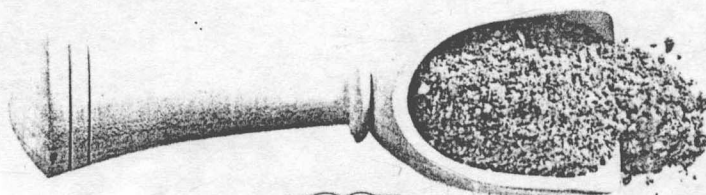
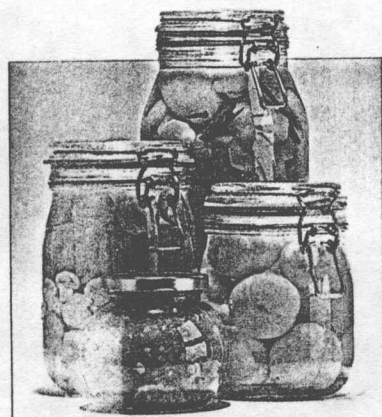
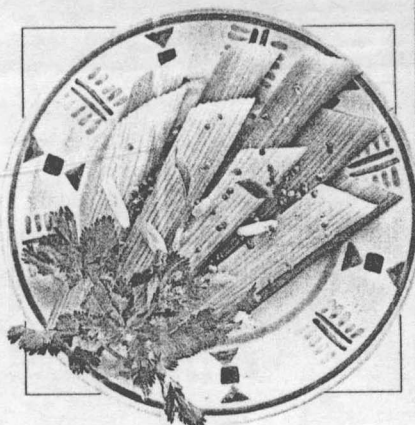
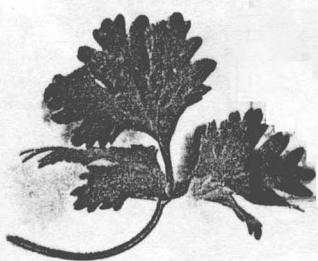
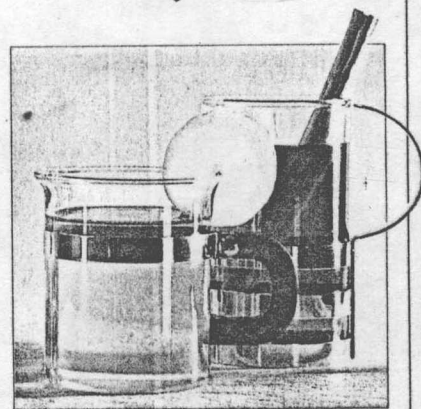


