Tips for Cooking with Mexican Tarragon

- *Tagetes lucida* may be referred to in recipes as Mexican tarragon, Texas tarragon, mint marigold, Mexican mint marigold or sweet mace.
- The flowers are edible and can be taken apart and petals sprinkled on salads or soups.
- Add the leaves at the end of the cooking time for best flavor.
- Chop and sprinkle fresh over sautéed vegetables, near the end of cooking.
- Especially good on squash and complementary to green steamed or lightly boiled green beans.
- Substitute for French tarragon.
- Use leaves fresh or dried, though some flavor is lost in the drying process.
- Use to flavor simple syrups and vinegar.
- Add finely chopped to boxed or made from scratch pound cakes or sugar cookies.
- Add to chicken, tuna and potato salads, as well as deviled eggs.

Texas Tarragon Vinegar

White wine vinegar  
Texas tarragon leaves

Fill clean jars 1/3 to 1/2 full with the fresh leaves (no stems as it tends to turn the vinegar brown). Add white wine vinegar and fill to the top. Cover with a non-reactive (not metal) lid and let steep for 2-3 weeks. Strain out the leaves and filter if desired. Use or store in clean bottles or jars.

*Henry Flowers, HSA Pioneer Unit*

Basic Herb Butter

1/2 pound butter (unsalted)  
1 tablespoon chives  
1 tablespoon mint marigold  
Dash of salt

Bring butter to room temperature. Lightly chop herb and blend with butter in a food processor or chop more finely and blend in by hand. Refrigerate at least 6 hours or overnight if possible.

Notes: If available substitute some chervil for part of the parsley or tarragon instead of mint marigold.  
Yield: 1/2 pound

*Henry Flowers, HSA Pioneer Unit*
**Recipes**

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**Sweet Red Chile Dressing**

3 large dried New Mexico red chiles or ancho chiles
3/4 cup water
1/2 cup vegetable oil
1/2 cup white wine (or rice or cider)
4-5 tablespoons honey
1 tablespoon fresh ginger, finely chopped
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 large clove garlic, peeled and finely slivered
1/4 cup herb of choice: spearmint, lemon balm, basil, mint marigold, lemon thyme or mixture

Remove stems and seeds from chiles; rinse and cut them into strips with kitchen scissors. Place chiles and water in a small saucepan; bring to a boil. Remove pan from heat and cool at least 5 minutes.

Place chile mixture and remaining ingredients in a blender or food processor container; puree until smooth. Taste and add more salt or honey if too sharp. Serve on fruit or vegetable salads. Delicious as a marinade or drizzled on grilled chicken, seafood or pork.

*Madalene Hill and Gwen Barclay*

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**Confetti Pasta Salad with Texas Tarragon Vinaigrette**

8 ounces uncooked shell pasta
1 pint small cherry tomatoes
2 cups coarsely chopped fresh spinach
1 yellow bell pepper, chopped

1/4 cup finely chopped red onion
3 tablespoons chopped fresh dill
Fresh Texas Tarragon Vinaigrette
4 ounces crumbled feta cheese

Optional: 1 tablespoon finely chopped Mexican Mint Marigold

Cook pasta and drain. Toss pasta with all ingredients. Serve immediately or chill.

8 servings

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**Texas Tarragon Vinaigrette**

1/4 cup Texas Tarragon Vinegar
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
1 clove garlic, pressed
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper
1/4 cup vegetable oil

Whisk together first 5 ingredients. Gradually add oil in a slow, steady stream, whisking until blended. To prepare ahead, store in refrigerator up to one week, and bring to room temperature then whisk before serving.

*Adapted from a Southern Living Recipe*
Mexican Mint Marigold Buttermilk Cake

1 cup butter  
3 cups sugar  
½ cup Mexican mint marigold leaves  
1 cup eggs (4 to 6)  
3 cups flour  
½ teaspoon baking soda  
½ teaspoon salt  
1 cup buttermilk

Remove the marigold leaves from the stem and then place them in a food processor with half of the sugar. Process just until the leaves are finely chopped. Mix butter and sugar well in a mixer. Add eggs and beat until well mixed and fluffy (2-3 minutes). Mix dry ingredients in a separate bowl. Add dry ingredients and buttermilk alternately in small amounts on low speed and only until well blended.

Greased and floured pans:
- Large Bundt* – 325° - 1 ½ hours
- Small Bundt* – 325° - 70 min
- 2 large or 4 small loaf pans – 350° - 1 hour

Cake is done when a toothpick inserted comes out clean. The top of the cake in the pan will be a light brown and usually has cracks.

Cool 10 min. then remove from pan – the cake does shrink down some.

Let cool completely. Sprinkle with powdered sugar if desired.

Great served with a lemon or rose geranium custard or ice cream.

Note: I have found that it is best to use a heavy, not thin, Bundt pan and if using a smaller one to make sure that it is not overfilled or the cake will overflow the pan in the oven

Henry Flowers, HSA Pioneer Unit

Many thanks to Henry Flowers for contributing these recipes from his collection and sharing some tips for using Mexican Tarragon!