

Herbs Make Scents

THE HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA
VOLUME XL, NUMBER 8



SOUTH TEXAS UNIT
AUGUST 2017

Editor – Linda Alderman (ewalderman@comcast.net)

August 2017 Calendar

No meetings are scheduled. Harvest your gardens for Herb Fair!
Keep an eye on your inbox for any workshop notifications.

Aug 22, Tues. at 7:00 p.m. **Board Meeting** at the home of Sally Luna

September 2017 Calendar

Sept 12, Tues. at 10 a.m. **Day Meeting** is at the home of Pam Harris,

Sept 20, Wed. at 6:30 p.m. **Evening Meeting** at the Cherie Flores Garden Pavilion in Hermann Park (1500 Hermann Drive, Houston, TX 77004), **Program TBD. Bring your plate and napkin and a dish to share.**

Newsletter deadline: 25th of every the month

Herbs Needed for Teas!

Lois Jean Howard asks you to harvest the following herbs for teas for Herb Fair.

- Red Stem Apple Mint
- Mexican Mint Marigold
- Lemon Verbena
- Lemon Grass
- Lemon Balm

AUGUST



philipmartin.info





Chairman's Corner

Greetings,

It was thrilling to see so many members and guests at the July evening meeting. I suspect Karen Cottingham's great program and active recruiting of the entire city by Albert Ramos had something to do with the great mid-summer attendance. The view through the Cherie Flores' west windows with the afternoon rain looked like a vacation landscape. Plans are being made and committees recruited for our annual fundraiser, the Herb Fair on November 4, 2017. The opportunity to co-chair with Julie Fordes is still available. If that sounds daunting, we need help with advertising, crafting, phone calls, set up, SALE DAY and take down. There is a job for everyone AND according to the "Membership Guidelines, Rules and Procedures... an active member shall support the endeavors of the Unit during the fiscal year by serving on a committee, participating in the preparation of one major event and participating on-site in one major event." A job for everyone!

Thanks to those that added their names to the 2017-2018 hostess sign up sheet during the last meeting, it may be completed. We are brainstorming ideas for the 50th Anniversary of the Society also.

I am bolstered by the kind and encouraging comments many of you have shared with me as I begin this term as Unit Chair. Thank you for supporting my idea of the Compost Bucket. Let's try to remember to bring our own tableware and napkins to the next meeting. I also invite you to fill that empty pickle jar (that you were going to recycle) with cuttings from your garden and bring it to the next meeting— and send it home with someone else at the end of the evening.

Once again, thank you for your support and participation as we continue to share our love of herbs with each other and our community.

In gratitude,
Donna Yanowski
Unit Chair



A view of Rienzi's Garden

Our member, **Susan Wood**, is presenting "**10 Easy to Grow Herbs for Fall**" at Reinzi, 1406 Kirby Drive in Houston, on Monday, September 4th from 2 – 3 p.m.

As part of the Museum of Fine Arts Labor Day activities there is a \$10 admission fee to Reinzi which includes touring the house & gardens and other activities.

Details at www.mfah.org – click on "Calendar", and then click on September 4th.

Seating is limited to about 50, so you might want to get there early. This is a power point presentation with photos from Susan's herb garden. Seed packets of cilantro, dill, fennel, nasturtiums & oregano, donated by Susan and Botanical Interests, will be given away to participants.

A reception sponsored by Reinzi of lemonade & cookies follows the talk.





About Our Meetings . . .

Janice Stuff

A Coastal Outing, Tues., July 11

Several members of the South Texas Unit enjoyed an outing at the Bay Area this past month.

First stop was **Maas Nursery** in Kemah, TX. This is a fabulous nursery and massive site just to wander around and enjoy the environment and offerings. You enter through a fabulous Gift Shop with a variety of garden products and artful objects to decorate your garden. Outside, there is a quaint classroom area outfitted with rows of old vintage theatre seats. As you begin to wander through the garden area, you will find not only plants for coastal gardening and landscaping, but also herb, vegetables, flowers, and ferns, to name a few. Artistic groupings of plants throughout the nursery incorporate and showcase fountains, statuary, masks, and pottery.

