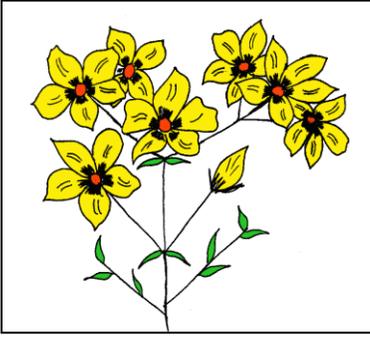


## *Herbal Tips for June*

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Well, here it is almost Summer Solstice, the time of the year when there is the most daylight. Our gardens are growing prolifically and we are just trying to keep up with it. If you have herbs in your garden, they are probably growing like crazy as well. So, now is a good time to cut them back so that you can get 2 crops this

year.

Drying herbs can enable you to use them in the winter when they aren't available.

Cut your herbs early in the morning, but after the morning dew has dried. Never pick your herbs with water on them, as they will not dry well, they will have brown spots on them and they will be prone to molding.

Next Bundle the herbs in a comfortable handful at the stem end. Tie them with twine at the stem end very tightly. Hang upside down in a warm, dry, dark place that has some air movement. You can hang them upside down in a paper bag, if a dark place is not available. If you dry your herbs in a sunny place, most of them will lose their color and their essential oils too quickly.

The most challenging of the herbs that can lose their color is parsley. So be very careful with that one. Check weekly to see that they have plenty of air circulating, and that they do not have any mold on them, especially if you place them in a bag. Shake or turn the bag regularly.

### Herb of the Month: **St. John's Wort**

St. John's Day is June 24<sup>th</sup> at high noon. Traditionally, that is when it is to be picked for its highest potency. For making tinctures, one should cut the flowering 4-6 inches of the plant. So some of the flowers will be open, some will be budding to flower. Try to pick the ones that have the most open flowers on them. Do not overharvest any one place. Leave something in exchange for the plants as an offering, like corn meal.

Cut and place tops in a glass jar that you will be tincturing in so that none of the pollen will be lost. For making oils and salves, one picks only the flowers; again placing them in the jar you will be using to "steep" your flowers.

St. John's Wort has been traditionally used as an anti-bacterial, anti-viral, for bruises and nerve pains, but it has come to the public's attention as an anti-depressant. If you decide to take it internally, check with your medical doctor to make sure it does not conflict with other medications you may be taking.

If you have any questions that you would like me to address in the future newsletters, please email them to me at [drbontravis@gmail.com](mailto:drbontravis@gmail.com)

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