THE  
ENCYCLOPEDIA  
*of*  
HERBS,  
SPICES  
& FLAVOURINGS

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR  
ELISABETH LAMBERT ORTIZ



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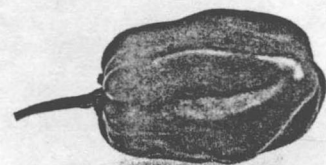
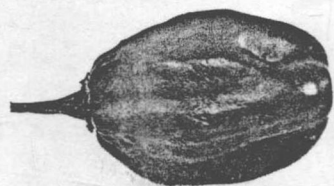
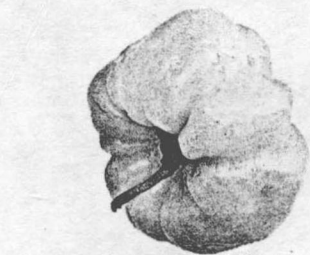
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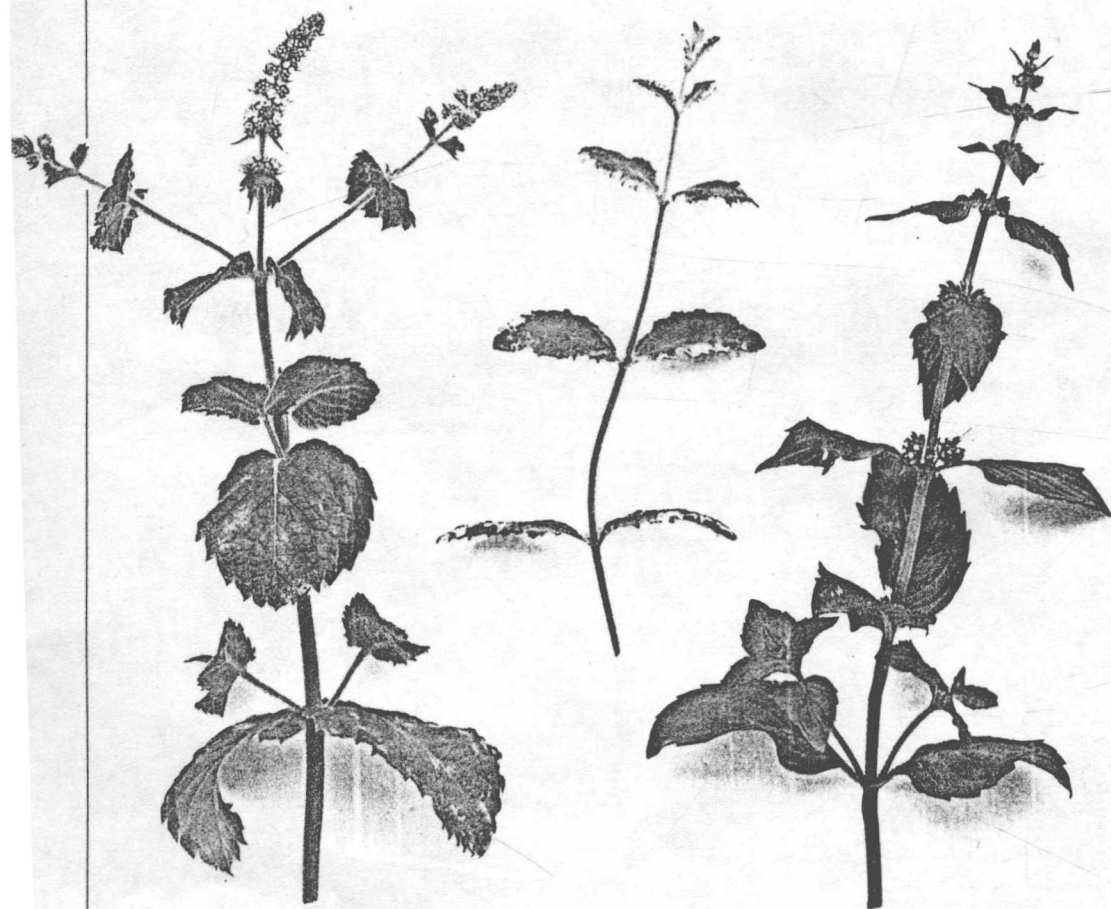
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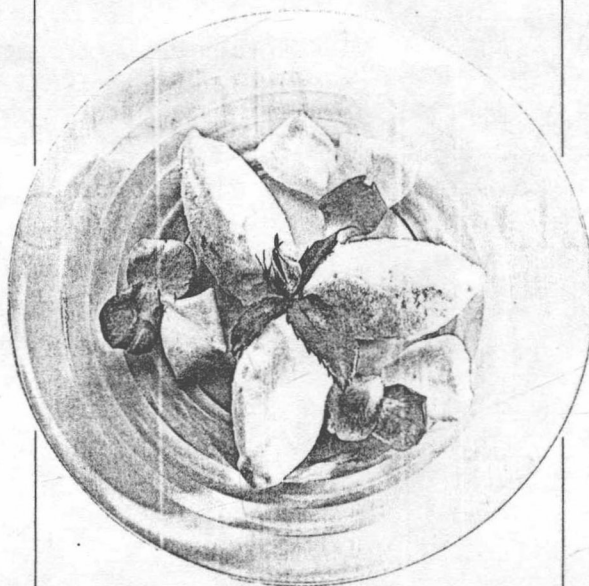
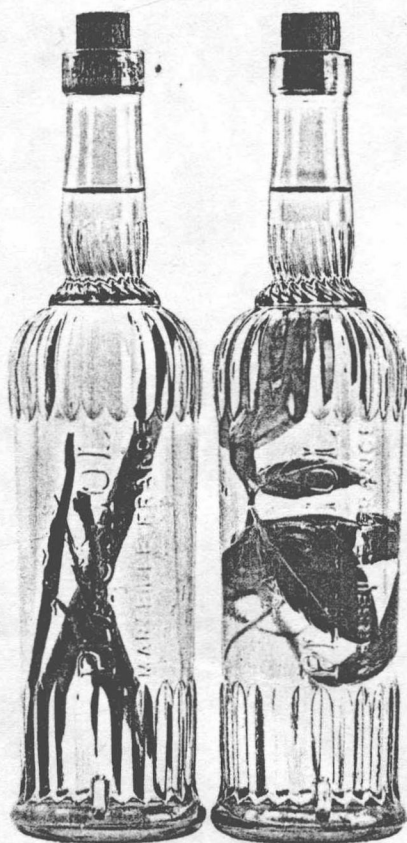
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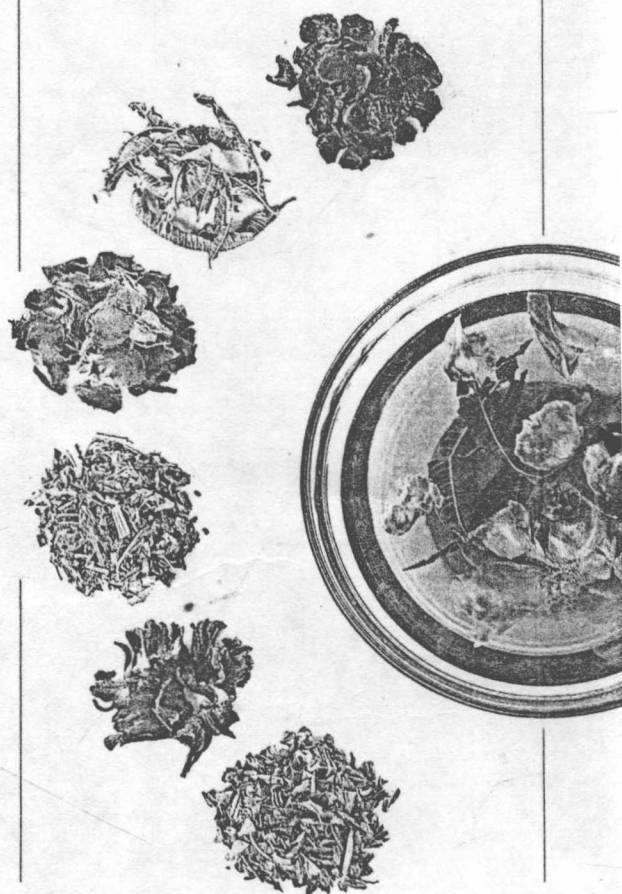


