

Mary's Medley

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JANUARY ~~~

First month of the Gregorian calendar
Begins on Saturday and has 31 days

National Hot Tea Month
National Oatmeal Month
January 1-New Year's Day
January 23-Pie Day

Birthstone: Garnet
Flower: Red carnation

Happy Birthday to Andrew!!

~tea~

TEA of the MONTH

Vanilla Spice. What better way to warm you but with a superb black tea? Naturally flavored with spices (um-m-m, you should see the cinnamon slivers!) and vanilla, this tea is a treat alone or with dessert. A delight to the sense of smell, better yet, the taste will linger and satisfy any feeling of emptiness. Sharing a cup with a friend is fun.

~tea~

TEA TIPS and TIDBITS

What is TEA? Camellia Sinensis is the botanical name for tea. All types of tea are derived from this deciduous, evergreen tree. There are various varieties just like there are various varieties of tomatoes. The three types of tea that we enjoy as a hot or cold beverage are created through different processing procedures.

~tea~

NATIONAL HOT TEA MONTH

What a great way to start the year! Hot tea to soothe the soul and energize the body. After shoveling the snow or playing hard at your favorite wintertime sport, a nice hot cup of tea is just what the body and mind needs. Tea, natures "lift", has relatively little caffeine and no calories (unless, of course, you add the sugar and milk) plus the nutritious protection of antioxidants. Soon, I hope, the USDA will add tea to the nutrition charts, classifying 4-5 cups/day of tea as equal to 1 vegetable serving. After all, catsup made the list and it's a tomato with additives.

Tea is tea.

~tea~

WHAT'S on MY BOOKSHELF?

The Power of a Teacup. What a beautiful little book written by Lissi Kaplan. Lissi is a porcelain artist. She creates gorgeous works of art on teacups and other china pieces. This is a book of inspiration. The well-written text, fine drawings, and wonderful photographs will uplift you.

This is a hardbound book available at **An Early Elegance**. This is just one of the many interesting and unusual titles that can be found in the shop. Check for my comprehensive "Bookshelf" booklists at anearlyelegance.com.

~tea~

In the Kitchen

“Oatmeal Raisin Cookies”

This recipe makes a lightly textured, pretty cookie, perfect for a tea party.

Yield: 4 ½ - 5 dozen

½ cup granulated sugar
1 cup light brown sugar, firmly packed
¾ cup butter or margarine
1 egg, beaten
¼ cup reserved liquid
1 teaspoon vanilla
½ teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon salt
1 cup all-purpose flour, sifted
3 cups quick oats, ground
1 cup golden raisins, plumped
½ cup nuts, chopped finely, if desired

-Preheat oven to 350°
-Plump raisins in 1 cup water until the water steams. Drain the raisins and reserve the liquid for use in recipe
-Grind the oatmeal in a food processor
-Cream the butter and sugars
-Add the beaten egg, liquid, and vanilla
-Blend well
-Combine the dry ingredients and add gradually to the creamed ingredients
-Mix well
-Blend into dough, raisins and nuts
-Use small cookie dough scoop (about 1 teaspoon) and drop onto ungreased cookie sheets
-Bake 10-12 minutes or until done
-Cool and store tightly covered
-**ENJOY!**

~tea~

Important

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Garden Catalogs

Well, the pleasant along with the inevitable has arrived. Garden catalogs and tax forms, don't you look forward to them? I do. It's the start of a new year.

Time to renew, refresh, revitalize, rejuvenate, rewrite, redesign, reorganize, renovate, restore, rework, ...
Can you think of another "r" word to add? No need. You get the picture.

January is the start of a brand new year. I don't do resolutions (hey, there's another "r" word) but I do believe in reviewing (another!!) the past year. It's good to know what has happened, make appropriate changes or continue on the same successful path whether the path is a personal or a professional one.

Garden catalogs help me in this process of assessment. It is a grounding (no pun intended). They help me to look forward, a kind of faith and hope for the future. No matter what the past year has dealt me, I plan my gardens, my work, and my life. This is not such a precise plan. I always allow for changes. Just like my little creek, it keeps on flowing. Sometimes it rises, hits rocks, overflows but always it keeps moving forward to a destination, a bigger creek.

What have I found in my garden catalogs this year? A lot. Always more than I need (or can keep weeded). Same with my life. I took a new path this past year. A not so smooth path but getting smoother. It's getting cleared and the flowers are blooming.

This year I am choosing to not plant too much new but to really cultivate what I have. I have much and am grateful for everything that blooms around me.

I hope your garden catalogs will help you to move forward to the destination of your life. **HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

Mary