

Welcome to the  
Herb Growers  
Network of WA



Herb of the  
Month:  
Motherwort

## Network News

Hi All,  
Many best wishes for the solstice and for Christmas. I am looking forward to some timeout. This year has been an interesting and busy year for many of us.

I decided this month to write about some of the Christmas traditions. I started looking at why we associate holly with Christmas and basically it grew from there. It is good to put some historical perspective upon things every

once in a while. It give opportunity to reflect and reevaluate.

On a lighter note I will be away from the 2nd to the 16th of January as I will be cruising around new zealand going to see ester Hicks and Abrahams. What a great 2 weeks that will be. I am sure I will come back a new woman.

Have a fantastic Christmas and New year break, my love and light goes out to you all  
Enjoy your month, Louise Plant



## Interesting Facts to Consider

- Research in New Zealand is showing that young children who take paracetamol are twice as likely to develop asthma. The study found that those who took paracetamol before the age of 15 months are twice as likely to develop asthma and three times as likely to develop allergies by the age of six.
- Only in America—A father of two was harassed and investigated by Child Protective Services and police for feeding his daughters organic food, refusing to make them drink fluoride-poisoned tap water and not having them injected with mercury-laden vaccines, all of which constitutes “suspicious activity” in the new Sovietized America
- A new book is our called ‘The Calcium Lie’ It is written by Dr Robert Thompson and explains that focusing on calcium supplementation is likely to worsen bone density and increase osteoporosis risk. Instead we need to focus on at least a dozen minerals.
- GM canola contamination has lead to a WA farmer having his organic farm decertified. If you want to have your say email me and I will pass on more info.
- Researchers have found that inhaled corticosteroids have been associated with an increase diabetes risk by 34%
- More research is being found about the harmful effects of aspartame. Artificial sweeteners found in over 6,000 products are being linked to lung and liver cancers. The more you consume the higher your risks
- Canada has voted NO to the fluoridation of their water

### QUALITY HERBS Given with WISDOM

Do you know where you are able to find quality herbs?

Do you know where you can find information and traditional uses of herbs?

- The Herb Growers Network of WA, offers Quality Herbs with Wisdom.

## Article

# How do I give my Baby Solids?

This journey of discovery started when I wanted to know more about Holly and why we connect it to Christmas.

As to whether there is any truth to any of these stories, will we ever know, though as stories go this is one story being told by another to another and another.

Holly was connected to Christmas because the berries of the holly were considered to be white, though after Jesus was crucified on the cross the berries changed to red. The pointed leaves symbolize the crown of thorns placed on his head, some believe that the cross was made from the holly tree and it is also said that holly sprang up from his footsteps.

Other folklore says that is if you decorate your house with holly for Christmas, if it is prickly then the man will rule the house for the following year and if it is smooth then the woman will rule. Is this then implying that men are prickly?

The druids regarded holly as a symbol of fertility and eternal life. They believed that it had magical powers and that if you cut down a holly tree then it is bad luck. The druids believed that if you hang it in your house then it will bring good luck. They do not seem to worry if it is prickly or not. They also thought it would help protect the house from lightning strikes.

The Romans associated holly with Saturn, the god of agriculture and harvest, and decked the halls with its boughs during the festival of Saturnalia.

So what about the Christmas Tree? The story goes that in the 7th century a monk travelled to Germany from Devonshire in the UK to teach the word of God.

A story goes that he used a fir tree to describe the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and it was from this that people began to associate the fir tree as the Tree of God which was previously the oak tree.

By the 12th century it was hung upside down in central Europe during Christmas time as a symbol of Christianity.

The tree first became decorated in Latvia in the early 16th century. Martin Luther is said to have decorated his tree with small candles to show his children how the stars twinkled in the sky at night.

Tinsel came from Germany in around 1610. What was used in those times was real silver and machines were built to create wafer thin strips of tinsel. The tinsel was found to tarnish quickly so lead became added, though this was found to be too heavy and people went back to silver. Silver stayed on the trees until the 20th century.

