

Growing herbs has become her hobby

By Mrs. Charles McSparran
Feature Writer

Herbs are returning to their rightful place of usefulness in our homes and are becoming more popular in home gardens. One who has turned a hobby into practical use, traveled extensively in search of more kinds of herbs and grows many kinds of herbs is Mrs. Thomas Cox, 130 New Haven Street, Mount Joy, Lancaster County.

Mrs. Cox finds growing and using herbs very exciting. She says "I wanted a hobby, nothing quite suited me. About fourteen years ago I started an herb garden." At last count she had 98 varieties and plans to get more kinds. Most people are not aware that so many kinds exist, however; Mr. and Mrs. Cox visited Hill Top Herb Garden, Cleveland, Texas, where they saw 1400 kinds growing. This is a business and gift shop run by Mrs. Madalyn Hill and is located north of Houston.

What is an herb? There are numerous definitions because there are so many varieties and types of plants listed as herbs and their uses are so varied. An herb is a plant without woody tissue whose stem withers and dies after each season's growth. Any such plant used as a medicine, seasoning, food or scent. Even this does not describe some herbs. Mrs. Cox's favorite herb is Aloe vera, sometimes known to its growers as Healing Plant, Medicine Plant, Sunburn Plant or Egyptian Plant. It is of the lily family and must be taken indoors for the winter in cold climates. It has been used for 2000 years for medicinal purposes. The leaves are hollow except for a milk-like substance which is good for burns and other healing purposes. Mrs. Cox keeps a leaf in the refrigerator



Mrs. Thomas Cox, Mount Joy, holding her favorite herb plant and sitting beside her other aloe vera plants.

for use when needed. Another medicinal herb is German Squill which can be used for a felon. It has drawing qualities.

The late Rosetta E. Clarkson, an outstanding herbalist, said "An herb is a plant that has been cherished for centuries because of its usefulness in cooking, in medicine, in household preparations and in industry." Mrs. Cox says herbs are for everyone and quotes Euell Gibbons "An herb is to hunt; an herb is to learn; an herb is to see; an herb is to pick; an herb is to taste; an herb is to smell; an herb is to cure our illnesses; and an herb is to eat."

Mrs. Cox, who wants to do an herb history sometime, has over 80 herb books. She has collected herb recipes and uses herbs a lot in cooking. She cautions not to use too much as some are strong in flavor. If you're not sure how much to use, just take a pinch the first time. She subscribes to The Herb Grower which is the only herb magazine published in the United States.

Mrs. Cox belongs to the Herb Society of America. Its closest unit is in Philadelphia. She is interested in having a local herb society but a unit should have 20 members. She went to the national convention in Detroit in 1974. It will be in Philadelphia next year. She has traveled ex-

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tensively in search of herb plants and to see how herbs are used. She says Rosemary is used for hedges in Morocco. In Spain, the poor go to the Madrid Botanical Gardens on Saturdays for free herbs.

The Coxes go far and wide to buy herb plants. Mrs. Cox does not like to start herbs from seed. She gets quite a few from Miss Mary Glick of Smoketown, Lancaster County but also goes to Westminster, Md., Cleveland, Ohio and buys Rosemary plants from The Rosemary Shop in Mechanicsburg, Pa. Coxes herb garden is laid out in elevated beds with stone walk ways among them.

Vera enjoys giving talks on herbs. Some of her topics are "Herbs Especially The Biblical Herbs", "Herbs And The Tussie Mussie" (a tussie mussie is a gift to give), "Herbs And A Mayflower Thanksgiving", "Gold Franchincense, Christmas Herbs, And Myrrh", "Gold Herbs And The Bicentennial." On some occasions she gives out samples of dried herbs or teas.

Vera, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Clinton Eby, Mount Joy, graduated from Mount Joy High School and took two years in Home Economics at Penn State University. She discontinued her education until after her first marriage and her second son was born when she went to Millersville State College. She started teaching fourth grade at Grandview Elementary School in Mount Joy when her second son was in first grade and this is her sixteenth year teaching. She also acted as a tour guide in Lancaster County for four years.

Her son, Mitchell Hess, enrolled in the Mineral Economics course at Cleveland State University, received his Bachelor's Degree there and his Master's Degree at Penn State University. He married Kathy Kurth of Cleveland, Ohio. The couple is currently living in



Mrs. Vera Cox, in front of their recently built fireplace and built in oven in their remodelled kitchen and holding her favorite cookbook "Private Collections. A Culinary Treasure", loves to cook with herbs.

