

# Herbs Make Scents

THE HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA  
VOLUME XLIV, NUMBER 8



SOUTH TEXAS UNIT  
AUGUST 2021

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## Aug. 2021 Calendar

No Day Meetings are scheduled in August

August 1

**Deadline for paying your dues!**

Aug 3 & 17, Tues. at 10:00

**Crafts Workshops for Herb Fair** at a location to be determined. Members should contact Pam Harris or Janice Dana to **RSVP** and receive details.

Aug 13, Fri. at 6:30 pm

**Westbury Community Garden Workday** at 12581 Dunlap, Houston, TX 77035

Aug 18, Wed. at 7:00 pm

**Evening Meeting: "A Members Only Herbal Happy Hour – Let the Good Thymes Roll!"** hosted by the HSA-STU board. The **In-Person Gathering** is at the Cherie Flores Garden Pavilion in Hermann Park (1500 Hermann Drive, Houston, TX 77004) Watch your email and our Facebook page for updates.

Aug 22, Sun. at 7:00 pm

**Full Moon Ramble** – (Members Only, watch your email for Zoom invitation)

## Sept. 2021 Calendar

Sept 14, Tues. at 10:00 am

**Day Meeting** program and meeting place to be determined

Sept 15, Wed. at 7:00 pm

**Evening Meeting: "Hildegard of Bingen – The Holy Healer"** will be presented by Adrian Melissinos, RN, PhD. The **In - Person Gathering** is at the Cherie Flores Garden Pavilion in Hermann Park (1500 Hermann Drive, Houston, TX 77004) **The program is free and open to the public.**

Sept 20, Mon. at 7:00 pm

**Full Moon Ramble** – (Members Only, watch your email for Zoom invitation)

Sept 24 - 25, Fri.-Sat.

**South Central District Gathering** at the San Antonio Botanic Garden

**Newsletter deadline: the 25<sup>th</sup> of every month is strictly enforced**  
(September editor Janice Freeman)



## Happy Birthday!!!

8/05 Rose Wherry

8/12 Carolyn Kosclskey

8/19 Lucinda Kontos

There are many species of poppy but the one that is best known for its medicinal properties is the opium or bread poppy (*Papaver somniferum*, Papaveraceae). Seeds for this poppy are readily available in the U.S. and produce flowers in a wide variety of colors. It is not illegal to grow these poppies, in the U. S. or to harvest the seeds; they are the same ones that are found in poppy seed dressing and baked goods. It is, however, illegal to harvest the sap from the pods and it would not be wise to self-medicate with poppy juice. The opium poppy has strong sedative and hypnotic actions and was traditionally used to relieve pain and calm excitement. There are many sedative herbs that are much less toxic than poppies and better suited for self care. (Coutesy of the American Botanical Council)

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.



## Chairman's Corner

I hope that we're ready to gear up for my favorite time of year, Fall. Yes, I know it's not Fall yet, AND it's still HOT, but the heat will soon be a little less overwhelming. Plants (and people) will start to perk up and we will begin a new season, and a new chapter in the life of STU. Let's all reconnect with each other in a way that nurtures us during the coming months. We are making final plans to meet in person once again at the **Members Only Herbal Happy Hour "Let the Good Thymes Roll"**.

Here is the 411 on the meeting:

- We ask that all participants wear a mask. So, find your prettiest mask and get ready to let the good thymes roll.
- We are brown bagging it for this meeting. Bring whatever you want to eat and a cup or mug to sample the delicious herbal teas we will be serving.
- Bring a checkbook or credit card to pay your dues if you still haven't done it.
- Be prepared to give your total for volunteer hours to someone from Membership.
- Bring any plants to share. Don't bring dried herbs yet (next month).
- Bring examples of crafts you have made. Refer to Donna Wheeler's article on Herb Fair.
- Think about what you can do for Herb Fair and sign up at the meeting.
- We will have a special project at the meeting. Karen will ask you to bring some specific herbs in one of meeting reminders.

I feel that each of us, as members, have a responsibility to each other. What we do in the coming weeks to prepare for the Fall season is important. So, suit up and show up! Make plans to come to the August 18<sup>th</sup> meeting, to chat with your old friends and make some new ones. Sign up to volunteer for Herb Fair, to provide your expertise on something we traditionally do/make or learn a new skill from another experienced member. Head on down to Westbury Community Garden to harvest herbs. If you get involved in STU events and opportunities, you won't regret it!

