

# THE DRUNKEN BOTANIST'S GUIDE TO BACKYARD BARTENDING

## ✦ TEN INTERESTING & UNUSUAL COCKTAIL PLANTS ✦

Mint? Check. Strawberries? Check. Go beyond the basics with these cocktail-friendly fruits, vegetables, and herbs:

### BORAGE

Deep blue flowers are gorgeous in drinks or frozen into ice cubes. Leaves taste vaguely like cucumbers. Traditional Pimm's Cup garnish.

### CELERY

Homegrown stalks may be thinner than beefy, store-bought varieties, which make them perfect as swizzle sticks. Look for the dramatic crimson 'Redventure'.

### CURRANT

Once banned because of the risk of spreading white pine rust disease, black currants are back. *Ribes nigrum*, used to make French cassis, is now available in disease-resistant cultivars; white and pink currants also make beautiful garnishes.

### ELDERFLOWER

Use *Sambucus nigra* flowers in infusions and syrups. Try the dramatic 'Black Lace' or the chartreuse 'Sutherland Gold'.

### HOPS

A must for beer gardens. The golden hop vine 'Aureus', with its yellow to lime green foliage, is a widely sold ornamental, as is 'Bianca', a variety with light green foliage that matures to a darker green.

### LEMON VERBENA

Leaves have a bright, powerful citrus flavor perfect for homemade herbal liqueurs and infusions.

### LIME

Also called key lime, Mexican lime, or West Indian lime, this *Citrus aurantifolia* is the ideal variety for mojitos and margaritas.

### POMEGRANATE

Make your own grenadine. The dwarf variety *P. granatum* var. *nana* thrives in pots, so it can spend the winter in a greenhouse.

### RHUBARB

Rhubarb simple syrup is a must-have cocktail ingredient. Give it a permanent spot with rich, loamy soil, and it will produce for years.

### SLOE

Also called blackthorn, this large, thorny shrub (*Prunus spinosa*) bears the fruit used to make sloe gin.