Capetown, South Africa. The past two summers Mr. and Mrs. Cox visited Mitchell and Kathy in Capetown. Last year they toured six African countries and this year five countries with them.

Scott, her second son is taking the Political Science course at Penn State and will graduate in March, 1976.

Vera met Thomas Cox while on a National Education tour of Spain and Portugal. Tom was born in Bethlehem, Pa. and also lived in Scranton. He taught school in the Bethlehem School District and is now a special education teacher at Columbia High School. Both are NEA and PEA members. Coxes have many slides of their trips and often show them to children and adults for the schools, Parent-Teacher, Rotary and Church groups.

Mr. and Mrs. Cox are members of Saint Mark's United Methodist Church in Mount Joy. They are members of Schaefferstown Historical Society and Mrs. Cox is a member of the Mount Joy Historical Society.

They both enjoy bowling as a pastime. Vera is in the Clearview Bowling League and Tom is in the Lincoln Bowling League of Mount Joy. They play bridge in the Lancaster Red Rose Bridge Club once a week and also play bridge in New Cumberland.

They also like collecting antiques. They had a household sale recently to make room for their antiques. They are just completing extensive remodeling of their house, making room for a library and also shelf space for Vera's herb books in the kitchen. They collect Mount Joy antiques and have a room in their basement known as the Mount Joy Room where they have a Brady stove, a collection of old bottles made in Mount Joy and pictures of early girls' schools.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Cox enjoy trying new recipes and have a policy of keeping only the recipes they especially like. They type them on filing cards and put them on file. Mrs. Cox has many cookbooks but she especially enjoys one called "Private Collections: A Culinary Treasure", written by Janet E. C. Wurtzbruger and published by The Women's Committee Of The Walters Art Gallery. She says "In cooking I believe I like the thymes, marjoram, savories. I like Rosemary in lamb. I like to make herb vinegars. I like to make herb jellies, start with pure apple juice and pectin. Basil herbs are good for jellies." Tom does not cook but thoroughly enjoys baking different kinds of breads and has quite a repertoire of recipes. When

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Country Corner

Heart disease - is it really what we eat?

By Melissa Piper

Heart disease is by no means new. In fact it's probably been around since humans first began living on earth. And while research into its causes and cures have been going on for many years, we've been bombarded with information on the subject in the past three years.

We've heard that exercise is imperative and smoking doesn't help but the one main concern has been what you eat.

That old villain cholesterol has really been tossed around, thrashed about, chewed up and literally spit back in our faces. For many medical people have linked serum cholesterol and heart disease hand in hand. And if heart disease is not scary enough - the fear campaign lodged by many medical personnel and advertisers is certainly just that!

It's not my purpose to go into an indepth study of heart disease and its relationship to cholesterol or vice-versa but several articles recently written by noted researchers in the field of cardiology have certainly opened the discussion on the matter.

Up until about three years ago, people were

eating (without too much fear) butter, eggs, cheese, milk and pork without dropping over in great numbers. In fact our grandparents and great grandparents probably found these foods as staple diets. But after some research findings were printed on the correlation of serum cholesterol and arteriosclerosis we suddenly began to fear for our lives.

Instead of eating eggs, we were told that artificial egg products were much better as they contained no cholesterol. Even if they do have several artificial flavorings and color (which just may produce cancer) at least there was no chance of adding to the development of heart disease.

And what about those other dairy products? Well we suddenly found all kinds of artificial cheese and dairy products lining the shelves of the super-market.

We've also been "informed" that animal fat is very bad for the situation. And while this might be true to a certain extent, it has been vastly over-exaggerated. Pork which has been especially picked on contains much more protein and a large

amount of necessary vitamins which certainly overrides its so called "faults."

Even our mayonnaise has been taken to the laboratory and rejuvenated into looking the same but made without eggs.

Most of us know these things are happening and assume that with so much going on it must be for our betterment. But what we don't often see are the articles written by prominent cardiologists which have noted that dieting has little to do with heart disease.

For more than what we eat or do, heart disease say the specialists may be caused more by basic abnormalities of metabolism.

Dr. Michael DeBaakey, the noted cardiac specialist from Texas, recently was quoted as saying, "Rigid diets are going to affect only a relatively small segment of the millions of people who have the basic abnormality of metabolism which leads to heart disease."

"We don't know the causes of arteriosclerosis so how are we going to prevent it?"

While the leading cardiologist suggests that

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