

# Drink Your Garden!

*Herbs, Fruits & Flowers for the Glass*

Kathryn Kellam & Susan Wilhelm,  
Extension Master Gardeners

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## Why Think DRINKS?

More ways to ENJOY:

- Plants you're already growing
- Flavor at its peak
- Late-stage ripeness
- Over-abundant or tiny harvests
- Herb and flower options you may be missing out on

**More HEALTHFUL than many other options!**



## Overview for Today

- Building a great drink
- Tasty plants for the glass
  - Questions
- Infusions
- Chunky blends
  - Questions
- Simple syrups & shrubs for soft drinks & mocktails
- Garnishes
- Safety, wrap-up, and resources
  - Questions




## Building a great drink

Strive for 3 qualities:

- Complex flavor
- Richness
- Substantial mouth-feel

Look to:  
**PLANTS**  
**VINEGAR & SUGAR**  
**WATER**



## Vinegar

"God loves to make vinegar."  
*French winemaker saying*

- Good quality = fruity richness
- Sour flavors quench thirst
- Sour stimulates appetite
- Affinity for sour (Vitamin C)

"Vinegar is alcohol's fate."  
*Harold McGee*



## Vinegar options

**BEST**

- Wine (white or red)

**OKAY**

- Apple cider
- White balsamic

**AVOID**

- Infused flavors
- Fermented flavors

**NEVER**


- Distilled white



### Sugar

- Balances sour
- Adds body (mouth-feel)
- Combined with vinegar – sophisticated, complex, adult

Both vinegar and sugar are preservatives!



### Sugar options

**BEST**

- White or golden (familiar, colorless, cheap)

**OKAY**

- Natural (demerara, turbinado)
- Brown

**OKAY, BUT ...**

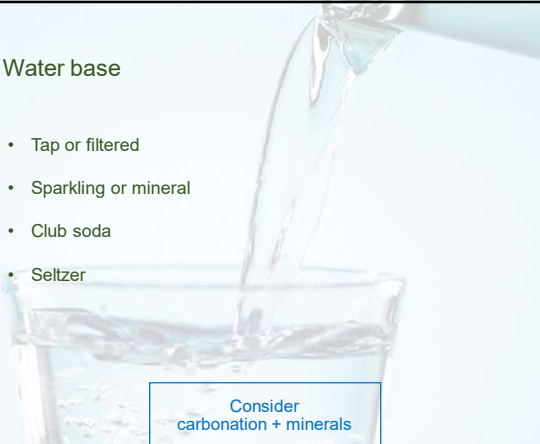
- Honey
- Other (flavor, preservative qualities vary)



### Water base

- Tap or filtered
- Sparkling or mineral
- Club soda
- Seltzer

Consider carbonation + minerals



### Tasty Plants for the Glass

Leaves & Flowers	Veggies & Roots	Fruits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mint</li> <li>• Basil</li> <li>• Pineapple sage</li> <li>• Marjoram</li> <li>• Thyme</li> <li>• Winter savory</li> <li>• Chamomile</li> <li>• Lavender</li> <li>• Elder flower</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tomato</li> <li>• Cucumber</li> <li>• Greens</li> <li>• Sweet pepper</li> <li>• Melons</li> <li>• Ground cherries</li> <li>• Hot chili peppers</li> <li>• Ginger</li> <li>• Turmeric</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cherries</li> <li>• Blueberries</li> <li>• Pears</li> <li>• Grapes</li> <li>• Kiwi</li> <li>• Strawberries</li> <li>• Pomegranate</li> <li>• Goumi</li> <li>• Citrus</li> </ul>



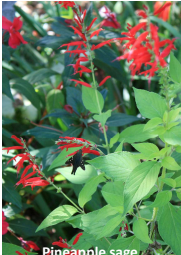
### Leaves and flowers

#### Mint-family herbs

- Mints (e.g., *Mentha spicata*)
- Basils (e.g., *Ocimum basilicum*)
- Pineapple sage (*Salvia elegans*)

#### Features

- Annuals and perennials
- Pollinator-attracting blooms
- Full sun to part shade
- Moist, rich soil

### Leaves and flowers

#### Mediterranean herbs

- Marjoram (*Origanum majorana*)
- Thyme (e.g., *Thymus vulgaris*)
- Winter savory (*Satureja montana*)

#### Features

- Evergreen perennials
- Pollinator-attracting blooms
- Full sun to part shade
- Dry to moist, well-drained soil








### Leaves and flowers

**Edible flowers**

- Chamomile, German (*Matricaria recutita*)
- Lavender, English (*Lavandula angustifolia*)
- Elderberry flowers (*Sambucus canadensis*)

**Features**

- Great flavor enhancers
- Annuals and perennials
- Pollinator-attracting blooms
- Full-sun & part-shade options




