

# Chesapeake Bay Herb Society News



March 2016, Vol. 14, No 3

## Message from our President - Spencer Garrett



A couple of warm days and I cleaned up my vegetable beds and turned the soil over. I have lots of earthworms, so I think that is a good sign. They taught us in the Master Gardner's class that you

shouldn't disturb the soil; but I can't help it, I like to play in the dirt and dig out the weed roots.

We still have some openings for Meeting Hosts and Committee positions, Herb Fans. By my count for 2016 we have 47 local dues paying members and 30 have signed up to participate as Hosts or on Committees.

Please consider signing up if you haven't done so already.

If anyone needs transportation assistance to the meeting next Thursday, please let me know and I will arrange a car pool. Hope to see everyone there.

Cheers,  
Spencer [slg69@atlanticbb.net](mailto:slg69@atlanticbb.net)  
410-827-5434

**Thursday, March 10:** CBHS Monthly Meeting. Immanuel Lutheran Church 7215 Ocean Gateway, Easton, 6:00 PM. Program topic will be "Colonial Herbs" presented by our own Bob Hall. The potluck dinner theme is "A Colonial Dinner" Members prepare 18th Century foods flavored with colonial herbs. Meeting hosts are Sharon H. and Ted M.

**Tuesday, April 5:** Board Meeting, 10:00 AM, Senior Center Brookletts Ave. Easton

**Thursday, April 7:** Deadline for CBHS Newsletter Items, Noon. Make submissions to Penny Hall

**Thursday, April 14:** CBHS Monthly Meeting. Immanuel Lutheran Church 7215 Ocean Gateway, Easton, 6:00 PM. Program topic "The Roots of Health: Understanding the Role of Natural Foods, Exercise, and the Mind on the Human Body." presented by David Mercier. The potluck dinner theme is "The Russian Empire" using herbs, Dill, Chervil, Russian Tarragon and Bay. Meeting hosts are Kathy C and Wendy M.

**Tuesday, May 3:** Board Meeting, 10:00 AM, Senior Center Brookletts Ave. Easton

**Thursday, May 5:** Deadline for CBHS Newsletter Items, Noon. Make submissions to Carol Jelich

**Thursday, May 12:** CBHS Monthly Meeting. Immanuel Lutheran Church 7215 Ocean Gateway, Easton, 6:00 PM. Program topic will be TBD. The potluck dinner theme is "Aztec/Mayan" using Herbs Epizote, Mexican Oregano Chile Peppers and Achiote. Meeting hosts are Ann D. and Holly W.

The purpose of the Chesapeake Bay Herb Society (CBHS) shall be to: a) Share ongoing knowledge of herbs through their use and enjoyment, and b) Contribute to the community through herbal related projects which benefit both members and the community.

2016 Officers: President: Spencer Garrett, Vice President: Ann Davis,

Secretary: Wendy McGuire, Treasurer: Dana McGrath

[www.ChesapeakeBayHerbSociety.org](http://www.ChesapeakeBayHerbSociety.org)



# Upcoming Events

## March Dinner Meeting

Our featured speaker at the February meeting will be **Bob Hall** who will give us a talk on Colonial Herbs. Colonial food in the late 1700's was varied and abundant. The environment of the 13 colonies included lush woodlands, fields, rivers and the ocean. When colonists arrived in America they planted familiar crops from Europe and raised domestic animals for meat that included sheep, cattle, pigs and chickens.

Colonial housewives and cooks had to prepare meals under difficult conditions, while using meat, long past its prime, dealing with strong gamey flavors of wild animals, tough, stringy chicken, and overcooked vegetables. At our meeting next week you will discover the secrets of 18th century cooking and how herbs and spices saved the day.



### Adkins Arboretum in March

Mar. 3 & 7 Color Pencil introduction 9:30-3:30

Mar. 5 First Sat. guided walk 10Am

Mar. 12 Museum Day - free admission

Mar. 19 Soup and Walk -11 - 1:30

Juried art show in the visitors center all month

Adkins Arboretum, 410-634-2847 [adkinsarboretum.org](http://adkinsarboretum.org)



## We are still looking for someone to be chairman of the Herb Garden at Pickering Creek.

### Responsibilities:

1. Manage the CBHS Herb Garden Committee to plan, plant, and maintain the CBHS Herb Garden at Pickering Creek.
2. Participate in monthly CBHS Executive Board Meetings.

