

*Some helpful tips from* **K**ETTLEBY HERB FARMS.....

## Potpourri Blending

For centuries, herbs have been used in fragrant blends for both pleasure and purpose. In Medieval times, herbs were strewn on the floors and tables to cover the foul odour of both the foods and the participants. The Victorian age brought potpourri blending to a fine art. Homes, drawers and cupboards were scented with herb sachets and the women often wore or carried a small fragrant sachet. These fragrant blends were the original precursors of the perfume industry we know today.

By using specific herbs you can create useful blends for everything from moth repellents to clothes dryer sachets. Try drying some of your favorite herbs or flowers so you can enjoy the beauty and scent of your garden all winter long. The power of scent is well documented and with a few basic instructions and some imagination you can create your own signature blends to enhance the moods in your world.

### **The Basics:**

1. Always use quality, dried herbs, spices or other plant materials, preferably from your own garden or a reliable source. Herbs should have good colour and aroma when dried.
2. Choose some plant materials for scent and others for colour and/or texture.
3. Remove all tough stems and break up by hand if necessary.
4. Using fixatives like orris root or calamus root mixed directly in with your herb blend, or scented with essential oils prior to adding to your herb blend, will extend the life (smell) of your potpourri. Oak Moss is another great addition to potpourri blends as it acts as a fixative and also provides both bulk and an interesting texture.
5. Use glass, ceramic or stainless bowls and spoons when preparing your blends. Essential oils contained in the herbs can leach into and break down plastic and aluminum.
6. Mix blends in a large bowl, usually by hand works best, to ensure even blending.
7. Only use pure essential oils to either add more fragrance or to refresh your potpourri. Fragrance oils, though commonly available and less expensive, can cause severe allergic and sensitivity reactions. Essential oils are very potent and should not be used by children without supervision. Use sparingly, usually added by the drop.
8. Store potpourri blends in closed glass, ceramic or metal (not aluminum) containers and place in open bowls or remove lids when needed.
9. For easy to change cloth sachets, use heat sealable infusion bags filled with your favourites blends to insert into the cloth sachet bags to use in drawers, cupboards etc.
10. To refresh potpourri blends, add 15 to 20 drops of your favourite Essential Oil or a Signature Essential Oil blend of your own for each cup of blend, mix well and store in a closed glass jar for 2 to 3 weeks to allow blend to age.

### **Suggested herbs and other plant materials:**

#### **For Scent:**

Anise, Angelica, Basil-Cinnamon, Bay, Bergamot, Scented Geraniums, Lavender, Mints, Pineapple Sage, Garden Sage, White Sage, Sweet Grass, Lemon Verbena, Rosemary, Roses, Thymes, Pennyroyal, Clove Pink, Anise Hyssop, Wormwood, Lemon Balm, Oregano

#### **For Colour or Texture:**

Lemon Peel, Orange Peel, Cinnamon Sticks, Cloves, Ginger, Cedar Bark, Calendula, Cornflowers, Pine Cones, Pine needles

*Here are a few recipes to get you going!*

### **Victorian Sachet Blend**

Ingredients:

450g dried lavender flowers  
30g dried thyme leaves  
15g dried mint leaves (peppermint/spearmint)  
15drops lavender essential oil

To Make:

Finely grind all ingredients and mix together well. Store in a glass jar and use to fill sachet bags.

### **Rosemary Revival**

A refreshing, fragrant blend, great for the bath too!

Ingredients:

1 cup Rosemary leaves-dried  
½ cup Lavender flowers-dried  
½ cup Garden Sage leaves-dried

To Make:

Blend all ingredients and mix well. Store in a glass jar. To use in the bath, place 2 to 3 tablespoons in a square of cheesecloth or use a heat sealable infusion bag and add to tub while filling.

### **Peppermint Potpourri**

Ingredients:

1 ½ cups Calendula flowers-dried  
1 ½ cups Peppermint leaves-dried  
1 cup Basil leaves-dried  
½ cup Thyme leaves-dried  
1 cup Coarse Sea Salt

To Make:

Make sure all herbs are well dried. Carefully blend all herbs together then blend in the salt. Store in a covered glass jar and shake daily for 1 month to allow to age. The salt acts as a fixative to help maintain the fragrance.

### **Spicy Sage Blend**

Ingredients:

3T orris root-cut  
½ tsp Geranium Essential Oil  
2 cups Artemisia-Wormwood or Southernwood-dried  
2 cups mix of red and pink flowers and petals (roses, clove pinks, pineapple sage flowers, bergamot flowers or whatever is available)  
1 cup pineapple sage leaves-dried  
1 cup garden sage leaves-dried  
2T whole cloves  
2T cinnamon sticks-crushed

To Make:

In a small jar, combine the orris root with the essential oil and leave covered overnight. In a large bowl combine the Artemisia, flowers/petals, and both types of sage leaves. Mix well, play with the blend to get the texture and colours that you like, then add the orris root mixture and remaining spices. Blend well and let the blend age for 3 to 4 weeks in a suitable covered container. Place in your favourite container and add a dried whole flower or two for interest and enjoy!

