVENDER

There are many varieties of lavender but it is *Lavandula angustifolia* which is the classic lavender used in herbal therapies.

Lavandula angustifolia is a small shrub native to the Mediterranean, despite its common name of “English Lavender.” It likes cool winters and hot, dry summers reminiscent of its native climate. It needs sandy, well-draining soil and full sun. Lavender is drought resistant and hardy to zone 5.

Lavender is a hard-working plant that puts a lot of energy into setting a long season of heavenly-scented flowers. Proper pruning helps to extend the life of the plant by promoting growth, branching, and blooming. Because lavender blooms on new stems, pruning early or late in the season will be most beneficial. Start pruning in the second year after planting, and repeat each year after that.

You can cut back up to one third of the plant at a time, taking care not to cut into the woody stems. Pruning new growth promotes more new growth, whereas cutting into the woody stems will just cause those stems to die without growing anything new. To keep the plant neat and tidy, lavender should be pruned three times throughout the season:

- Prune once in early spring just after the new growth appears,
- prune again in summer after the first bloom,
- and prune a third time in fall after the second round of flowers has finished.

You don't have to prune all three times; you can do it only once or twice a season if you want the plant to grow wilder and leave the flowers for the bees, if that is your preference.

You can also harvest lavender buds for crafts and recipes. If you time it right, pruning and harvesting can be the same thing, but they can also be very different. The purpose of pruning is to maintain the shape of the plant, while harvesting is the act of removing the flower buds for another use.

Harvest lavender stems for the colorful buds by cutting the flowers before the buds have opened. It's not the end of the world if you harvest them after the flowers have formed, but the buds will be less colorful when dried.

Tie the stems in bunches and hang them to dry in a cool, airy place. When dry, Gently rub the stems between your hands over a large tray to remove the dry buds and store them in an airtight jar for up to a year.

HERB CRAFTING RECIPES & PROJECTS



Lavender Bath Salts

- 2 c Epsom salts
- 15 drops lavender essential oil
- 2 tbsp dried lavender buds

Combine Epsom salts with dried lavender buds and essential oil for a soothing bath treatment.

Store the mixture in a Mason jar and add a scoop to the bath under running water.

As the salts and oils dissolve into the bath, the hot water will also draw out the fragrance of the dried flowers.

Read more about this project:

<https://gardentherapy.ca/bath-salts-recipe/>



Lavender Soap Cupcakes

- Silicone cupcake mold
- 2 lbs oatmeal melt and pour soap base
- 1 tsp lavender essential oil
- 1 tbsp dried lavender buds

Like lavender, oatmeal is soothing on skin, so this soap is very gentle and healing.

Melt the soap base in a double boiler or microwave and add lavender essential oils and dried lavender buds, then pour into a silicone cupcake mold to get the cupcake shapes.

Read more about this project:

<https://gardentherapy.ca/lavender-oatmeal-soap/>



Lavender Wreath

- Wire coat hanger
- Dried lavender
- Twine or wire

Hanging a dried lavender wreath around the garden looks gorgeous and gives off a lovely, relaxing fragrance.

First, bend the coat hanger into a circle.

Gather a small bunch of lavender and secure it to the circle with the twine or wire. Repeat with more bundles, tucking the stems of each bundle beneath the flowers of the next, until the wreath is covered.

Read more about this project:

<https://gardentherapy.ca/project-lavender-wreath/>



Linen Water

- 4 c distilled water
- ¼ c witch hazel
- 25 drops lavender essential oil

Spritzing your linens with this lavender spray gives them a light floral scent that is fresh and calming—use it on your pillows for a good night’s sleep.

To make, simply combine distilled water, pure witch hazel, and lavender essential oil, then fill up a spray bottle and spritz clean laundry.

You can also add it to your ironing routine to steam the scent into your linens as you press them.

Read more about this project:

<https://gardentherapy.ca/lavender-linen-water/>



Lavender Lemonade

- 2 c sugar
- 2 c water
- 2 tablespoons lavender
- A few blueberries

Lavender simple syrup gives traditional lemonade a refreshing update and a beautiful violet color.