### Veggies and roots

**Savory flavors**

- Tomato (*Solanum lycopersicum*)
- Cucumber (*Cucumis sativus*)
- Greens (e.g. *Beta vulgaris* subsp. *vulgaris*)

**Features**

- Annuals
- Pollinator-attracting blooms
- Full sun
- Moist, rich soil

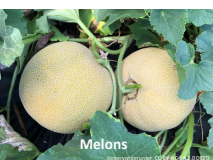


### Veggies and roots

**Sweet flavors**

- Sweet chili peppers (*Capsicum annuum*)
- Melons (e.g., *Cucumis melo*)
- Ground cherries (*Physalis peruviana*)

**Features**

- Annuals
- Pollinator-attracting blooms
- Full sun
- Moist, rich soil




### Veggies and roots

**Spicy flavors**

- Hot chili peppers (*Capsicum annuum*)
- Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*)
- Turmeric (*Curcuma longa*)

**Features**

- Grow as annuals
- Part shade
- Moist, rich soil




### Fruits

**Shrubs & trees**

- Cherries, dwarf tart (e.g., *Prunus fruticosa* x *Prunus cerasus* 'Juliet')
- Blueberries, lowbush (e.g., *Vaccinium angustifolium*)
- Pears (*Pyrus communis*)

**Features**

- Perennial
- Pollinator-attracting blooms
- Full sun (some part-shade)
- Moist, rich soil

### Fruits

**Vines**

- Grapes, Concord (*Vitis labrusca* 'Concord')
- Kiwi, hardy (*Actinidia deliciosa* 'Jenny')
- Strawberries (*Fragaria x ananassa*)

**Features**

- Perennial
- Pollinator-attracting blooms
- Full sun
- Moist, rich soil





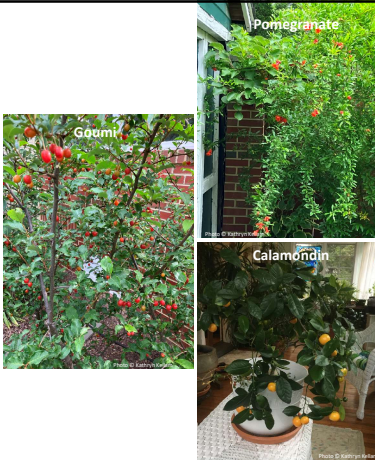
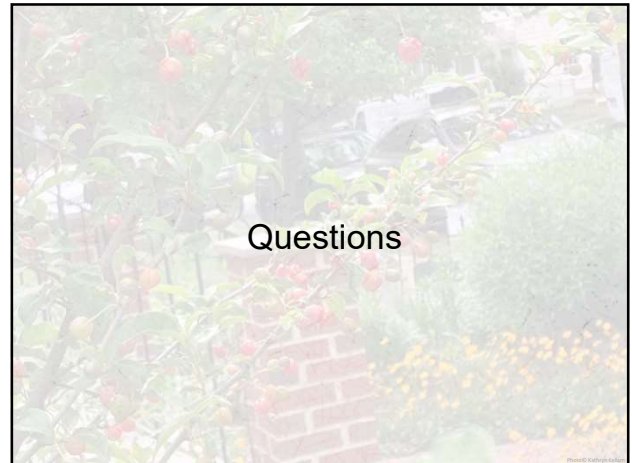

### Fruits

Something different

- Pomegranate, hardy (*Punica granatum*)
- Goumi (*Elaeagnus multiflora*)
- Citrus (e.g., *Citrus × macrocarpa*)

**Features**

- Perennial
- Pollinator-attracting blooms
- Full sun (some part-shade)
- Moist, rich soil

### Flavored waters

**Cold processing**


Simplest beverage:

Cold water  
+  
Plant

*Infuse to taste & enjoy!*

Infuse for 2 – 4 hours or overnight in the fridge.

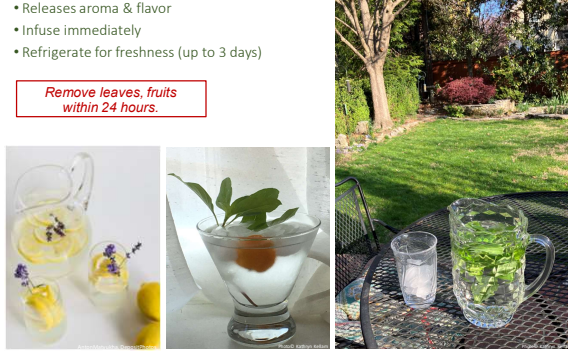
Flavored water lets me enjoy flavor from my garden every day.



### Spank the leaves!

- Releases aroma & flavor
- Infuse immediately
- Refrigerate for freshness (up to 3 days)

Remove leaves, fruits within 24 hours.