### Monthly:

1. Maintain a volunteer hours logbook and database (Excel spreadsheet) and report to Pickering Creek Volunteer Coordinator several times during the season.
2. Send a weekly email to CBHS members describing the work done in the Herb Garden that week.

**January:** Submit budget request to Treasurer for estimated plant expenses for upcoming season based on last years budget and any known changes.

### Early April:

1. Meet with committee members to decide who will be responsible for planting the various beds in the herb garden.
2. Use plant list from previous years to chose which herbs can be used for each bed; each volunteer can add any new plants to the beds, if desired.
3. Establish the best day of the week for committee members to work together in the herb garden. (Work time has usually been in the mornings, for 1-2 hrs.)
4. Submit an article from the herb garden for the monthly Newsletter each month during the planning and growing season.

### Late April/Early May:

1. Schedule a day for committee members to meet in the garden to clean up garden and prepare soil for planting. Any winter damage to the garden is evaluated, including assessment of perennial herbs, and decisions are made to correct damages. Update budget request to Treasurer as necessary.

## Herbal Trivia Quiz

1. Cleopatra is said to have seduced Antony knee deep in this flower.
2. Herb of the year for 2016.
3. "Dew of the Sea"
4. North American native named for an unrelated plant it's smell resembles, it has proved useful for upper respiratory problems.
5. Eleanor of Troy was said to be gathering this plant when abducted by Paris. The root is a good expectorant.
6. Nutritional root, but oh, the gas!
7. One of the first shade plants up, it is used to make May Wine.
8. Nervine that was believed to help when bitten by a mad dog.
9. Roche Pharmaceuticals used this to make Tamiflu.
10. Following the lead of the ancients, Mr. Bayer used this plant to make aspirin.



Answers:

1 Rose, 2 Cayenne – peppers, 3 Rosemary, 4 Monarda (Bee Balm), 5 Elecampagne, 6 Jerusalem artichokes, 7 Sweet Woodruff, 8 Skullcap, 9 Star Anise, 10 Willow

~from the Wisconsin Herbalist

# Culinary Letter - Bob Hall



## Colonial Foods and Herbs

Colonial food in the late 1700's was varied and abundant. The environment of the 13 colonies included lush woodlands, fields, rivers and the ocean. When colonists arrived in America they planted familiar crops from Europe and raised domestic animals for meat that included sheep, cattle, pigs and chickens. The farm animals were supplemented with wild game, deer, bear, rabbits, and fowl as well as a host of animals and birds that we do not recognize as a food source. Native plants like squashes, gourds, beans, corn and greens became staples of Colonial meals.

In addition, new vegetables were introduced, peas, turnips, parsnips, carrots and potatoes. Apples were planted as soon as the settlers arrived. Other common fruits,

quince, plum, pear, nectarine, peach, cherry, and apricot, were all introduced from Europe. Fish and shellfish were abundant and an extremely important item in Colonial food.

Commonly planted herbs included Angelica, Basil, Burnet, Calendula, Caraway, Chamomile, Chervil, Coriander, Comfrey, Dill, Fennel, Lovage, Marjoram, Mint, Nasturtium, Parsley, Sage, Thyme, And Tarragon.

Colonial food was served on wooden or horn dishes. Each person had their own knife, forks and spoons were rarely used. Liquid food, such as soups, was drunk from a cup. Breakfast was generally eaten between sunrise and 9 am, depending on their lifestyle, and it consisted of a light meal of bread, or porridge. The Colonial dinner was taken from noon until 2 pm, while supper was

eaten after sunset, especially during the growing season. The substantial meal of the day was served according to local custom and status, however most of the settlers preferred to eat it at dinner. Supper was a light meal, usually just leftovers.