Additionally, it's time for our Unit Renewal. Once a year, we are charged with getting all our ducks in a row by collecting dues, collecting and reporting volunteer hours, and updating our roster of members; and then sending the information to National. Our Treasurer and the Membership Committee are hard at work compiling this data.

YOU CAN HELP BY:

1. Renewing your membership and paying your dues (either on our website, or in person)
2. Sending in your volunteer hours to Membership
3. Suiing up and Showing up!!!
4. Taking care of yourself!!!

One final bit of information on our Houston Botanic Garden membership: details are being finalized as you read this. We will send a separate Mail Chimp communication explaining how to use the membership.

Until next month,  
**Julie Fordes**  
Unit Chair

### Let the good thymes roll!



Mask up, bring some herbs and  
roll on over to the Herb Society  
meeting !



**Announcing Our August 18  
HSA-STU In-Person Gathering**

***“A Members Only Herbal Happy Hour – Let  
the Good Thymes Roll!”***



**It's easy to get tangled up in the twists and turns of life. If that happens at Longleat, the world's longest hedge maze, there are emergency “Lift if Lost” direction panels to help wayward wanderers find the exit.**

***Are you stuck in the COVID maze? It's time to escape!  
LIFT IF LOST!***

***And join your fellow herb enthusiasts  
for a festive evening of fun and refreshment***



## Herb Fair - 2021

Donna Wheeler – Herb Fair Chair

We are in the planning stages of the 2021 Herb Fair, more to come as we finalize the location. Until then you can help us prepare:

- **Crafts: Please bring to the August 18 STU meeting-** a sample of the craft(s) or an idea (picture or sample) you want to include to sell at the Herb Fair.

There will be a display table to place your item/items on. This will help us get an idea about the items and quantity that we have and/or still need to make. After assessing our needs, workshops will be scheduled in September and October.

- **Volunteers:** There will be **Herb Fair volunteer sign-up sheets at the August 18th meeting.** Not crafty? There are many other areas in which you can help!





## HSA-STU Board Members and Officers 2021-2022

Whom should I contact?  
Keep this as a handy reference!

### Officers

Chair - Julie Fordes

Vice Chair - Karen Cottingham

*Hospitality - Yvette Darnell*

Secretary - Dena Yanowski

*Speakers Bureau*

Treasurer - Maria Treviño

### Standing Committees

Day Section - Janice Dana

Education - Catherine O'Brien

*Archives-*

*Herb Day - Catherine O'Brien*

*Scholarship - Sara Diaz*

Development - Donna Wheeler

*Herb Fair - Donna Wheeler*

Membership - Carolyn Kosclskey

*Member Outreach - Donna Wheeler*

Publications

*Newsletter - Linda Alderman co-chair*

*Janice Freeman co-chair*

*Website - Benée Curtis*

*Facebook - Karen Cottingham*

*Cynthia Card*

*Mail Chimp - Janice Freeman*



## Support the South Texas Unit!!!



You shop. Amazon gives.

An AmazonSmile account has been set up for the South Texas Unit. Be sure to sign up for [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com) and select the South Texas unit as described below. Each quarter the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible items to our unit.

The shopping experience is the same as shopping through amazon.com with the added benefit the foundation will donate to our organization.

### Five Easy Steps to Support the South Texas Unit

1. Go to [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com)
2. No account? Create one! Have an account? Sign in.
3. Select charitable organization. Found near the top of the [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) home page.
4. Type in Herb Society South Texas Unit and click Search. Once the name comes up hit Select.
5. Enjoy shopping!

## Every Garden Needs a Protector



*Photo courtesy of Carolyn Kosclskey*

From the Shakespeare Garden located in the Montgomery County Master Gardeners Herb Garden in Conroe. The garden features herbs common in Shakespeare's time in addition to a red rose bush and a boxwood shrub. Open to visitors during the week from 8 to 5, and on Open Garden Day on October 16.

“Bard-on” me, but do you have the thyme?

## Who's Keeping Watch in Yours?



# BACK TO OUR ROOTS

*Julie Fordes*

We had a lovely time weeding our herb bed and harvesting holy basil (tulsi) at the Westbury Community Garden a while back. We got done with our chores quickly, and had time to socialize, eat watermelon and enjoy a delicious herbal dip (thanks **Carolina Beiro**)! We also enjoyed a wonderful hibiscus tea from one of the Westbury Gardeners! There was even a breeze!