### Great plants for waters

**Cold Processing**

- Strongly-flavored herbs (*mint, basil, ginger*)
- Subtle savorys (*G. chamomile, winter savory*)
- Small fruits (*blueberry, cherry, grape*)
- Firm & juicy produce (*cucumber, melon*)
- Citrus juice & zest (*calamondin, lemon, key lime*)



Great everyday combos

- Veggie & herb combos
  - Cucumber & mint
  - Ground cherry & lemon thyme
- Fruit & herb combos
  - Watermelon & basil
  - Meyer lemon & rosemary
  - Grape & lavender



Let sit 2 – 4 hours for flavors to come through.

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Teas  
*Hot Processing*

Hot water  
+  
Plant

Infuse to taste & enjoy!

When you want a warm drink, tea makes everything better.



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Brewing *fresh* teas  
*Hot processing*

- More fresh than dried (2-3 times)
  - I prefer 6-8 spice basil leaves
- Water just below boiling
- Check flavor at 2-3 minutes
  - Longer steep = stronger tea (personal taste)
  - Bitterness may increase with longer steep times



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CAUTION!

"Sun tea" is brewed in sun-warmed (not hot) water. It has an higher risk of bacterial growth.

Great plants for teas  
*Hot processing*

- Favorite herbs  
(*mint, basil, pineapple sage*)
- Edible, flavorful flowers  
(*G. chamomile, lavender, elder*)
- Citrus zest  
(*calamondin, lemon, key lime*)
- Ginger & turmeric  
(*rhizomes, leaves, flowers*)

Consider blends!  
(*ginger + citrus, chamomile + elder*)



Chunky Blends

*Aguas frescas, smoothies, gazpachos*



Aguas Frescas  
*Cool Waters, Fresh Waters*

- 4 Cups Chopped Fruit
- +  
3 Cups Water
- +  
1 – 2 Tbsp. Sugar (Agave)
- +  
Juice of 1 Lime



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Herbs, Fruits, & Flowers for the Glass

Great plants for aguas frescas

- Sweet & juicy  
*(blueberries, strawberries, grapes, melons, ground cherries)*
  - Tart & fresh  
*(kiwi, tart cherries)*
  - Tree fruits  
*(pears, apples, plums, peaches)*
  - Leftovers from making shrubs
- + Complementary flavors from the garden, such as mints & basil



Agua fresca combos

- Strawberry Basil
- Blueberry Pomegranate
- Cucumber Ginger



Smoothies

*Pureed & thickened; liquid meal*

Classic Template

- 2 parts fruit or veggies  
(2 cups)
- 1 part liquid (juice, milk)  
(1 cup)
- ½ part yogurt / thickener  
(½ cup)

*Freeze fruit/veg – or add ice cubes*



Great plants for smoothies

- Sweet or tart  
*(tart cherries, blackberries)*
- Savory and mild  
*(greens, cucumber)*
- Fruits with edible seeds  
*(blueberries, strawberries, kiwi, ground cherries)*

*With a high-powered blender, include goudi & pomegranate.*

- Leftovers from making shrubs



Great smoothie options

- Kale, spinach & ginger
- Blueberries & mixed baby greens  
*(kale, Swiss chard, spinach, arugula)*
- Pear & ginger
- Mixed berries & rose geranium syrup
- Cantaloupe & mint
- Watermelon & strawberry



Gazpachos

*Cold soup or drink blended from raw vegetables*

Classic red

- Tomato
- Sweet & juicy vegs
  - Cucumber, bell pepper
- Sharp & savory alliums
  - Onion & garlic
- Body & brightness
  - Stale bread
  - Olive oil & wine vinegar
- Salt & water, as needed



### Gazpachos

*Traditional white & green variations*

#### Classic white (Moorish Spain)

- Sweet & juicy
  - Green grapes & cucumber
- Body & brightness
  - Stale bread & blanched almonds
  - Olive oil & wine vinegar
- Sharp & savory
  - Garlic
- Salt & water, as needed

#### Classic green

- White gazpacho + green herbs



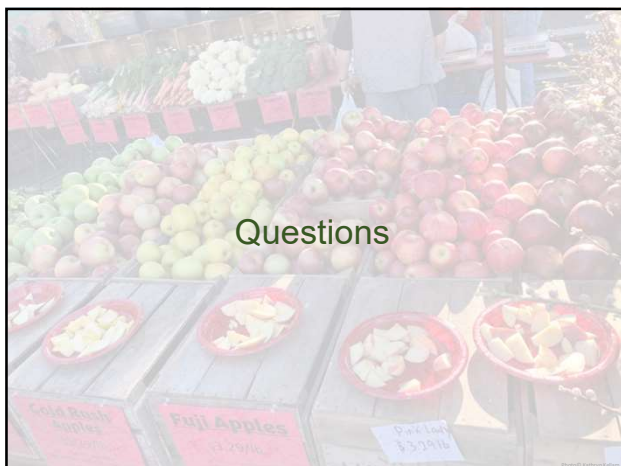
### Easy combos from bountiful veggies

- Spicy garden salsa
  - Tomato
  - Jalapeno
  - Chives
- Cool savory cukes
  - Cucumber
  - Sweet pepper
  - Parsley or mint leaves