Colonial cooking was dependent on fireplaces or rudimentary stoves, limiting the cooking methods to boiling, frying, roasting and baking, over or on, uncontrolled heat. As result, Colonial cooking can best be described as overcooked, dry, tough and often lacking flavor. The most common preparation was boiling foods over the fire, using pots on cranes or trivets. Meats and poultry were hung on spits, hand cranked or in the wealthy homes they installed a spit jack automating the process. Tin reflector ovens were



used for baking and covered metal roasting oven was set alongside the fire or fitted on a spit. Frying was common, using heavy iron pans sitting on a grate or by using high tripod legs. Many fireplaces were built with an oven attached to the side, an important improvement as baking, like boiling, were the foundation of colonial food preparation.

# Culinary Letter - (cont'd) Bob Hall



Let's look at our home state during this period. Life in Eastern Maryland closely resembled that of the plantations of Virginia. The Chesapeake Bay and its numerous tributaries (rivers and streams) provided oysters, crabs, fish and turtles almost year 'round. Abundant wild turkey and venison were served with sweet potatoes. Those who could afford beef and

favorite spice mixture. The most common meals were made with chicken because they thrived in poor conditions, fended for themselves and reproduced often, while the eggs were a bonus.

Kitchen or dooryard gardens were very popular since they provided the herbs and salad greens used every day. Cooked salads, called



*Door Yard Garden*

biscuits and the still famous Maryland batter fried chicken which was served with gravy, similar to the ubiquitous Colonial chicken fricassee.

The study of Colonial cuisine and cooking was interesting and exciting, especially after discovering the abundance and variations of food available. A good part of the reason why this became so was that The Revolutionary War led to a drastic change in the food production of the American colonists. Since they could no longer depend on British and West Indian imports, agricultural practices of the colonists began to focus on becoming completely self-sufficient, which in turn required more efficient methods and substantially increasing the output. We owe a lot to these hardy folks, so let's celebrate with our own versions of colonial dishes.



lamb added them to their cooking. Almost everyone raised pigs, the settlers cured hams and salted pork for the Winter. Veal was often roasted with herbs or paired with sweetbreads. Lamb was stewed with exotic spices from the Far East, and curry powder became a

pot salads were popular in colonial Maryland. They consisted of greens that were cooked and then served with a dressing. Potato salad also became a mainstay of Maryland cuisine along with Maryland crab soup, with a beef base and bacon flavoring, crab cakes, beaten



# Colonial Recipes

## To Fry Crab

*Although based on a common patty or croquette, the classic Chesapeake crab cake isn't to be found in any cookbook printed in the 18th century. This recipe is the closest we have. Fresh picked blue crabs are best for this recipe. However, the recipe works adequately if you use dungeness crab, canned, or even artificial crab.*

### 18th Century

*First boil a large crab, take the meat out of the great claws, then flour and fry it; then take the meat out of the body, strain it, keep one half to be fried and the other for the sauce; mix that you fry with almond paste, grated bread, salt, nutmeg, and the yolks of eggs; dip these first in some batter; and fry them in clarified butter; then beat some butter up thick with the juice of an orange and grated nutmeg; put in the rest of the strained meat, let this be your sauce; dish the fried meat, placing the legs around it, run it over with beaten butter, and lay fried parsley around it.*

*~Nott, John, "Cooks and Confectioners Dictionary 1726" Art 195.*

### 21st Century

#### For the Crab Cakes:

¾ lb. lump crab meat  
½ cup ground almonds  
½ cup bread crumbs  
1 teaspoon salt  
1/3 teaspoon nutmeg

2 egg yolks  
1 cup white wine  
1 egg  
2 cups flour  
1 stick butter or canola oil for frying  
2 Tbsp. Tarragon Vinegar

#### For the sauce:

1 stick butter  
½ lb. crab meat from the claws  
the juice of 1 orange  
½ fresh grated nutmeg  
1 tsp. salt

[Click Here for a short video](#)

Take the ¾ pound of crab and combine it with the ground almonds, bread crumbs, nutmeg and egg yolks. Make these into small, thin cakes.

