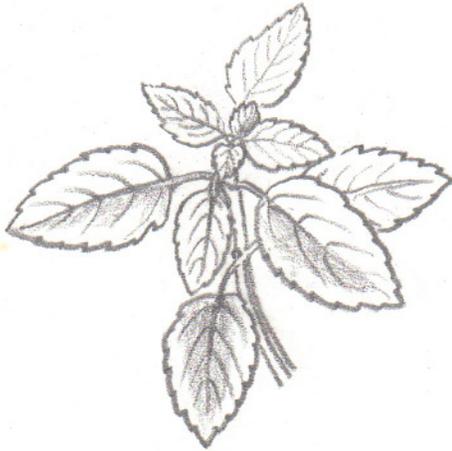


Refreshing Leaf Teas or Fruit Beverages~

A Few Plants You Might Include in Your Garden

Edith Pucci Couchman © 2012



Peppermint

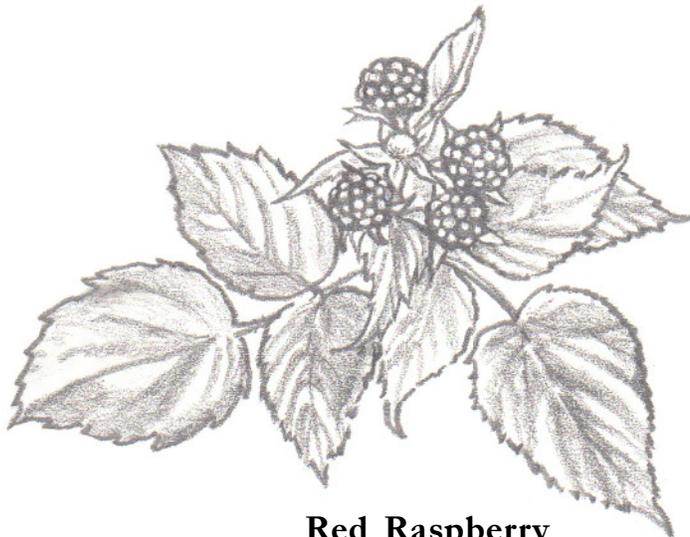
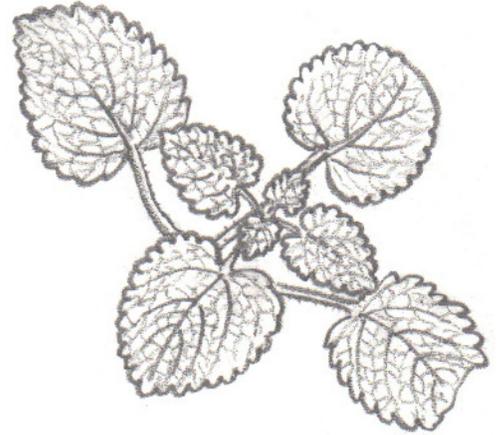
Mentha x piperita

Here's an herb that's fairly easy to grow in a pot. And because it grows and spreads so vigorously, keeping it in a container is probably a very good idea! As a tea, it is flavorful either hot or iced. Peppermint tea is considered helpful for indigestion.

Lemon Balm

Melissa officinalis

This is a wonderful plant that has been a favorite since the time of the ancient Greeks and Romans. Its benefits were cited by the great Muslim physician Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and it was cultivated in the monastery gardens of Europe for centuries. The Renaissance emperor Charles V drank a cup of lemon balm tea every day. The beverage was very popular before the widespread importation of caffeinated teas from China and India, and it came to be known as 'Thé de France.' It is valued for its calming properties. It also helps attract honey bees to the garden.



Red Raspberry

Rubus idaeus

The leaves on the arching, prickly branches of this shrub have long been used for teas, especially teas for women. However, it is the fruit which is even more delicious and versatile. The berries can be eaten fresh, dried or cooked. They can easily be made into jams, jellies, or syrups. To make a sweet raspberry juice beverage, just cook the berries in a small amount of water until they're very soft and practically a sauce. At this point, strain out the seedy pulp using a colander and add honey and water to taste. Enjoy hot or iced.

A Basic Recipe for Preparing Herbal Teas:

Wash the leaves and mince them into little pieces on a cutting board. You will need approximately 1 teaspoon of the chopped leaves for each cup of boiling water. Allow the mixture of leaves and water to steep for 10 minutes and then pour the liquid through a tea strainer and into your drinking cups. Sweeten with locally harvested honey.

Principle Reference: Keville, Kathi. *Herbs, an Illustrated Encyclopedia*. New York: Friedman/Fairfax Publishers, 1999.