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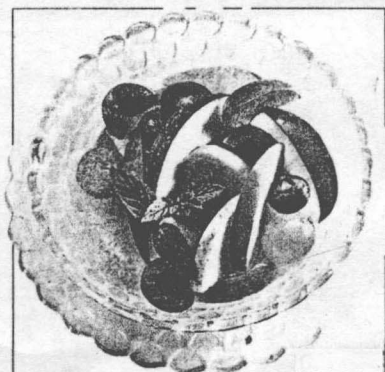
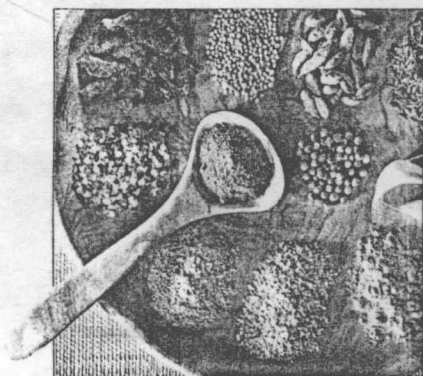
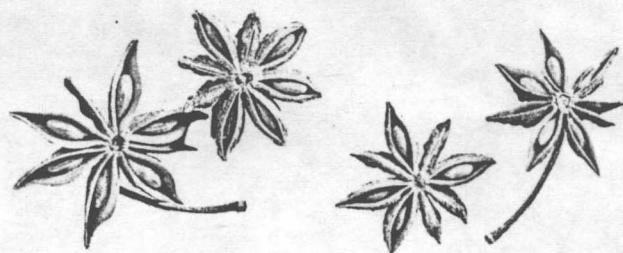




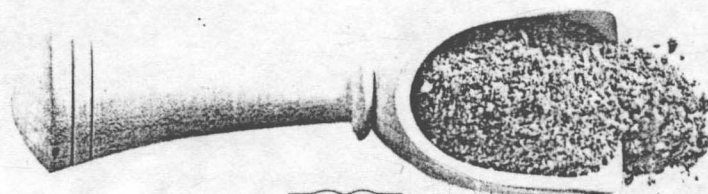
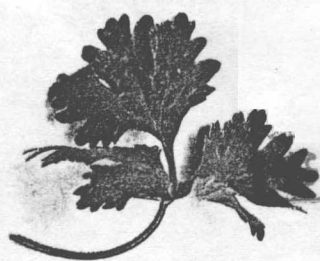
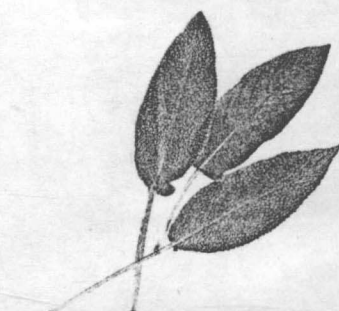
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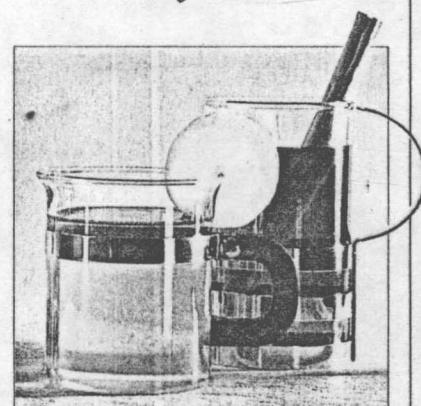




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## FOREWORD

Since the art of cookery was developed, herbs have been used to enliven and enhance meals. The number of herbs are legion, and they may be used medicinally as well as in the kitchen. Herbs are always bracketed with spices, but the difference between the two is easily defined. Herbs are the leaves of fresh or dried plants, while spices are the aromatic parts: buds, fruit, berries, roots or bark, usually dried, from plants that thrive in tropical regions. Their role in the kitchen is the same: to enhance the flavour of foods. Herbs, which are not confined to the tropics, are outdoor plants though some can be grown indoors in sunny places. The categories can overlap as a plant can supply both a spice and a herb, coriander for example with its fresh leaves and aromatic seeds, or celery and celery seed. It is herbs and spices in combination that give the flavour and aromas which are a mingled sensation of smell and taste.

Herb cultivation and use has always been a peaceful enterprise. Spices, on the other hand, have upset and altered history, caused fortune or mishap, and have been prime movers in great events. The nations of Europe, especially Portugal, Spain, the Low Countries (Holland and Belgium), England and France became embroiled in colonial wars as a result of Columbus's search for a quick route to the Spice Islands. It was this search for spices that ended with Columbus discovering the Americas – an event with far-reaching consequences; he found not only a new world but new foods, including the capsicums that greatly influenced world cooking and spread with astonishing rapidity over the globe.

Nowadays, an ever-widening range of reliable seeds are available for sowing in home gardens, patio tubs, window boxes or pots on ledges. In addition, more fresh herbs are on sale in supermarkets and greengrocers as well as a wide variety of dried herbs, freeze-dried herbs and packaged spice mixtures. The world of herbs, spices and flavourings from faraway places, as well as the familiar ones of home, can add immeasurably to our gustatory pleasure, whether we are dining on family favourites or entertaining friends with new and exciting dishes. Our culinary horizons are expanded and our imaginations stirred. And, travel away from home is more fulfilling when we have some knowledge of unfamiliar dishes and can choose with confidence from a menu in a foreign land. The flavours of the world are yours to discover, they are just waiting for you to try them, so accept their invitation and go and experiment, go and enjoy.