To make lavender syrup, combine all ingredients and bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Turn heat to low and simmer for ten minutes, then let the syrup cool. Strain out lavender buds and blueberries.

For sparkling lemonade, add 1 part lavender syrup to 4 parts soda and 2 parts lemon juice. Serve over ice.

Read more about this project:

<https://gardentherapy.ca/lavender-simple-syrup/>



Lavender Dryer Bags

- Dried lavender buds
- A few drops lavender essential oil
- Small drawstring muslin bags

Swap out chemical-laden dryer sheets for sachets of lavender for naturally refreshed laundry.

To make, fill the muslin bags with dried lavender flowers and a little essential oil, tie them closed with a few good knots, and toss them in the dryer!

Each dryer bag will last for up to 10 washes. Replace the lavender buds and essential oils as they lose fragrance.

Read more about this project:

<https://gardentherapy.ca/lavender-dryer-bags/>



rosemary

Rosemary

HEALTH BENEFITS

Rosemary is known for its antiseptic, anti-fungal, and anti-inflammatory properties⁴—in the sixteenth century, it was often burned to disinfect rooms that had previously been occupied by sick people⁵.

It is also purported to have anti-stress properties, improves focus and memory, and is a natural painkiller for nausea and headaches⁶. To use, rub a sprig of rosemary between your hands to release the aroma or diffuse rosemary essential oil.

This herb can even help with bad breath. Chew one leaf as a natural breath freshener, or add some to a batch of homemade dog cookies if your pooch has a tendency to wake you up in the morning with a kiss.

GROWING ROSEMARY

Plant rosemary seeds about eight to ten weeks prior to the last frost or set out transplants after all chance of frost has passed. Rosemary, like lavender, is a Mediterranean shrub so it loves sun and well-draining soil. Rosemary is more sensitive to winter cold and overwinters in zones 8-10. It will thrive in poor soil so it's worth growing as an annual even if it doesn't overwinter in your area.

A rosemary plant can grow up to four feet tall with a four-foot spread, so make sure that you give it enough room between other plants. Be careful not to overwater, which is a common mistake with rosemary. Remember that it likes dry conditions and only water when the top two inches of soil feel very dry to the touch. Root rot is common when rosemary is overwatered.

Prune rosemary back after it flowers by cutting off the top inch or two of each flowering sprig and be sure to prune regularly to keep the plant from becoming leggy.

Harvest rosemary branches as needed fresh in recipes or save the branches that have been pruned, wrap them in twine, and hang to dry. To remove the leaves, pinch the top of the stem with one hand and hold the bottom with your other hand, then run your fingers down the stem to pop off the leaves. Store in an airtight jar for up to one year.

HERB CRAFTING RECIPES & PROJECTS



Rosemary Sea Salt

- 1 c coarse sea salt
- 1 sprig fresh rosemary
- 1 tsp lime zest

Sea salt infused with lime and rosemary makes a great addition to chicken, lamb, or veggie dishes.

Combine sea salt with fresh rosemary and lime zest in a pot. Stir over medium heat for about six minutes to infuse the flavors. Allow the mixture to cool.

Store in a terrine-lidded canning jar and use a small pinch spoon to sprinkle the finishing salt onto dishes of your choosing.

Read more about this project:

<https://gardentherapy.ca/herb-finishing-salt/>



Rosemary Candles

- ½ lb beeswax
- ½ lb soy wax
- 2 candle wicks
- 2 x 8 oz canning jars
- 0.5 oz essential oils
- Pressed, young rosemary sprigs

To make these pretty candles, combine the waxes in a double boiler and gently melt. Add essential oils of your preference.

Position rosemary sprigs around the insides of the jars, using a little of the melted wax to secure them to the sides. Add a wick to each jar.

Pour the wax/essential oil mixture into the jars and let cool.

