

For Immediate Release

Media Contact: Allison Marchese 518-755-6061  
allisonmarchese@aol.com

## **Lore and Fantasy Take Root at Berkshire Botanical Garden Hogwarts Herb Garden New Herb Products and Potions on the Shop Shelf**

September 18, 2009 -- Stockbridge, Massachusetts -- In celebration of its 75th Anniversary, the Berkshire Botanical Garden has created a fantastic Hogwarts Garden. The brainchild of guest gardener Page Dickey, the Hogwarts Garden is situated in the beloved Herb Garden newly and carefully refurbished by Ms. Dickey this season.

According to Dickey, "The Hogwarts Garden is planted primarily for young wizards and, of course, for the child in us all." She has filled the garden with herbs rich in lore and fantasy and valued in past times as elixirs, magic potions, spells, and cures for numerous ailments and predicaments. "Many of these Herbs, I suspect, would be found on the shelves of Muggle shops."

Adding intrigue, the plants included in this garden have wizardly names, some that might have tickled the fancy of Harry Potter character "Snape" and entranced the well known "Dumbledore" and his students. The magical list includes herbs such as Black Snakeroot (*Cimicifuga racemosa*), favored for fevers and nervous disorders; Dragon Weed (*Artemisia dracunculus*), a sure cure for snakebites; Wolfsbane (*Aconitum napellus*), used in deadly potions; and Mad-dog Skullcap (*Scutellaria*), which was believed to cure rabies. Hangman's Root (*Nepeta cataria*) reports Ms. Dickey, "Was thought to make the nicest person mean." As the story goes, executioners ate the roots to get them in the mood. Further down the herb garden path young visitors will discover Horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*) once used to protect against witches' spells. Dead Nettle (*Lamium maculatum*) which was fashioned into whistles. Cobra lily (*Arisaema triphyllum*) also valued as a cure for coughs and colds.

"Hundreds of visitors of all ages have come this season just to walk the path in the Hogwarts Garden and learn, as Harry and Hermione surely did, about these fantastic, magical plants," says Dorthe Hvid, Head of Horticulture at Berkshire Botanical. "This garden has always been a special place, ever since our opening and our own group, The Herb Associates, worked their magic so many years ago."

The Herb Associates, founded by members in 1958, are still hard at work tilling the soil and turning simple herbs into delicious epicurean potions. The new list of herb products include:-Salt free sandwich sprinkle \$4.00-Salt free herb seasoning \$4.00 -Herb Salt \$4.00 -Savory Wine Jelly \$4.00 - Opal Basil Jelly - Orange Jelly-Grape Rosemary Jelly-Fresh Mint Jelly-Harvest Marmalade-Herb Mustard-Savory Herb Sachets for soups and stews \$5.-- two sachet packets with recipe-Dried Boursin Mix-Fresh Herb French Dressing \$5.00-Herb wine bbq sauce-Fresh tarragon dressing \$5.00-California Herb Dressing-Fresh tomato basil dressing: \$5.00. Also on sale is the Herb Associates new 2009 cookbook filled with amazing herb-based recipes.

The cookbook and freshly made herb products are available at the Berkshire Botanical Garden shop now through October 12 and at the Garden's Holiday Marketplace in December. Amateur cooks and professional chefs alike shouldn't miss this rare opportunity to take home a bottle of dressing, a pot of jelly or a shaker full of special seasonings while they last.

"We have a bit of our own magic happening," says long-time Herb Associate Marcia Brolli. "Most of our recipes have remained a secret for over 50 years and are passed on from member to member." The most coveted of all recipes is the Herb Associates famous "Mai Bowle" a potable concoction filled with both freshly picked blossoms and herbs served exclusively at the opening of the Garden each May.

For more information about Hogwarts Garden, and Herb Associates products, please email: [info@berkshirebotanical.org](mailto:info@berkshirebotanical.org) visit [www.berkshirebotanical.org](http://www.berkshirebotanical.org). The display gardens are open daily and admission is only \$10 for adults. For further information about exhibitions, events, educational classes and membership, please call: 413-298-3926.