ELISABETH LAMBERT ORTIZ

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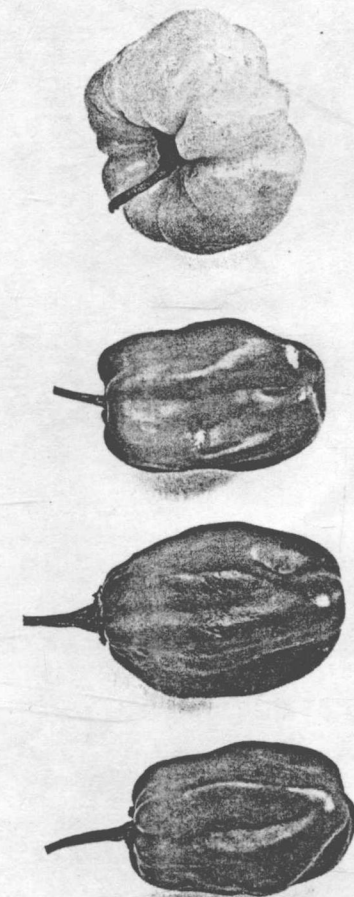
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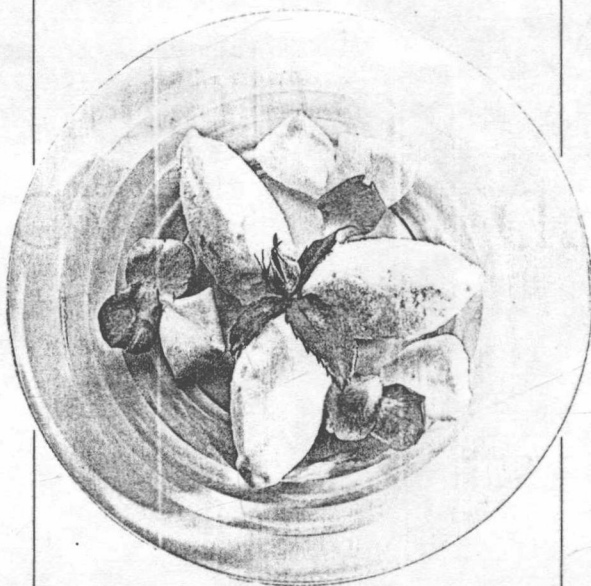
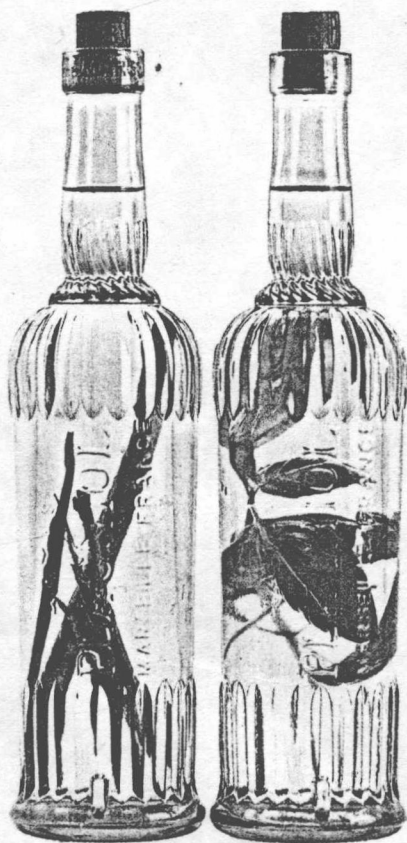
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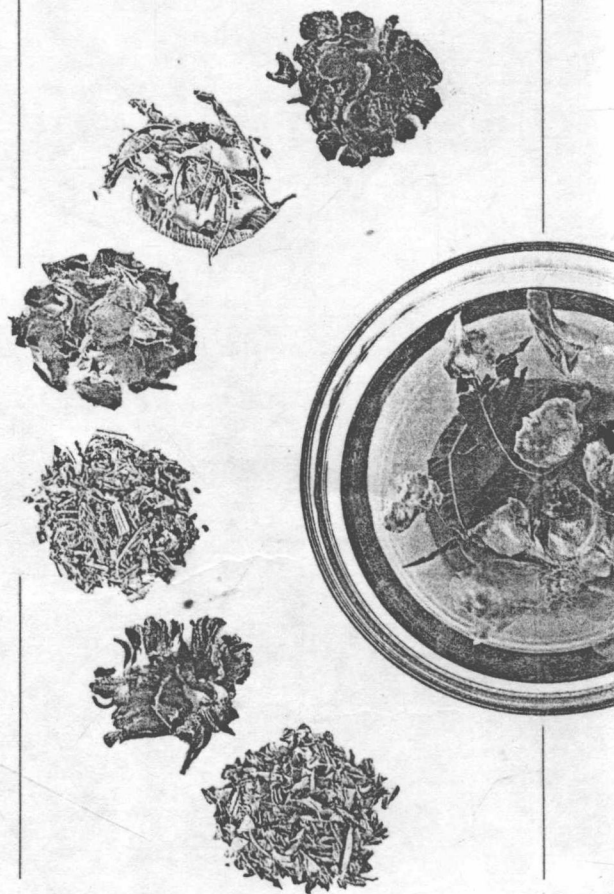


