Quickly fading gardens may hold hidden gems that still can be harvested, provided you get to them before a hard frost. Anyone who has had mounds of glorious basil nipped by ice crystals can attest to the blackened mass that has taken its place, rendered useless overnight. Hardier herbs like oregano and thyme can withstand cooler temperatures. Sift through fallen leaves and you’ll be surprised by what you might find.

Your late season foraging will pay off. Fresh herbs are a great addition to most meals, transforming a bland dish into something savory. Fresh herbs add instant gratification with their distinct flavors. What would tomato and mozzarella salad be without basil?

Dried herbs are less potent than fresh, but good quality dried herbs are worth having on hand. If you have an abundance of fresh herbs in your garden, try drying them for use during winter months. Air drying or a dehydrator work well for many herbs. The National Center for Home Food Preservation (nchfp.uga.edu) offers great tips on “how to.”

Whether fresh or dried, you’ll enjoy using herbs in this recipe for Italian Popcorn from the Popcorn Board (www.popcorn.org). It’s a snap to make—popcorn is tossed with herbs, a touch of Parmesan cheese and a pinch of red chili flakes—and will quickly become one of your “go-to” recipes. Delicious!

**Italian Popcorn**

**Ingredients:**
- 2 quarts popped popcorn
- 2 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon fresh (1 teaspoon dried) oregano
- 1 1/2 teaspoon fresh (½ teaspoon dried) basil
- ½ teaspoon minced garlic
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon red chili flakes
- 1 tablespoon (or to taste) grated Parmesan cheese

**Directions:**
Place popcorn in a large bowl and drizzle with olive oil; toss. In a small bowl, mix oregano, basil, garlic, salt and chili flakes. Sprinkle herb mixture over popcorn and toss again. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese; toss and serve.

**Note:** For fewer calories, omit olive oil. Spray popcorn lightly with cooking spray. Sprinkle herbs, garlic, salt and chili flakes over popcorn and toss again. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese; toss and serve.

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