Read more about this project:

<https://gardentherapy.ca/pressed-herb-candles/>



Rosemary Soap (Stars and Bars)

- Star cookie cutter
- 3 lbs shea butter soap base
- 1 tsp each rosemary and lemon essential oil
- 2 tbsp rosemary leaves
- Zest from 1 lemon

Melt the shea butter soap base and add rosemary, lemon zest, and essential oils. Pour onto a cookie sheet.

When the soap is dry, use the cookie cutter to make star shapes. Poke a hole in each star (try using a screw) and loop cotton twine through it to make soap-on-a-rope.

Read more about this project:

<https://gardentherapy.ca/soap-on-a-rope/>



Herbal Drawer Fresheners

- Dried rosemary, lavender, and mint
- Felted wool cut into 3 ½" x 3 ½" squares
- Sewing machine or needle and thread

Wash old wool sweaters in hot water and dry on hot in the dryer to felt them. Cut the fabric into two squares and sew the squares together, leaving one end open. Fill with dried rosemary (a natural deodorizer), lavender, and mint, and sew the last side closed.

Pop the sachets into drawers, gym bags, or a linen closet for a boost of herbal freshness!

Read more about this project:

<https://gardentherapy.ca/herbal-drawer-fresheners/>



Rosemary Pumpkin Seeds

- 1 c fresh pumpkin seeds
- 2 tbsp finely chopped fresh rosemary
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp sugar
- Salt and pepper to taste

Make plenty of these sweet, savory snacks. They won't last long!

Rinse the seeds to remove any residual pumpkin flesh. Dry well and add to a bowl with the other ingredients. Stir until the seeds are coated by the herb/spice mixture.

Spread seeds out on a baking sheet and roast at 375°F for 15-20 minutes until golden brown, stirring and flipping the seeds halfway through.

Read more about this project:

<https://gardentherapy.ca/rosemary-pumpkin-seeds-recipe/>



Roasted Root Vegetables

- Root vegetables, cut into thin strips
- 2 tbsp fresh rosemary
- 1 tbsp honey
- 3 tbsp butter
- Salt and pepper to taste

The sweetness of winter root vegetables is brought out by the honey in this recipe, and the rosemary adds an earthy, savory flavor that makes this dish to die for.

Melt the honey and butter together in an oven-proof skillet. Add vegetables and rosemary and cook on medium-high for 10 minutes.

Transfer the whole skillet into the oven and bake at 375°F for 40 minutes.

Read more about this project:

<https://gardentherapy.ca/roasted-root-vegetables/>





HEALTH BENEFITS

Historically, calendula has had many uses. The early Greeks and Romans would drink calendula tea for upset stomach as well as add the flower to soups and stews to improve digestion.⁷

The bright hues were prized and often used to dye textiles and cosmetics.⁸ Calendula's brilliant orange color and peppery flavor has earned it the nickname "poor man's saffron."

Most commonly, calendula has been used as an essential ingredient in salves and ointments or as a poultice for treating wounds. This is because calendula applied topically increases the amount of oxygen and blood flow⁹ to the area, which in turn enables the body to grow new tissue faster, speeding up the healing process.

Calendula is still used for burns, cuts, bruises, and conditions that involve inflammation, and is known for being very gentle, even on the most sensitive skin.¹⁰

GROWING CALENDULA

Calendula is grown as an annual in most areas and can easily be started from seed, either indoors or out. To sow the seeds outdoors, the best time to plant them depends on what type of climate you live in, but a good rule of thumb is to plant just after the last frost of the season.

To start calendula indoors, plant them approximately eight weeks before you plan to move them outside into the garden and allow them to germinate in the dark for a week or two. Plant the seeds about ¼" deep. Dwarf calendula should be spaced 8" apart, while the taller varieties should be about 20" apart.

Calendula like lots of sunlight and can become leggy if they do not get enough, so plant them somewhere bright but not extremely hot.

Harvest flowers when they are fully open and spread them out on a screen or in a shallow basket to dry. They are ready to use when the petals feel papery to the touch. The petals hold color well and add a decorative element to herb crafts. Store dried flower heads in an airtight jar for up to one year.