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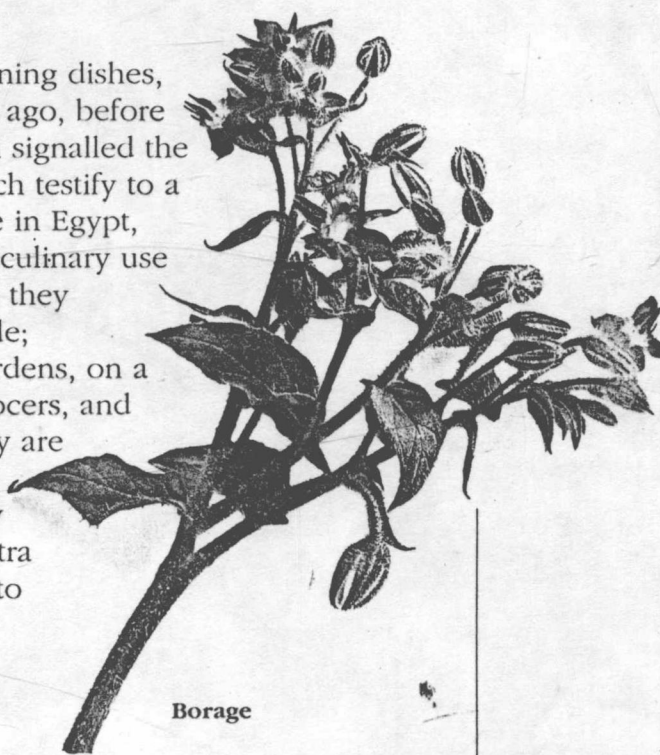




# INTRODUCTION: A WORLD OF FLAVOURINGS

## KITCHEN HERBS

Herbs, the fragrant plants that are used for seasoning dishes, were probably first cultivated thousands of years ago, before the dawn of civilization: perhaps their cultivation signalled the beginning of civilization itself. Records exist which testify to a very early knowledge of their cultivation and use in Egypt, China, India, Arabia, Persia and Greece, and the culinary use of herbs remains a firmly-rooted tradition. Today they are more important than ever and more accessible; they are cultivated on a small scale in private gardens, on a large scale for sale to supermarkets and greengrocers, and by chefs for use in their restaurant kitchens. They are increasingly sold fresh, which is best, and dried stocks mean they are available year round; many dried herbs happily retain their aromas. Their extra advantage as garden plants is that they are easy to grow, undemanding for the most part of special soils and conditions. Attractive in the garden and on the plate, they improve the flavour of our food and are also good for us.

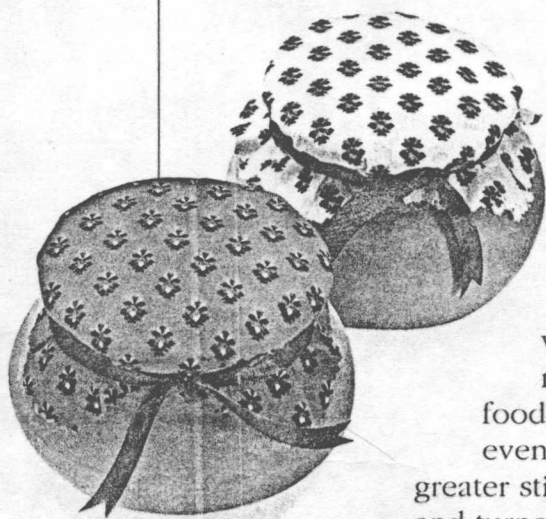


Borage

## KITCHEN SPICES

Today, all supermarkets and most corner shops have well-stocked spice shelves, offering a selection of seasonings from around the world. These spices are now all modestly priced, yet there was once a time when they were worth their weight in gold.

The Queen of Sheba brought spices, precious stones and gold to King Solomon, proof that spices with a temporary life were rated as highly as enduring metals and gems. Aside from flavouring and preserving foods, spices also played a considerable role in religion, an even greater role in medicine, and their role in politics was greater still. The spice trade virtually made the Dutch empire and turned the small city-state of Venice into a great power.



Spice jars



Many spices originated in the Asian tropics: cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, pepper and ginger. The Americas contributed allspice, vanilla and chillies; the Mediterranean countries provided coriander, mustard, fennel, poppy seeds and fenugreek; Europe's cooler regions brought forth caraway, dill and juniper.

There was a time when spices were so precious that they were kept locked away in special boxes and an exuberant use of spices was an indication of the provider's wealth. Nowadays we look to spices to capture the exotic flavours of faraway places without ever leaving our own kitchens.

## FLAVOURS OF THE WORLD

The great dishes of the world's cuisines are characterized by specific combinations of herbs, spices and flavourings. These mixtures have developed over the centuries, influenced largely by the foodstuffs native to each region, the foodstuffs being determined by climate, soil and local culture.