<http://maasnursery.com/>

Next, we drove down the road to the impressive **Kemah Boardwalk** dining and entertainment destination. We lunched at the Flying Dutchman restaurant and enjoyed some delicious seafood luncheon dishes.

Afterwards, we stepped outside on the boardwalk along the bay to get a closer look at the ships, boats, and coastal birds.

<http://www.kemahboardwalk.com/>



Maas Nursery: A vision of their wonderful walkways



A view of the bay and the boardwalk from the restaurant



Maas Nursery: Large Selection of Plants



Happy Diners-Donna, Linda, Pam & Nutti

*Photos courtesy of Janice Stuff



About Our Meetings . . . (continued)

Albert Ramos

Even though it was more than two weeks after the 4th of July, our July 19 evening meeting went off with a BANG! Despite many members being away on summer vacation, 20 of us were fortunate enough to attend the meeting. Even better, an amazing array of 23 guests joined us for a fascinating program based on HERBS IN THE HEADLINES. **Karen Cottingham** collected dozens of news articles about herbs over the past year and found a common theme that became the inspiration for her program: **ANCIENT WISDOM FOR CONTEMPORARY HEALING**. These were the provocative headlines she chose:

Could Ancient Remedies Hold the Answer to the Looming Antibiotic Crisis? - The New York Times Magazine (September 14, 2016);

Brazilian Pepperberry Packs Power to Knock Out Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria - The American Association for the Advancement of Science EurekAlert (February 10, 2017);

How a Secret Chinese Military Drug Based on an Ancient Herb Won the Nobel Prize - Washington Post (October 6, 2015); and

Garlic, Onions and Cow Stomach: A Medieval Solution for Modern Superbugs - IFL Science (March 31, 2015).

Leave it to Karen to make the serious issue of antibiotic-resistant *Superbugs* lively, fascinating, and fun! She started with the inspiring story of Dr. Cassandra Quave, who refused to let her childhood leg amputation stop her from studying ethnobotany and traditional medicine in the Amazon rainforest of Peru. There she “studied” with a *curandero* who taught her about traditional plant-based healing. Of great interest to Dr. Quave was the use of Brazilian pepperberry (*Schinus terebinthifolius*) to treat skin infections. Dr. Quave has since produced an extract from the berries in her laboratory at Emory University and is studying its beneficial effects on the deadly and drug-resistant *Staphylococcus* bacteria. The surprising element in all this is that Brazilian pepperberry is vilified as an invasive plant in Florida, Hawaii, and Texas. We may need to rethink our attitude toward “weeds”. The complex

chemical capabilities of invasive plants that give them a survival advantage over their native competitors may also be harnessed to combat human disease.

Karen then recounted the intriguing story of Youyou Tu, a dedicated young Chinese pharmacologist just starting her career during the Cultural Revolution. An unlikely candidate to be involved in “intrigue”, Tu was one of hundreds of scientists assigned to work on a top secret military project during Chairman Mao’s disastrous rule of the People’s Republic of China. The urgent and secret mission, known only as “Code Name 523”, was to find a new treatment for drug-resistant malaria because China’s ally, North Vietnam, was losing more soldiers to malaria than to the fighting in Vietnam. Despite the added stress of her husband having been sent to a re-education camp and other scientists being executed in the name of “revolution”, Tu analyzed more than 2,000 medical “recipes” from ancient texts and interviewed hundreds of rural “barefoot healers”. She and her team identified and isolated hundreds of plant extracts, but the one she labeled “Extract 191”, which the ancient writings indicated had been used to treat fever in China around 400 AD, was the key. Eventually, Extract 191 led to the development of the most widely prescribed antibiotic for malaria, saving millions of lives over the last several decades. This life-saving extract was from a common roadside weed the Chinese call *quinhao*, known to Westerners as Sweet Annie (*Artemisia annua*). For revealing the **miraculous malaria cure** hidden within this lowly weed, Tu was awarded the 2015 Nobel Prize in Medicine.