The Christmas tree and its decorations came from Germany and the cradle of the Christmas decoration Industry came from Thuringia which was where the monk first travelled to in the 7th century.

In the 17th century trees started to be decorated with wire ornaments, candles and small beads. The custom was to have several small trees on a table, one for each family member, with that persons gifts stacked under their own tree.



*Detox Teas*



*Cold and Flu Tea*

In Germany, the fir tree was beginning to suffer from mass destruction! It had become the fashion to lop off the tip off a large tree to use as a Christmas Tree, which prevented the tree from growing further. Statutes were made to prevent people having more than one tree.

So what other traditions do we have.?

At Christmas, it is also traditional to exchange kisses beneath the mistletoe tree. In ancient Scandinavia, mistletoe was associated with peace and friendship. That may account for the custom of "kissing beneath the mistletoe". Long before it was used as a "kiss encourager" during the Christmas season, mistletoe had long been considered to have magic powers by Celtic and Teutonic peoples. It was said to have the ability to heal wounds and increase fertility. Celts hung mistletoe in their homes in order to bring themselves good luck and ward off evil spirits.

Mistletoe, a traditional Christmas symbol, was once revered by the early Britons. It was so sacred that it had to be cut with a golden sickle.

In many households, part of the fun of eating Christmas pudding is finding a trinket that predicts your fortune for the coming year. For instance, finding a coin means you will become wealthy. A ring means you will get married; while a button predicts bachelorhood. The idea of hiding something in the pudding comes from the tradition in the Middle Ages of hiding a bean in a cake that was served on Twelfth Night. Whoever found the bean became "king" for the rest of the night.

Frumenty was a spiced porridge, enjoyed by both rich and poor. It was a forerunner of modern Christmas puddings. It is linked in legend to the Celtic god Dagda, who stirred a porridge made up of all the good things of the earth.

"Hot cockles" was a popular game at Christmas in medieval times. It was a game in which the other players took turns striking the blindfolded player, who had to guess the name of the person delivering each blow. "Hot cockles" was still a Christmas pastime until the Victorian era. Sounds like a nice game that all the family can play!

Electric Christmas tree lights were first used in 1895. The idea for using electric Christmas lights came from an American, Ralph E. Morris. The new lights proved safer than the traditional candles.

Candy canes began as straight white sticks of sugar candy used to decorated the Christmas trees. A choirmaster at Cologne Cathedral decided have the ends bent to depict a shepherd's crook and he would pass them out to the children to keep them quiet during the services. It wasn't until about the 20th century that candy canes acquired their red stripes.

Christmas was once a moveable feast celebrated at many different times during the year. The choice of December 25, was made by Pope Julius I, in the 4th century A.D., because this coincided with the pagan rituals of Winter Solstice, or Return of the Sun. The intent was to replace the pagan celebration with the Christian one.

During the ancient 12-day Christmas celebration, the log burned was called the "Yule log." Sometimes a piece of the Yule log would be kept to kindle the fire the following winter, to ensure that the good luck carried on from year to year. The Yule log custom was handed down from the Druids.

Eating mince pies at Christmas dates back to the 16th century. It is still believed that to eat a mince pie on each of the Twelve Days of Christmas will bring 12 happy months in the year to follow.

And on a final note, The Friday and Saturday before Christmas are the two busiest shopping days of the year.

Louise Plant



*Tincture Making  
at a Field Trip*



## *Herb of the Month—Motherwort*



### **Name: Motherwort**

**Botanic Name** – Leonurus cardiaca

**Family** - Lamiaceae

**Energetics** : Bitter, spicy, and slightly cold, and the systems affected are the pericardium and the liver . Venus owns this herb and it is under Leo.

**Other Names** - Motherwort, Lions Tail, lion's ear, throwwort

**Parts Used:** Aerial Parts

**History: History** - It was historically used by midwives as uterine tonic and to prevent uterine infections.

**Habitat:** Motherwort originally came from central Asia. It has historical use in central Europe as well as North America.