Mix the wine and egg together, then add the flour and stir till thick.

Dip the crab cakes in the batter and refrigerate them for an hour.

Fry the patties in clarified butter until nicely browned. Drain on paper towels and keep warm.

Cream the butter with your hand until you can easily move your fingers through it without feeling any lumps. Add the juice of the orange and the nutmeg. Using your hands, mix all the orange juice into the butter. Add the claw meat to the butter and orange mixture.

Spoon the butter sauce over the crab cakes and serve them hot. The butter will melt to glaze the crab cake underneath. As an alternative, you may use your favorite seafood sauce.

# Colonial Recipes

## Salmagundi

*Salmagundi is a 17th & 18th century composed salad of cold chicken with anchovies, boiled eggs, green beans, boiled onions, grapes, and dressed with a vinaigrette.*

*"To Make Salamongundy"*

*Take two or three Roman or Cabbage Lettice, and when you have washed them clean, swing them pretty dry in a Cloth; then beginning at the open End, cut them cross-ways, as fine as a good big Thread, and lay the Lettices so cut, about an Inch thick all over the Bottom of the Dish. When you have thus garnished your Dish, take a Couple of cold roasted Pullets, or Chickens, and cut the Flesh off the Breasts and Wings into Slices, about three Inches long, a Quarter of an Inch broad, and as thin as a Shilling; lay them upon the Lettice round the End to the Middle of the Dish and the other towards the Brim; then having boned and cut six Anchovies each into eight Pieces, lay them all between each Slice of the Fowls, then cut the lean Meat of the Legs into Dice, and cut a Lemon into small Dice; then mince the Yolks of four Eggs, three or four Anchovies, and a little Parsley, and make a round Heap of these in your Dish, piling it up in the Form of a Sugar-loaf, and garnish it with Onions, as big as the Yolk of Eggs, boiled in a good deal of Water very tender and white. Put the largest of the Onions in the Middle on the Top of the Salamongundy, and lay the rest all round the Brim of the Dish, as thick as you can lay them; then beat some Sallat-Oil up with Vinegar, Salt and Pepper and pour over it all. Garnish with Grapes just scalded, or French beans blanched, or Station [nasturtium] Flowers, and serve it up for a first Course."*

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

### 21st Century

2 heads romaine lettuce	1 lemon
2 breast of cooked skinless chicken, (and/or your choice of cooked duck, veal, or pork)	2-4 hard-boiled eggs
4 boneless cooked chicken thighs	3-4 anchovies
	Colonial Vinaigrette
	Garnishes to top salad

Shred the lettuce and lay on a platter. Cut the cold meat in julienne. Slice the lemon thinly. Dice or slice the eggs. Arrange the meat, lemon, and eggs on the lettuce. Add to the platter your choice of parsley, onions, green beans, grapes, watercress, pickled cabbage, gherkins, or edible flowers. Mix vinaigrette and dress the salad with it, or serve the dressing on the side.

### Vinaigrette

1 tbs. prepared mustard  
4 tbs. red wine vinegar  
1/2 tsp. salt  
1/2 tsp. freshly ground pepper  
1/2 cup olive oil

# Herbal Hints

## Containers and Window Boxes for Herbs



If I had to choose some 'must haves' to put in a window box on the sunny side of the house I would include chives, oregano, lemon thyme and a creeping rosemary to drape over the edge. However, on the shady side of the house I would have a salad herb window box which would include wild rocket, chervil, French parsley and red mustard.

When growing herbs in containers, I have two important tips. The first is to use a soil-based compost, either organic or something like John Innes potting compost.

To make your own potting compost like John Innes, [click here](#). This is because there are very few herbs that grow in peat, and a soil-based compost retains moisture which is a must to stop containers drying out. I also advise watering in the morning rather than the evening because this gives the plants a chance if the temperatures are hot during the day, especially for containers grown in full sun. The second tip is to feed container plants weekly from March until September. This keeps the plants healthy, helps them produce leaves, especially on cut and come again salads. I use a seaweed-based feed, however you can use any proprietary

*~BBC Gardening*

# Happy St Patrick's Day