*"Gazpachify" it!*  
Add bread + oil + vinegar + salt



### Questions



### Syrups & Shrubs

*for making soft drinks, mocktails, & more!*



### Flavored simple syrup

*Hot processing*

- 1 part sugar
- +
- 1 part water
- +
- Flavoring plant

*(1 part fruit, less for spices. Steep to achieve desired flavor.)*

**Simmer, strain, refrigerate (typically 1-2 weeks).**



### Great plants for simple syrups

- Distinctive herb flavors
  - Spearmint
  - Lavender
  - Thyme
  - Winter savory
  - Fragrant rose geranium
- Spicy
  - Ginger
  - Hot chili peppers (up to 5 min.)
- Tart citrus
  - Lemon, lime, calamondin



Great syrup options

- **Ginger**
  - Equal parts water + sugar + ginger slices
- **Lavender buds**
  - Add 3 Tbsp fresh or dried (off heat)
- **Jalapeno**
  - 1 part water + 2 parts sugar + jalapeno slices
- **Grenadine**
  - Sub. pomegranate juice for water
  - + dash orange blossom water at end
- **Sour mix**
  - Tart citrus juice + simple syrup (equal parts)

Add 1 – 2 Tbsp vodka for longer shelf life.



Soft drinks

Flavored simple syrup + Cold seltzer or club soda



Easy soft drinks & lemonade

- **Ginger ale**
  - Pour club soda over 1 – 2 ounces ginger simple syrup
- **Lemon-lime soda**
  - Pour club soda over 1 – 2 ounces sour mix
- **Homemade lemonade**
  - 2 parts water + 1 part sour mix
  - + jalapeno syrup (spice)
  - + lavender syrup (floral notes)



Shrub

Food preservation from Colonial America

Use leftovers in dishes or smoothies!



Cold processing:

1 part sugar + 1 part vinegar + 1 part flavoring plant (1 part fruit; less for herbs)

Hot processing can be used for hard-to-extract flavors.



Great plants for shrubs

- **Spicy**
  - Ginger
  - Turmeric
- **Ripe fruits or veggies**
  - Pomegranate
  - Goumi
  - Sweet pepper (red bell, Trinidad perfume)
- **Favorite herbs**
  - Winter savory
  - Marjoram
  - Spice basil



Mocktails from shrubs

Shrub + Sparkling Water



### Shrub pairings for mocktails

- Tomato herb
  - Tomato + basil, marjoram, etc.
- Lemon spice
  - Lemon + ginger
- Sweet Italian
  - Red bell pepper + marjoram
- Floral & spicy
  - Trinidad perfume pepper + ginger

**BONUS!** Chocolate mint  
Cacao nibs + spearmint



### Virgin Mary mocktail

- Tomato, crushed
- Lemon (citrus) juice

*According to taste:*

- Savory
  - Celery
  - Herbs: tarragon, winter savory
  - Smoked sea salt
- Sharp & spicy
  - Hot pepper
- Garnish
  - Rosemary, cucumber, lemon, celery




### Decorative garnishes

- Sprigs of herbs
- Whole berries
- Edible flowers

*As-is or in ice cubes*




### Functional garnishes

- Fruit wedges
- Veggie stalks
- Citrus
- Microgreens
- Pureed fruit ice cubes




### Edible Flowers

- Choose only safe-to-eat flowers
- Eat only the right part
- Harvest at peak bloom & use quickly for best flavor






### Great guides to edible flowers

### Food safety practices

- Research plants & flowers
  - Use site:edu & site:gov
  - Which parts are edible?
  - When safe to consume?
- Rely on Latin names
  - Plants & seeds
- Ensure contaminant free
- Clean containers before using
- Try new plants in small amounts
  - Possible unknown allergens

Today's Take-Away:  
**Use ALL of your garden to elevate your everyday drinks!**

**Flavor & Texture**

- Increased nutrition
- Increased flavor complexity
- Better texture, mouth feel

**Liquids**

- Plain water
- Sparkling mineral water
- Club soda or seltzer

**Beauty**

- Color
- Bubbles
- Garnish

### Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia

Organization of volunteers with Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) serving Arlington & Alexandria

Since 1985, promoting public education on environmentally sound gardening practices

- Help Desk
- Plant clinics
- Classes
- Demonstration gardens

Website: [www.mgnv.org](http://www.mgnv.org)  
Virginia Extension Service: [www.ext.vt.edu/](http://www.ext.vt.edu/)