**Come out to the garden on the next workday, Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> of August at 6:30 pm.**

We will weed and harvest again! Also at Westbury, the butterfly pea is flowering. The more we harvest this plant, the more it will produce. If you can run down and pick a couple of times a week, let me know.

It's a great time to harvest some of the herbs on the list that's printed in the newsletter. Don't forget that we have a great resource right on our website. Look under the section titled Growing Herbs. **Susan Wood's** article *Harvesting, Drying and Storing Herbs* is a fantastic resource that I read often. There are many ways to accomplish the same goal and I think that is actually pretty cool that so many different methods are around. I have found a couple of instructional videos on the topic of harvesting, drying and storing herbs. They each present drying options that may work for you. The first is from Living Homestead and is about 10 minutes long.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4QxzHUXIji0&t=198s>

The next video is about 20 minutes long and covers a variety of topics.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UUtWgVZ9VwE&t=4s>

I liked both of these videos for different reasons.

Happy harvesting!

Julie

## Fun and Friends at Westbury Community Garden!



*This plant is returning from last year...does anyone know what it is?*



*Carolina Beiro, Catherine Wampler, Donna Yanowski, Sara Diaz*



*New member, Debbie Lancaster, working on a bed.*

*All photos courtesy of Janice Stuff*





**HSA-STU Membership Dues Renewal Notice!**

Maria Treviño, Treasurer

The Deadline for submitting your Membership Dues August 1, 2021

**For online Payment,**

Click this Link:

<https://hsa-south-texas-unit-248275.square.site/>

Under the word, "Dues", click on the Basil leaves picture and you will be directed to checkout.

There is a drop-down menu for the various membership categories.

OR

**Mail a check to:**

South Texas Unit, HSA  
PO Box 6515,  
Houston Tx 77265

Regular Member \$67.50

Sustaining Member \$80.00

Joint Membership \$98.75

Affiliate or Life Member \$12.50

*Slow Down and Savor the Day*



*Photo courtesy of Janice Freeman*

*Love is like a butterfly: It goes where it pleases and it pleases wherever it goes.*

*-Author Unknown*





## Herb of the Month: Cayenne Pepper

### Cayenne pepper

Catherine O'Brien



Photo: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cayenne\\_pepper](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cayenne_pepper)

**Botanical name:** *Capsicum annuum* cultivar cayenne

The genus name *Capsicum* probably derives from the Greek word *kapto* meaning “to bite” referring to its biting taste, whereas *annuum* suggests the annual cycle of its flowering and fruiting, even though the plant growth cycle is that of a perennial in warm to moderate climates. Cayenne pepper is a member of the Solanaceae or nightshade family of flowering plants. Well-known members of the nightshade family include potatoes, eggplant, tomatoes, petunias, as well as the more poisonous *datura* or jimsonweed, mandrake, belladonna, and tobacco. Of the 102 identified genera and nearly 2500 species in the nightshade family, there are 30 species of flowering plants that are called “pepper.”

Peppers range from the mild bell peppers to the hottest pepper in the world, the Carolina reaper. The heat of peppers, measured as its spiciness or pungency, is on the Scoville scale. The scale was named after its creator, an American pharmacist Wilbur Scoville, who designed the Scoville organoleptic test in 1912. Scoville dissolved an exact weight of dried pepper in alcohol to extract the heat components and gave the extract to a panel of five trained tasters until a majority of three could no longer taste the heat in the dilution. Given that the Carolina Reaper measures 2.2 million Scoville Heat Units (SHU), it is good that modern methods for determining the spiciness of peppers use laboratory equipment instead of the tongues of tasters. Cayenne falls between 30,000-50,000 SHU, making it “highly pungent.”

Pungency	Scoville Heat Units (SHU)
Very highly pungent	Above 80,000
Highly pungent	25,000 to 70,000
Moderately pungent	3,000 to 25,000
Mildly pungent	700 to 3,000
Non pungent	0 to 700



## Peppers in Folklore

Peppers have a place in astrology, history, and mythology. Astrologically, Capsicums are considered the dominion of Mars, the god of war. Historically, the ancient Incas believed that peppers would be a disruptive influence, so they were banned at initiations and funeral ceremonies. Mayans, on the other hand, consumed chili peppers and other spices in their chocolate drinks. In mythology, if you were out of silver bullets or holy water, it was believed that burning hot peppers would protect against attacks by creatures of the night (e.g., werewolves and vampires). Hot peppers were used in witchcraft to excise demons as well as ill humors. Pepper is seen as a way to ward off the “evil eye”, but for goodness sake, don’t get pepper juice in your eyes. One legend implied that if you want really hot peppers, you must be angry when you plant them.