**Cultivation** : When once planted in a garden, Motherwort will soon increase if theseeds are permitted to scatter. It is perfectly hardy and needs no special soil, and the roots will continue for many years. Seedlings should be planted about a foot apart.

**Description** - *L. cardiaca* has a square stem and opposite leaves. The leaves have serrated margins and are palmately lobed with long petiole basal leaves are wedge shaped with three points and while the upper leaves are more latticed. Flowers appear in leaf axils on the upper part of the plant and it blooms between June - August. The flowers are small, pink to lilac in colour often with furry lower lips. The plant grows to about 60-100 cm in height. It can be found along roadsides and in vacant fields and other disturbed areas.

**Active Compounds** - Iridoids. Leonuride and L-stachydrine alkaloids. Diterpenes of the labdane type, such as leocardin, a mixture of two epimers of 8b-acetoyx-9a, 13a, 15, 16-bisepoxy-15-hydroxy-7-oxo- labdan-6b, 19-olide. Flavonoids; rutin, quinqueloside, genkwanin, quercitin, quercetrin, isoquercetrin, hyperoside, and apigenin and kaempferol glucosides. Caffeic acid 4-rutinoside. Tannins

### **Actions**

- Nervine
- Emmenagogue
- Anti-spasmodic
- Hepatic
- Cardiac tonic
- Hypotensive
- Anti-arrhythmic
- Diaphoretic
- Anti-thyroid
- Tonic

### **Indications—**

Motherwort is used for menstrual and uterine conditions as well as in heart and circulation treatments. It is valuable in the stimulation of delayed or suppressed menstruation, especially where there is anxiety or tension involved. It is a good relaxing tonic for aiding in menopausal changes. Eases false labour pains. An excellent tonic for the heart, strengthening without straining. It is considered to be a specific in cases of tachycardia (heart palpitations), especially when brought about by anxiety and other such causes. It may be used in all heart conditions that are associated with anxiety and tension. Chinese research referred to in Potters Cyclopedia found that it both reduced blood platelet aggregation and decreased levels of blood lipids.

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Old writers tell us that there is no better herb for strengthening and gladdening the heart, and that it is good against hysterical complaints, and especially for palpitations of the heart when they arise from hysteric causes, and that when made into a syrup, it will allay inward tremors, faintings, etc. There is no doubt it has proved the truth of their claims in its use as a simple tonic, not only in heart disease, neuralgia and other affections of the heart, but also in spinal disease and in recovery from fevers where other tonics are inadmissible.

Motherwort is especially valuable in the treatment of weaknesses and disorders, allaying nervous irritability, inducing quiet and passivity of the whole nervous system. It is also seen as a remedy for heart palpitations, it has a strengthening effect, especially on a weak heart. The antispasmodic and sedative effects promote relaxation rather than drowsiness.

The leaves are antispasmodic, astringent, cardiac, diaphoretic, emmenagogue, nervine, sedative, stomachic, tonic and uterine stimulant. They are taken internally in the treatment of heart complaints (notably palpitations) and problems associated with menstruation, childbirth and menopause, especially of nervous origin. Although an infusion can be used, the taste is bitter that the plant can be made into a conserve or syrup. An alcoholic extract is said to possess superior action to valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*).

It is a great herb to be considered during pregnancy and when taken during labour it reduces the possibility of hemorrhages. As a blood invigorator, it is currently used to regulate menstruation involving blood stasis, for post partum abdominal pain, for Damp heat skin conditions, and as a diuretic to reduce swelling and oedema.

The plant has been found effective in the treatment of functional heart complaints due to autonomic imbalance, and also as an anti-thyroid treatment, though it needs to be taken for several months for these effects to be noticed.

**Dosage** - Infusion: pour a cup of boiling water onto 1-2 teaspoonfuls of the dried herb and leave to infuse for 10-15 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day.

Tincture: take 1-4ml of the tincture three times a day. 2-6 ml of 1 in 5 tincture or 2-4 ml of 1:1 fluid extract either in 25% ethanol, three times daily.

**Combinations** - May be freely combined in any prescription, especially with Hawthorn.

**Safety** - Use with caution through pregnancy.

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