HERB CRAFTING RECIPES & PROJECTS



Calendula-Infused Oil

- Calendula flowers
- Olive oil, coconut oil, or sweet almond oil

Infusing natural oils with calendula is a wonderful way to give them the light scent and healing properties of calendula so that you can enjoy it in whatever homemade beauty recipe you like.

There are three different ways to make this. Heat the oil and calendula together:

- on the stove for 2-3 hours,
- in a slow cooker for 8-12 hours,
- or in a Mason jar in the sun for 8 hours.

After infusing, strain out the flowers, store in an airtight jar, and add to any natural beauty recipe that calls for oil.

Read more about this project:

<https://gardentherapy.ca/herbal-oils-for-natural-beauty/>



Calendula Salve

- 1/4 c olive oil infused with calendula (see previous recipe)
- 2 tsp cocoa butter
- 3 tsp grated beeswax
- 6 drops lavender essential oil (optional)

This moisturizing calendula salve helps soothe and heal cuts and bruises and is safe to use on adults, children, and pets.

In a double boiler, slowly heat up the olive oil, butter, and beeswax until just melted. Remove from the stove and add essential oils if using. Pour into a glass jar or tin and let cool before using.

Apply the salve to scrapes or cuts to speed up healing. This can also be used as a lip balm on chapped lips and as a cuticle balm on dry cuticles.

Read more about this project:

<https://gardentherapy.ca/herbal-healing-salve/>



Calendula Soap

- 1/2 lb oatmeal shea butter soap base
- Calendula petals
- 20 drops sweet orange essential oil
- 20 drops lavender essential oil
- Square soap mold
- Rubber embossing stamps

Calendula soap is moisturizing and gentle for those with sensitive skin.

Place stamps face up inside the soap molds. Melt the soap base and stir in essential oils and petals.

Pour the mixture into each mold over top of the stamps and let cool. When the soap is fully hardened, gently unmold it and carefully remove the rubber stamps.

Read more about this project:

<https://gardentherapy.ca/books/good-clean-fun/>



Harvesting Edible Flowers

- Freshly picked, homegrown calendula flowers

Calendula has a peppery taste similar to saffron and adds a pop of bright orange-yellow color to many dishes.

Add it to salads and soups as a garnish, or use it as a pretty topper for cakes and other desserts.

When harvesting flowers to eat, make sure that you are 100% sure of the type of flower you are picking and only choose edible flowers that were grown organically to avoid consuming pesticides and other chemicals.

Read more about this project:

<https://gardentherapy.ca/ten-edible-flowers/>



Homemade After-Sun Salve Recipe

- 3 tbsp calendula-infused olive oil (see previous recipe)
- 3 tbsp aloe vera gel
- 1 tbsp grated beeswax
- 1 tbsp coconut oil
- 1 tsp each shea and cocoa butter
- 15 drops lavender essential oil

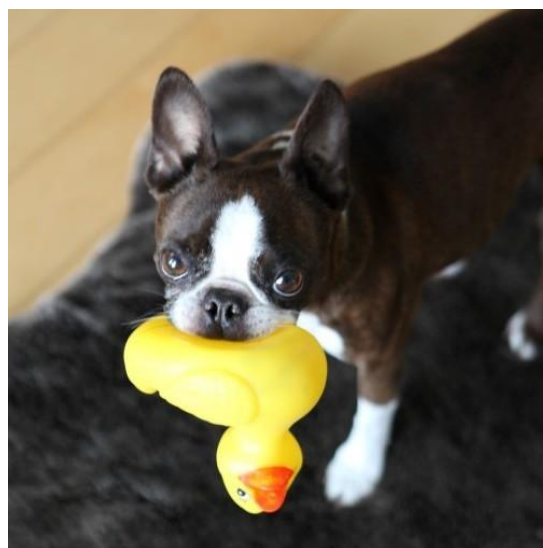
Melt together oil, butters, and beeswax in a double boiler.

Add room temperature aloe gel and essential oils once the mixture has cooled slightly.

