

A Season Made of Memories

While the holidays always seem to get here too soon after summer ends, and while the anticipation of everything the season brings can be overwhelming, slowing down to savor this special time of year promises to make it one for the memory books.

As the rainy days began to line up one after another last month, I was the first in my house to feel the gloominess settle over me. The dark mornings and cold, wet evenings felt particularly difficult to adjust to. But then as I watched the flowers in the garden lose all their color and fold to the ground under the weight of the weather, I began to feel nostalgic.

The smells both outdoors and in were about more than just what my nose picked up. As I tended to the garden, readying it for the first dusting of winter white, I found myself immersed in childhood memories of playing with the piles of leaves dropped by the enormous maple tree in my grandmother's yard. The scent of wet leaves and damp dirt brought a smile to my face and a warmth

to me that overpowered the chill in the air.

Later, as I sliced apples to pair with the cinnamon- and citrus-spiced cider simmering on the stove, my kids asked me what smelled so good. I realized then that just like I had fond childhood memories associated with all these scents of fall, my own children were building the same connections between their noses and their hearts. Scent is powerful.

But there's even more to it than the shift to the smell of the world around us. This is also the time of year when memories are made around meals. There are classics we all know and love, and those we cherish not because we actually enjoy the taste, but because of what they represent. Some things, however, deserve to be reinvented.

I remember the first time I told my family that I was going to make the sweet potatoes for Thanksgiving and that it was



not going to be the same recipe as we usually had. There was hesitation; was it a good idea to mess with tradition? Not only did my recipe not call for canned yams and mini marshmallows, but it incorporated gingersnaps and real maple syrup.

I forged on, and now, years later, each of my siblings calls ahead of time to make sure I am making my sweet-potato casserole. It's become a dish at the holiday table that connects us as a family.

Beyond scents and foods, this is also the season of thankfulness and giving — two values I continuously strive to instill into my children. As Christmas begins to draw near and I start to hear “I want” far too often, I like to remind my children that there are many out there who are less fortunate than us. Even the most gentle nudge can inspire them to want to give.

It's organizations such as Toys for Tots, which the Central Oregon Builders

Association's Holiday Chefs on Tour is benefitting this year, that gives us all an opportunity to put smiles on children's faces throughout our communities. What a wonderful idea to pair builders and chefs on a tour where each can showcase their expertise while tour-goers enjoy the festivities, admiring the details of the homes and indulging in the exquisite flavors of the food all while supporting a wonderful cause.

Within the pages of this edition of Central Oregon Living, among a variety of season- and holiday-inspired features, you'll find the official guide to COBA's Holiday Chefs on Tour, highlighting each participating builder and chef, as well as a look at what's planned for the progressive meal and beer pairing at each of the stops along the way. Once you review what's planned, the next thing on your to-do list is surely going to be to purchase tickets. And why not? This is, after all, a great season to indulge all of your senses.

—Kari Mauser, Editor

EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTORS



David Clewett is a writer and explorer based in Bend. Educated at Oregon State University and New Mexico State University, he publishes prose, poetry, and travel narratives in addition to operating a blog. David is frequently out hiking, biking, kayaking, and fly fishing.



Enthusiastic and outgoing, Bridget McGinn enjoys meeting new people and sharing their stories. She spends her days working as a marketing and advertising professional, making photos or documentary films and spending time with her family. She may also be seen being dragged along the end of the leash of her adopted beagle.



When Lindy Callahan isn't writing, she loves exploring the Pacific Northwest. Her favorite place to escape to is the Oregon coast. At home, she loves taking time for a long Vinyasa flow, curling up with a good book, a fresh cup of coffee and her cat, Stevie Nicks. Long hikes with her dog Phil Collins, paddle boarding and camping make the top of the list as well.



Dani Nichols loves to write and has 10 years of experience as a journalist, editor and copywriter. When she's not writing, Dani is likely teaching therapeutic horseback riding at Healing Reins Therapeutic Riding Center in Bend, cooking for friends and family or enjoying the Central Oregon outdoors with her husband and daughter. For more, visit www.wranglerdani.com



Freelance writer/editor Ronni Wilde moved to Bend 2-1/2 years ago with her two sons and two mutts, and loves Bend's active lifestyle and culture. Endless running trails and rivers were the initial draw to Central Oregon, but since then, the ski slopes have become her favorite place. When not working on a deadline or hitting the slopes and trails, her days stay full parenting her lively teenage boys.



Kimberly Bowker grew up in Central Oregon under the shadow of the Cascade Mountains and between the scent of the ponderosa pines. She currently spends her time guiding and writing, exploring stories of the heart and discovering how our lives intertwine. You might find her sipping a pint of craft beer at a local pub, or out on the trail strolling beneath the sky.



Damian Fagan is a freelance writer and COCC Community Learning instructor. He enjoys birding and botanizing while hiking in Central Oregon's wild lands. He lives in Bend with his wife, Raven, and their big nutty dog, Thielsen.

Scents of the Season



Whether it's apples and spices simmering on the stove or freshly picked mint that was harvested from a fading garden, the smell of fall is more than meets the nose.

by Ronni Wilde, for The Bulletin Special Projects
Photos by Kari Mauser

It's been said that if you want to sell a house, bake some cookies or a pie right before it gets shown. Likewise, when you buy a new car, one of the best things about driving it home is "that new car smell."

What is it about certain scents that just make us happy? Or sad, perhaps?

"Smell feels like such an integrated part of our human experience," said Chelsea Phillips, co-owner of Hawthorn Healing Arts Center in Bend. "Smell is part of our human experience. It enhances our lives in such a beautiful way, and makes our lives rich and full. It's the first sense that you

have when born and the last one you have when leaving this earth.”