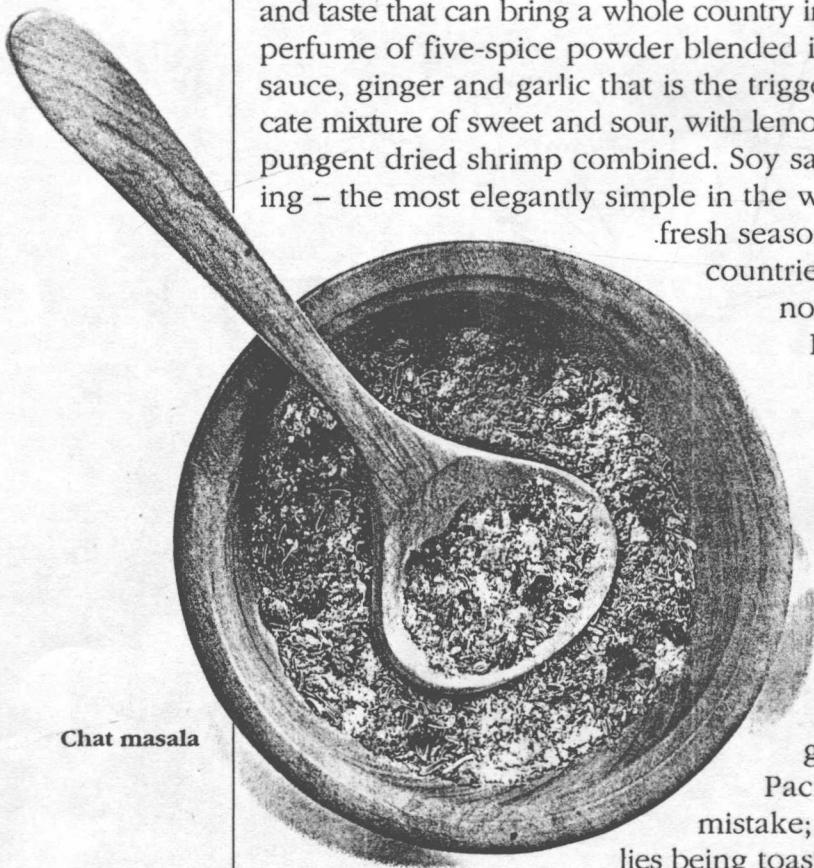
The scent of curry will instantly transport you to India, where the preferred spices are highly aromatic, with as many as 10 used to flavour a single dish. Thai curries, though very hot, are more delicate with a far greater use of fresh herbs and it is more likely to be the aroma of lemon grass, kaffir lime and fresh coriander leaves that evoke Thailand and its deliciously subtle cuisine. Chinese cooking is immensely diverse yet it still has a uniform characteristic flavour, a mingling of smell and taste that can bring a whole country into being in our imagination. It may be the perfume of five-spice powder blended in soy sauce, or a stir-fry with black bean sauce, ginger and garlic that is the trigger. The flavours of Indonesia are an intricate mixture of sweet and sour, with lemon grass, tamarind, kaffir lime, chillies and pungent dried shrimp combined. Soy sauce is also important in Japanese cooking – the most elegantly simple in the world – relying on the pure flavour of fresh seasonal ingredients. Though all these

countries are in the Far East, their cuisines could not be more richly diverse.

North Africa uses many of the spices of Asia in ways that produce wholly different flavours. Europe uses spices more sparingly – mainly for pickling and baking – while in the Mediterranean, the use of herbs is predominant, with healthy doses of thyme, sage, bay, oregano and rosemary. With a culinary history closely linked to Europe, North America uses herbs and spices in much the same way, though western regions are influenced by Mexico and the

Pacific. The flavours of Mexico are hard to mistake; the aroma of baking corn tortillas and chillies being toasted are characteristic of the region.

Highly spiced foods also are a feature of Central and South America, and the Caribbean. Here, as in the rest of the world, the individual combinations of herbs, spices and flavourings transform ordinary ingredients into culinary classics, which can be enjoyed throughout the year, in the comfort of our own dining rooms.

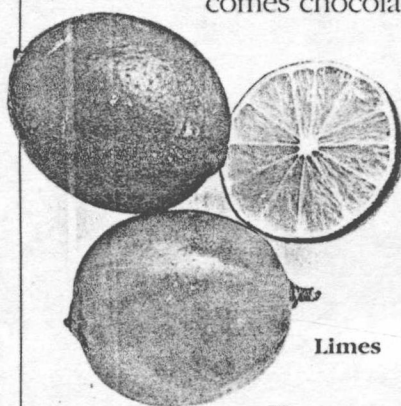


Chat masala



## VEGETABLE AND FRUIT FLAVOURINGS

Vegetables and fruit are as important as their close relatives herbs and spices in turning our daily meals into sources of pleasure as well as sources of nutrition, and so nourish both spirit and body. Mushrooms of many kinds, all with different flavours, are essential in an array of dishes from East to West. Life without the onion family would be a sorry thing as there is scarcely a savoury dish that does not welcome one or other of the *allium*, whether it be the everyday onion, the delicate chive or the robust garlic clove. Pungent roots like horseradish and wasabi add piquancy to foods as diverse as roast beef or raw fish. Olives bring with them the salty, sunny flavours of the Mediterranean, and it is hard to imagine how barren the culinary landscape would be without the tomato. From Mexico



Limes

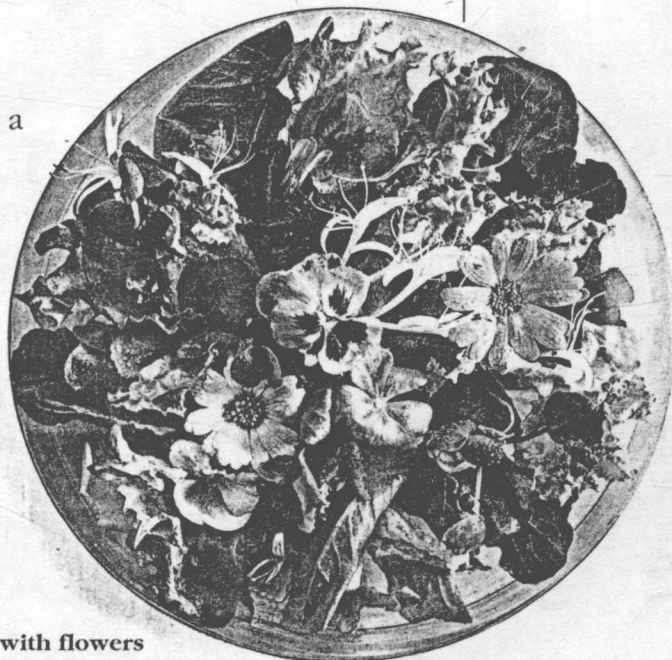
comes chocolate, the royal drink of the Aztecs and the modern-day ingredient in sweets and desserts the world over. The citrus family – limes, lemons, oranges and others – are infinitely useful in the kitchen; a few drops of their juices accent flavours of both savoury and sweet dishes. They could well be called indispensable. Nuts are good just by themselves, and their texture and their varied flavours make them a welcome and often essential ingredient in sauces, snacks, main course dishes and desserts.