Pour into a tin, let cool, and rub onto sun-damaged skin for instant relief. The calendula will promote healing and soothe irritated skin.

Read more about this project:

<https://gardentherapy.ca/after-sun-lotion-recipe/>



Anti-Flea Dog Shampoo

- Fresh or dried rosemary, peppermint, calendula, and lavender
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 1/3 c unscented baby castile soap
- Rosemary, peppermint, pine, and lavender essential oils

The calendula in this anti-flea shampoo works to repair Pooch's skin after it's been damaged by fleas and scratching.

Brew the herbs into a tea by pouring boiling water over them. Allow the tea mixture to cool and strain the herbs out.

Combine the tea with all of the other ingredients in a spray bottle and shake it up to mix.

Spritz on Fido's fur and massage in to soothe skin.

Read more about this project:

<https://gardentherapy.ca/anti-flea-dog-shampoo/>

About the Author

Stephanie Rose is an award-winning author and the creator of Garden Therapy (<https://gardentherapy.ca>). Garden Therapy started as a personal blog and has bloomed into a community of craft and garden projects for people looking to add some creativity to their lives.

Stephanie lives in Vancouver, BC, where she can be found in her garden studio testing new soap recipes and creating beautiful things with natural elements. As a Master Gardener, she volunteers with a school-to-farm program that teaches inner-city children how to grow and cook their own food.

At the end of the day, Stephanie enjoys every moment she can with her family. She lives with her husband, son, and tiny dog, who provide her with inspiration and delight both in and out of the garden.

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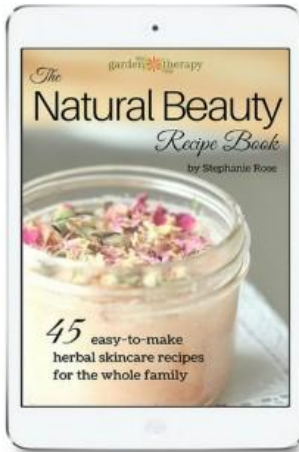
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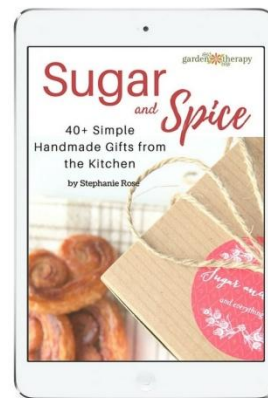
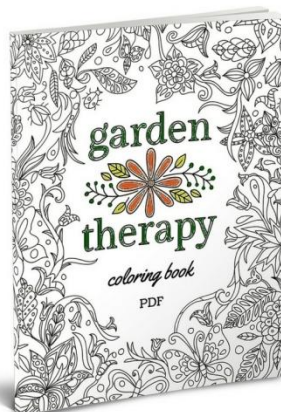
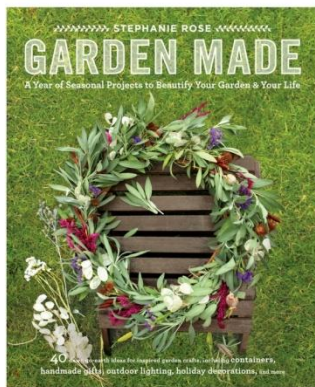
THE Idea Book for Creative Melt and Pour Soap Projects

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THE Melt and Pour Soap Projects Idea Book

Good Clean Fun: beautiful looking soaps that are super simple to make!



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[The Garden Therapy Coloring Book](#) (Printable PDF)

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Resources

Are you ready to get started with herb crafting? Then head over to the resource and supplies page I've put together to get your supplies and materials.

We've also listed where you can buy good-quality organic dried botanicals to get you started with these projects no matter what the season.

<https://gardentherapy.ca/herb-crafting-resources>

Visit the Blog

There are also many more creative herb crafting and plant-based skincare recipes on Garden Therapy, as well as craft ideas from nature, and, of course, gardening tips, projects, and ideas.

Visit Garden Therapy at <https://gardentherapy.ca>

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