Finally, we explored how two scholars at England’s University of Nottingham combined an unusual hobby with their respective fields of scholarship to discover another potential antibiotic for drug-resistant *Staphylococcus* infections. Dr. Freya Harrison, a microbiologist, joined a Medievalist reading group at the University to add depth to her Viking historical re-enacting hobby. There she met Dr. Christina Lee, an Anglo-Saxon History and Language specialist, who was interested in early Viking medical practices. They were both fascinated by a remedy for an eye infection described in a 10th century medical text called



“Bald’s Leech Book”. The recipe called for onion and garlic with a pinch of bovine bile and a dash of copper - all fermented in wine for nine days, and applied to the infected eye with a feather. The two PhDs re-created the salve as authentically as possible; and much to their surprise, it outperformed the most effective current standard antibiotic for drug-resistant *Staphylococcus* infections. Who could have imagined that medicine from the “Dark Ages” would outshine our best medicine today?

The effectiveness of the program was greatly enhanced by **Kerry Madole’s** striking PowerPoint images. Kerry generously applied her prodigious technical and artistic skills to create the “art” that beautifully illustrated Karen’s talk. Kerry spent many, many hours helping Karen select images and combined them with beautiful backgrounds to produce colorful and pleasing collages. We frequently heard “Oohs” and “Ahhs” from the audience as the presentation moved from one lovely slide to another. Thank you, Kerry, for helping make this presentation so engaging and memorable.

The evening’s wonderful hostesses were **Susan Wood** and **Sara Diaz**. They made the meeting space colorful and inviting with flowers and other plants from Susan’s gardens. Sara also made a delicious lemongrass and bayleaf beverage and a hibiscus punch that were refreshing complements to our tasty potluck meal. And in case you were wondering, there was no particular food “theme” tonight - a potluck supper theme based on a presentation about bacteria didn’t seem quite appropriate! We finished the evening with door prizes of breads from Three Brothers Bakery thanks to the generosity of **Bobby Jucker**.

Our next meeting will be Wednesday, September 20. I don’t know what the topic will be, but I’m confident it will be as fun and informative as all our meetings are.

Medicinal Disclaimer

It is the policy of The Herb Society of America not to advise or recommend herbs for medicinal or health use. This information is intended for educational purposes only and should not be considered as a recommendation or an endorsement of any particular medical or health treatment.

HERB FAIR 2017

45th Annual Herb Fair
By Julie Fordes, Chairperson

I am awed by how many years this event has taken place! A true testament to our group! Mark your calendars; **this year’s Herb Fair will be Saturday, November 4 at the Judson Robinson Center on Hermann Drive.**

I am very excited to help put this event together. I am a fairly new member; my first experience with Herb Fair was just last year. I would never dream of shouldering such responsibility for just any organization. My experience with HSA- South Texas Unit has shown me that this group is full of dedicated and hardworking individuals who can accomplish great things. My job will be easy.

I hope we can respect the traditions of the past fairs while honoring the skill sets and ideas of our newer members. We will need help from **everyone** to make this event be a successful one.

Our mission is to provide education and information about herbs to the public. In past years we have sold plants, jelly, herbal blends, crafts, soaps and many other items. I believe there have been educational workshops as well. I would like to maintain all that and possibly add some new ideas as well. I want to hear from everyone about what they think... call me directly (832-969-8349) or email me at fordes.julie@gmail.com.

I will meet with the past chairs soon and after that will have more to tell you and to ask of you. Stay tuned.





Herbally Speaking...

...from the desk of Linda Alderman

I can't have a garden without at least one lemony herb! There are several to consider, so it was a tough decision to make. I decided to share one of the most aromatic lemon herbs, lemon verbena. Remember, Lois Jean Howard would like us to harvest it for tea for the Herb Fair!

Lemon Verbena

Aloysia triphylla
Verbenaceae



Description: Lemon verbena is a deciduous woody shrub with a very distinctive lemon fragrance. It has tiny lavender flowers which are tubular, with two

equal lips, four stamens (two short, two long), and four-toothed calyx in spikes or racemes from leaf axils. Lemon verbena has leaves which are light green, lanceolate, and pointed with margins slightly toothed or toothless, fringed with hairs. These leaves are 2 - 4 in. long, and 1/2 - 1 in. wide, in whorls of three or four. The fruit is two seed-like nutlets enclosed by a calyx. The shrub can grow 10-15 ft. outdoors in warm climates or 5 ft. in cooler climates or indoors.