## EXTRACTS, ESSENCES AND SWEETENERS

Natural extracts and essences bring a wonderful flavour into our cooking, conveniently bottled so that they will keep almost indefinitely. From Asia comes the soy bean, and from around the world comes the variety of flavoursome table condiments. For sweetness, the bees work hard, but we get the honey, and the sugar maple gives us the subtle flavour of its syrup. The fruits of summer are captured in purées, essences and syrups, to bring the warmth and brightness of that season into our winter kitchens.

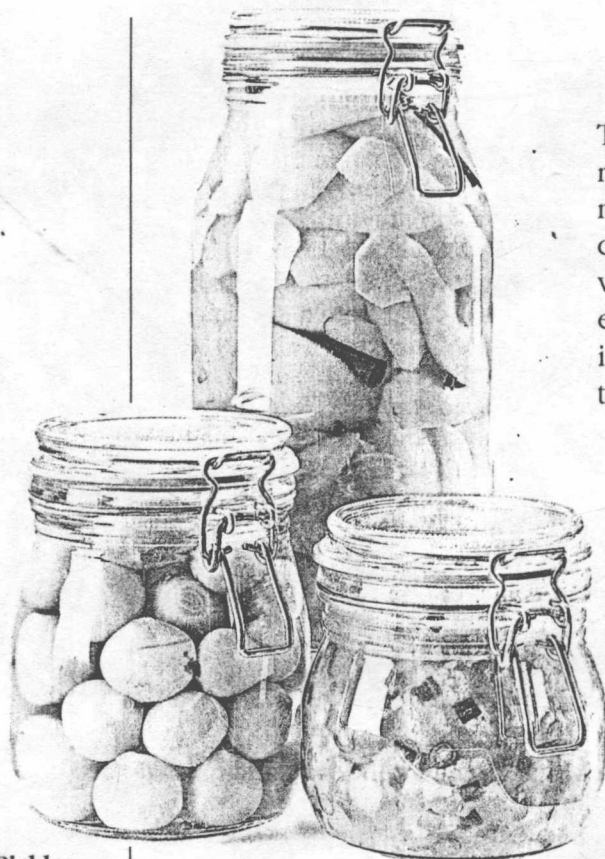
## EDIBLE FLOWERS AND LEAVES

Flower gardens, as much as herb gardens, can be a valuable source of ingredients for the kitchen. Likewise, many plants have leaves that are not edible but do make valuable wrappings. Clam-bakes in New England and *curantos* in Chile would lose a great deal without the seaweed used in their preparation, and Japanese cooking would not be half as delectable if the seaweeds were taken away. Most flowers are used more for beauty than for flavour, though courgette blossoms make a splendid soup and a fine first course when stuffed. Crystallized violets and rose petals are both beautiful to look at and delicious to eat; bringing the best of both worlds to the kitchen.



Salad with flowers



Pickles  
and  
relishes

## OILS, VINEGARS AND DAIRY PRODUCTS

The fats – oil, butter and cream – give food a rich and satisfying quality. Soured cream, butter-milk and yogurt add a richness and tang to any dish, from soup to dessert. The acidic quality of vinegar is vital both for flavour and preserving. It is essential in vinaigrette, the mustardy salad dressing of French cuisine, and it adds the tartness that characterizes sweet-and-sour dishes.

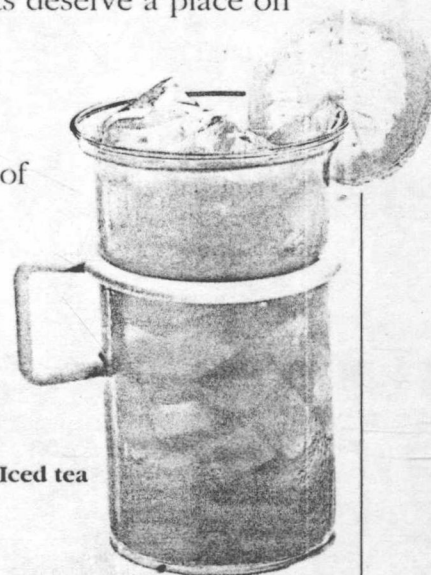
## SAUCES, PRESERVES AND CONDIMENTS

All the good things of summer can be harvested and transformed into pickles, relishes, preserves and chutneys, though nowadays modern agriculture and transport mean that many fruits and vegetables are available all year round. Many sauces can be made fresh whenever needed, making the winter table a very lavish one indeed. In addition, there is a myriad of commercial cooking and table

saucers that can be used directly on cooked food, or added during cooking. Sweet or savoury, these sauces, preserves and condiments deserve a place on our kitchen shelves.

## COFFEE, TEA AND SPICED DRINKS

Tea and coffee are both ancient drinks in their countries of origin: China and Ethiopia. Today, they are both firmly established beverages in most countries of the world. Tisanes, or herb teas, have long been appreciated for their soothing and mildly medicinal properties, and they are gaining popularity as a flavoursome and healthy alternative to coffee and tea. Fruit and vegetable juices, wines, spirits, and even yogurt, are the perfect base for drinks, both hot and cold, to be flavoured with herbs and spices.