No one really knows the historical origin of cayenne peppers, but they are named for the Cayenne River in French Guiana. Ironically, cayenne peppers are not grown in French Guiana. Today, cayenne peppers are grown commercially in Louisiana, Africa, India, Japan, and Mexico.

## Uses for Peppers

The fruit of the cayenne is dried and ground. Its flavor comes from the chemical capsaicin. Capsaicin is a nitrogen-containing alkaloid that can be used medicinally. Other alkaloids include morphine, strychnine, quinine, ephedrine, and nicotine.



*Dehydrated peppers. Photo by Catherine O'Brien*

Capsaicin can reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease, lower cholesterol, and relieve pain. Capsaicin cream is applied topically for pain relief from ailments (e.g., back pain, arthritis). In addition to being a powerful inflammatory, capsaicin has been named by Cancer Treatment Centers of America as a top food with cancer-fighting properties.



*Photo <https://www.wellrx.com/CAPSAICIN/monographs/>*



Nutritionally, a 5-gram serving of cayenne pepper contain carbohydrates, fat, calcium, magnesium, potassium and phosphorus, as well as 15% of the recommended daily value of vitamin A, vitamin E, vitamin C, vitamin B6, and vitamin K, all for a mere 17 calories. Some people are removing foods in the nightshade family from their diets because it is believed to cause inflammation (e.g., irritable bowel disease). However, the study was small, and more research is needed.

### **How to grow Cayenne**

Peppers grow best in warm weather. Cayenne can be grown in seed trays in January through February and transplanted outside in 4-6 weeks in well-drained soil. Seeds are sown at a depth of approximately three times the diameter of the seed. They are best planted at soil temperatures between 65°F and 75°F, usually in March through May for Houston—that is, warm, frost-free weather. Fall peppers can be planted 12 to 16 weeks before the first expected frost. Space the plants 15-20 inches apart. The plant itself is small and bushy with dark green leaves. The more you harvest, the more they grow. Chilies freeze well if you wash, dry, and freeze them whole. Use them directly from the freezer. A word of caution: You should always wear rubber gloves when handling and cutting peppers, and avoid accidentally rubbing chili juice in your eyes and mouth.



*Cayenne peppers. Photo by Catherine O'Brien*





## Cooking with Cayenne

Cayenne is tart, slightly smoky, and pungent. It combines well with bay, caraway, chili, cinnamon, cloves, coffee, coriander, coconut milk, cumin, ginger, lemon and lime juice, paprika, pepper, saffron and yogurt. Cayenne goes particularly well with chocolate.

Probably the best-known recipe among herbalists is **Rosemary Gladstar's Fire Cider Recipe** (in her words):

### Ingredients

- ½ cup grated fresh horseradish root
- ½ cup or more fresh chopped onions
- ¼ cup or more chopped garlic
- ¼ cup or more grated ginger
- Chopped fresh or dried cayenne pepper 'to taste'. Can be whole or powdered. 'To taste' means should be hot, but not so hot you can't tolerate it. Better to make it a little milder than too hot; you can always add more pepper later if necessary.
- Optional ingredients; turmeric, echinacea, cinnamon, etc.

### Directions

1. Place herbs in a half-gallon canning jar and cover with enough raw unpasteurized apple cider vinegar to cover the herbs by at least three to four inches. Cover tightly with a tight fitting lid.
2. Place jar in a warm place for three to four weeks. Best to shake every day to help in the maceration process.
3. After three to four weeks, strain out the herbs, and reserve the liquid.
4. Add honey 'to taste.' Warm the honey first so it mixes well. 'To taste' means your Fire Cider should taste hot, spicy, and sweet. "A little bit of honey helps the medicine go down...".
5. Rebottle and enjoy! Fire Cider will keep for several months unrefrigerated if stored in a cool pantry. But it's better to store in the refrigerator if you've room.  
A small shot glass daily serves as an excellent tonic or take teaspoons if you feel a cold coming on. Take it more frequently if necessary to help your immune system do battle.

