

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 *Punica 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.

from

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