Iced tea

## FLAVOURINGS AT HOME

Nothing quite equals the pleasure of going into the garden, or to the window box, and picking fresh herbs for the next meal. The flavour is incomparable and, beyond that, it allows for last-minute decisions, improvisation and even the possibility to improve an old favourite. As the summer moves inevitably to autumn, the crisp, cooler days are perfect for canning, preserving and bottling the last of the season's fruit for the store-cupboard or holiday gift-giving. Any time of year, a gift from one kitchen to another is always welcome.



# GROWING HERBS

**M**ost culinary herbs are ideally suited to container growing, both indoors in pots on the window-sill and outside in tubs, window boxes and hanging baskets. Not only does this result in extremely attractive additions to the garden environment, but it puts herbs immediately at hand for cooking.

Tubs and large pots can be conveniently placed near the back door, on the terrace or balcony, or if space is really at a premium, small pots of herbs on a kitchen windowsill also work very well. With access to a bright window ledge, no cook has to be denied the authentic taste of fresh herbs for culinary creations.

A large tub will allow for a number of herbs in a relatively small area, but some attention to compatibility is necessary. Herbs such as rosemary, thyme, marjoram and sage love a very sunny spot, whereas the mint family, chervil and chives prefer filtered sunlight and a more moist atmosphere. Fussy herbs, such as basil, thrive indoors where their needs can be monitored more easily. Invasive herbs, such as tarragon and mint, should be planted in separate pots so they do not encroach on other herbs.

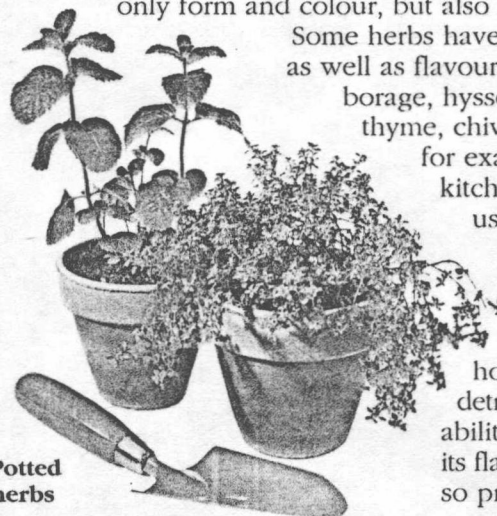
A well thought out herb garden can enhance the landscape as much as it enhances the stockpot and salad bowl. With many green, purple, gold and silver-leaved herbs, as well as the many variegated types, there is an overwhelming choice for the home cook and gardener. The striking sage tricolour, with pink-tinged new growth, the gold-green lemon thyme and the blue-green narrow-leaved rosemary column, amongst others, offer limitless opportunities to design with not only form and colour, but also flavour.

Some herbs have beautiful flowers as well as flavoursome leaves:

borage, hyssop, rosemary, thyme, chives, mint and sage, for example. In the

kitchen, they can be used as last-minute garnishes for salads or cheese platters.

In the garden, however, flowers detract from the plant's ability to devote all of its flavour to the leaves, so prune frequently.



Potted herbs

## HOW TO PLANT

If only one plant is required, it is probably best to purchase a small herb from a specialist nursery or garden centre and progressively pot it on to larger containers. For multiple plants, some herbs grow well from seed: tarragon, parsley, chives or basil can all be sown directly into individual pots of quality compost. Place them in a warm spot and cover with polythene bin liners until germination, and then position on the windowsill to grow to maturity.

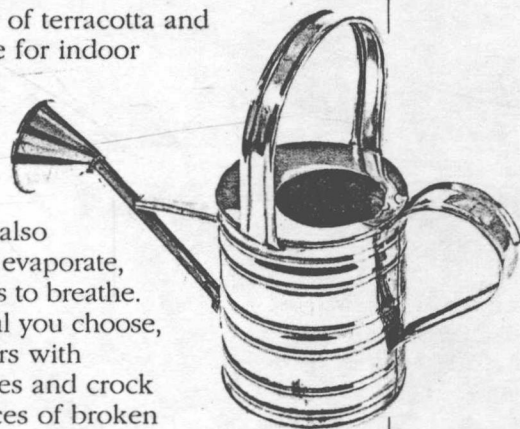
In all instances, remember that the larger and deeper the pot, the more leaves the plant will be able to produce.

## HERBS INDOORS

There is a vast array of terracotta and plastic pots available for indoor planting. As many herbs are native to the Mediterranean region, terracotta pots complement them visually while also allowing moisture to evaporate, which helps the roots to breathe. Whatever the material you choose, always use containers with proper drainage holes and crock well with a few pieces of broken pot or a layer of gravel to prevent water-logging. When potting up, incorporate a half-inch of horticultural sand two-thirds down from the rim of the pot which will assist drainage and keep the soil from impacting and suffocating the roots.

Herbs appreciate a moist atmosphere, particularly indoors. To increase humidity, stand the pots on a gravel bed in a saucer, if possible, with water not quite covering the gravel. The exception is basil, which will tolerate a moderate level of dryness.

Treat your herbs as you would wish to be treated; they will thrive in a comfortable environment – a stable temperature between 16-21°C (60°-70°F), free from draughts. Water regularly but err on the dry side. If in doubt, touch the soil; if it feels dry, the herb requires watering. Always use tepid water, not cold. Windows can reduce the available light quite substantially, so turn the pots regularly to expose all parts of the plant to some



Watering can