A little History: Lemon verbena is native to Argentina and Chile. This shrub so charmed the Spanish explorers who found it that they took it from the New World back to the Old. Its aroma is something people associate with personal use. Its leaves often were used as an after-bath body rub. This naturally led to its use in commercial soaps and bath oils. Sometimes it is referred to as the Scarlett O'Hara herb because it is mentioned in *Gone with the Wind* as her mother's favorite fragrance.

Cultivation: I don't think lemon verbena is what I would call an attractive plant. It has woody, sprawling growth that reached about 4 ft. in my garden in Bellaire. I tried to prune it to neaten it up, and I finally just gave it up! It is best propagated by cuttings, which I usually take later in the summer to limit the exposure to our extreme summer heat. Lemon verbena is a deciduous plant; at the first sign of cold weather it will drop its leaves. At other times of the year if it loses its leaves, it is under stress, possibly caused by a lack of water or root shock. This happened to me when I set a potted plant on the edge of the patio and the roots escaped to the nearby ground. When I broke the roots to move the

pot, the plant went into shock and I nearly lost it. Water lemon verbena carefully, not too much and not too little. I never had any trouble with pests, but I've heard it can become infested with spider mites and whiteflies.

Some Uses: aromatherapy, culinary, cosmetics, potpourri, tussie-mussies or bouquets

- Add dried, finely crumbled leaves to the batter when baking carrot, banana or zucchini bread
- To "spice up" plain rice, add minced lemon verbena leaves to cooked rice just before serving
- Perk up frozen peas by adding a small branch while cooking
- At your next fancy dinner party, try the old time custom of placing sprigs of lemon verbena in the finger bowls at each place. (You just know this is an LOL moment!)

Mixed Leaf* and Herb Potpourri

- 1 cup dried eucalyptus leaves
- 1 cup dried bay leaves
- 1 cup lemon verbena leaves
- 1/2 cup uva-ursi (bearberry leaves)
- 1/2 cup dried thyme/ rosemary/sage etc.
- A few whole sprigs of dried thyme
- 1/2 cup powdered orris root
- Several drops of lime (linden) flower, vervain, or rosemary essential oil

Put all the leaves into a large bowl. Add the orris root and mix really well with your hands or a wooden spoon. Add several drops of the oils, stirring as you do so. Put the mixture into large paper bags, fold them over and secure them loosely with a large clip or clothespin. Leave in a cool, dark place to cure, preferably for several weeks, before displaying.

*The leaves chosen are not crucial, what looks nice is a mix of large and small leaves.

Resources:

- Rodale's Illustrated Encyclopedia of Herbs
- Southern Herb Growing by Madalene Hill & Gwen Barclay
- At Home with Herbs by Jane Newdick



DON'T MISS OUT!



**From the Treasurer's
Desk:** Janice Stuff

Members, to be included in the **new 2017-2018 Membership Directory** AND to receive up to date announcements....please send your dues of \$67.50!!

Thanks,
Janice Stuff, Treasurer

**Remit your membership dues *NOW*,
deadline August 15.**

\$67.50 Single

\$98.75 Joint membership

\$80.00 Sustaining

**Mail to Janice Stuff, Treasurer
P.O. Box 6515
Houston, TX 77265-6515**

Questions? jestuff@pdq.net

The South Texas Unit is a non-profit educational organization incorporated under the State of Texas. The South Texas Unit has no paid employees. Our activities are accomplished through the efforts of our volunteers.

The Herb Society of America
South Texas Unit
P.O. Box 6515
Houston, TX 77265-6515



The Herb Society of America is dedicated to promoting the knowledge, use and delight of herbs through educational programs, research and sharing the knowledge of its members with the community.



Find our Unit on the web at:
www.herbsociety-stu.org

Herbs Make Scents – August 2017