The reason scents can affect us so deeply, said Phillips, is that our limbic system, which controls our emotions, is home to the human olfactory bulb, which provides our sense of smell.

“The limbic system is the most primitive part of the brain, which is connected to memory and emotion,” said Phillips, who is a licensed acupuncturist and has a master’s degree in Chinese medicine.

“The limbic system is the emotional highway to our mid-brain,” said Elyse Williams, a clinical herbalist, certified nutrition specialist and reflexologist with training in essential oil therapies and aromatherapy.

“The mid-brain directly affects emotions. When we smell something, it immediately stimulates our memories,” she said.

“The fun part is that science has not completely figured it out.

We are learning more about this all the time.”

Scientific explanations aside, Phillips defined “aromatherapy” as “the skilled use of essential oils or any aromatic substance to bring physical, mental or emotional well being.”

“The term ‘aromatherapy’ came from a French chemist who made perfume,” said Phillips. “He wrote a book on it. Aromatherapy is born from essential oils, but really it can come from anything, even walking into a house and smelling a pie cooking. What’s cool about it is that aromatherapy is so highly personal. If you smell something, it directly links you to something from your past.”

Phillips said that smells have a double effect on us; they trigger both memories and emotions. A certain scent can pick us up, or bring us down. Aromatherapy can also be seasonal.

“Right now, in fall, there is a fresh crispness in the air that can

bring in more smells,” said Phillips, who is an avid user of essential oils in both her practice and her home. Some of her favorite smells of the fall season, she said, include rain, wet leaves, pumpkin pie, cinnamon, clove, campfires, nutmeg and apples.

We are so tied in to seasonal smells that a particular scent can become part of a holiday tradition.

“Smell is one of the most powerful senses. It can create a sense of self, home and family. It’s comforting,” said Williams. “This can be important during the holidays and at family gatherings. It’s part of honoring the nostalgia, tradition and ritual of family meals and drinks.”

There are a number of ways to use aromatherapy in your home. Diffusing essential oils, burning candles, brewing tea on the stove, burning resins over an open fire and baking or cooking can all infuse a desired smell into the

house. Massage oils, lotions and body oils, oils in baths, direct or steam inhalation and aromatic spritzers are other ways to utilize aromatherapy.

“Incense in church is even a form of aromatherapy,” said Phillips. “The smell of incense goes to the spiritual level; I think that’s why many faiths use incense.”

“In the old days, people used to put lavender and peppermint on the floor so people would walk on it,” said Williams. “It helped deter mice and rats.”

When using aromatherapy, Williams said there are endless options from which to choose, and much of a scent’s effect on us will depend upon how our systems are functioning on any given day.

“It’s really fun to explore your own blends and see what helps you balance your own being,” said Williams. “A lot of people typecast certain oils, but it can be pretty individual.”





to create good smells and add anti-oxidants to the meal. "Rosemary is one of my favorites during winter. It helps keep the blues away."

In the kitchen, spiced mulled cider with cloves and cinnamon makes the house smell good, and it tastes good too, she said. In the tub, she recommends adding bath salts and a sprig of a favorite plant to enhance calm and relaxation. If a bath isn't possible, a foot soak in hot water with peppermint at the end of the day can be calming, she said.

At Hawthorn Healing Arts Center, Phillips said she uses cinnamon in Chinese medicinal formulas for its warming effect and for its boosting of brain functioning, including memory and attention span.

"The cool thing about cinnamon is it's so aromatic," she said. "You can just use it in your coffee or tea."

Phillips said she also burns resins such as copal, frankincense,

myrrh, white sage and mugwort both in her practice and at home. Mugwort can even be used directly on the skin in traditional Chinese medicine therapy.

"The aroma and smoke helps clear out the yucky, negative stuff if you need fresh air," she said. Williams also burns plant materials, including sage, which is traditional in Native American rituals.

"I have a passion for this. It's amazing to bring this into your life," said Williams. "My advice is to narrow it down to one or two plants or herbs that really resonate for you. Otherwise it can be overwhelming."

She added, "There is a lot of science behind this, but really you know what works for you. Just be present and experience it. Allow yourself to experience how something makes you feel and breathe deep."

Generally, with essential oils, there are top, middle and base notes, each of which accomplish something a little different.

Top notes typically are fast-acting and evaporate quickly. They can help with feelings of heaviness or low energy by offering a quick uplifting and invigoration, said Williams. Citrus such as lemon, lime, orange and tangerine, lemon zest, peppermint, eucalyptus, basil and sage are among the oils that fall into this category.

Middle notes are known as "heart notes" that affect our emotional balance and are a little slower to take effect. They can come from grasses, trees such as pine, juniper and Douglas fir, spices such as nutmeg, cardamom and black pepper and flowers such as lavender.

Base notes are those that have a grounding effect and help balance the nervous system, Williams said, adding that base notes can have more long-term results,

boosting energy reserves and helping with focus and effectiveness. Base notes can come from cedar wood, vetiver root, patchouli, rose, jasmine, vanilla, clove and other intense, heady oils.

"All essential oils can have these effects," said Williams. "What happens with aromatherapy is that more oxygen is brought to the body and brain and assists with circulation," she said, adding that diffusing oils in the home can also help kill germs and pathogens during cold and flu season.

Although the most common use of aromatherapy involves essential oils, there are many other herbs, spices, resins, fruit, bath salts, flowers and other sources that can be used to create pleasing smells and effects.

"There are so many wonderful ways to use herbs," said Williams. "They are therapeutic to the system and pleasurable to us." In food, she suggests adding a rosemary sprig or bay leaves to stews

