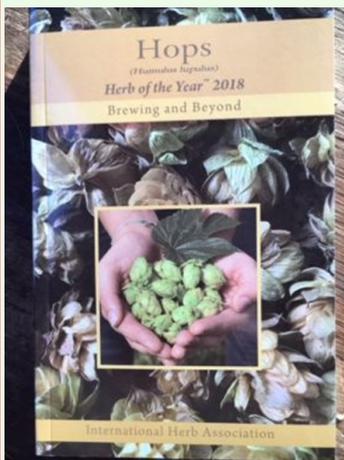


International Herb Association 2018 Herb of the Year and Book Review 'Hops' (*Humulus lupulus*)



Hops, Herb of the Year 2018: Brewing and Beyond is hot off the press!

Photo: Susan Belsinger

This year, herbies and hopheads from around the country are celebrating hops as Herb of the Year. The International Herb Association's newest publication, *Hops, Herb of the Year 2018: Brewing and Beyond* is hot off the press!

Some of the back-cover description reads, "Brimming with articles by regional herbal experts, fun facts and stories on every aspect of this plant -- from fragrance and flavor, botany and cultivation, lore and history to crafts and medicinal information, plus delectable recipes for the kitchen, bath, and boudoir!"

"The current craft beer craze is quickly revitalizing hops as a viable farm crop and this book works to explore this wondrous plant from its fibrous roots and hairy stems to its golden strobiles. No other plant in the botanical universe is quite as bitterly and aromatically intoxicating. Known mainly as the key flavor ingredient in one of the world's most consumed and tastiest beverages -- beer, there is much that is alluring."

Gert Coleman, friend, colleague and fellow hop-head is the editor of the just-released book. It is over 300 pages, with a color insert and many black and white photos, as well as over 40

articles on history and lore, cultivation, harvesting and processing, medicinal virtues, recipes, poetry and more. The fun thing about this year's publication is that we visited many hop farms and breweries, and those folks are featured in many of the articles -- giving the book a real sense of community.

Hops (*Humulus lupulus*) are plants with very bitter properties, due to the presence of extremely bitter phenolic acids, humulone and lupulone, and volatile oils, humulene and myrcene. The hop strobiles (appearing to be small, pale green pinecone-like flowers, which are actually leaf bracts that surround minute flowers) are the parts of the plants that are used in making beer and other products from bitters to tinctures and teas. Though they are all bitter, the flavors of hops vary enormously; they range from just plain bitter to grassy, resinous, piney, fruity, citrusy, floral and more. Medicinally, they have a sedative effect, are calming and help to encourage sleep, as well as aid in digestion.

Hops have been used for centuries to brew beers and in infusions for medicinal purposes. However, hops have many other uses from bath bags and dream pillows to bitters and tinctures. Meanwhile, get your copy of *Hops, Herb of the Year, 2018: Brewing and Beyond* from the IHA at www.iherb.org.



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