A family favorite recipe is **Pepper Jelly**, but please be careful. Hot peppers sent my mother to the emergency room with swollen hands. Wear gloves while preparing the ingredients.

### Ingredients

- 8 ½-pint canning jars with new lids and rings
- 1½ cups cider vinegar
- 6½ cups of white sugar
- 1 cup of shredded carrot
- ½ cup minced red or green bell pepper, depending on the colors of the hot peppers. (Mix it up for color)
- ¼ cup of hot peppers (cayenne, but you can also use habanero, jalapeño, Thai)
- Two 3-ounce pouches of liquid pectin



## Directions

1. Combine sugar and vinegar in a saucepan over medium-high heat. Cook until the sugar has dissolved. Stir in the carrot and bell pepper. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to medium, and simmer 5 minutes. Add the hot peppers, and simmer 5 more minutes. Pour in the pectin. Boil for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Skim any foam from the jelly and discard.
2. Sterilize the jars and lids in boiling water for at least 5 minutes. Pour the jelly into the hot, sterilized jars, filling the jars to within ¼ inch of the top. Wipe the rims of the jars with a moist paper towel, removing any food residue. Top with lids, and screw on the rings.
3. Place a rack in the bottom of a large stockpot and fill halfway with water. Bring to a boil over high heat. Carefully lower the jars into the pot using a holder. Leave a 2-inch space between the jars. Pour in more boiling water if necessary. You want the water level at least 1 inch above the tops of the jars. Bring the water to a full boil, cover the pot, and process for 5 minutes.
4. Remove the jars from the pot and place onto a cloth-covered or wood surface, several inches apart. Let them cool. Once cooled, press the top of each lid with a finger, ensuring that the seal is tight.

Serving: Our friends and family love cream cheese spread on Ritz® crackers topped with pepper jelly. It is simply delicious.

## Recipe links:

Fire Cider Recipe: <https://herbalachia.com/fire-cider-recipe/> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JU8U0bDmXks>

Mayan Hot Chocolate: <https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/216165/mayan-hot-chocolate/?internalSource=hub%20recipe&referringContentType=Search&clickId=cardslot%209>

Chili Chocolate Cookies: <https://www.allrecipes.com/video/338/chili-chocolate-cookies/>

## References:

DeWitt, Dave and Paul W. Bosland. 2009. *The Complete Chili Pepper*. Timber Press.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scoville\\_scale](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scoville_scale)

[https://www.goodfoodstore.com/PDF/BulkPreparationGuides/Spices\\_A-Z.pdf](https://www.goodfoodstore.com/PDF/BulkPreparationGuides/Spices_A-Z.pdf)

<https://www.hotsauce101.com/pepper-mythology-article.html>

<https://www.masterclass.com/articles/how-to-cook-with-cayenne-pepper-benefits-and-culinary-uses-of-cayenne-pepper#cayenne-pepper-nutritional-facts>

*A quote for the month:*

**Pepper is small in quantity and great in virtue.**

-- **Plato**



## BOOK

# C O R N E R

If you have suggestions for books or other media members might like, submit your suggestions to Julie Fordes at [fordes.julie@gmail.com](mailto:fordes.julie@gmail.com)



### The HERB SOCIETY of AMERICA

Have you joined one or more of our book clubs? Each group meets on GoToMeeting. The groups are open to all members and you are welcome to join in whether or not you have read the book!

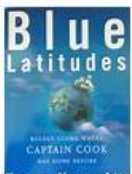
There is no pre-registration, just click the link below at the designated time.

Here are the book, times and link for each group:

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesdays of the month at 2pm EST**

<https://www.gotomeet.me/HSAOrganizer/bookclub1>

August 11 - Blue Latitudes: Boldly Going Where Captain Cook Has Gone Before, by Tony Horwitz



#### **3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays of the month at 3pm EST**

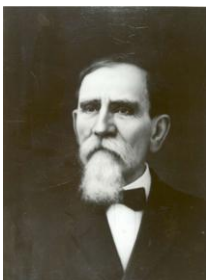
<https://www.gotomeet.me/HSAOrganizer/bookclub2>

August 18 - China Bayles' Book of Days by Susan Wittig Albert

## Let's party like it's 1899!

On Friday, August 6, Hermann Park's namesake, George Hermann, will be celebrating his 178th birthday!

To commemorate the occasion, children 12 and under can ride the Hermann Park Railroad between the hours of 10 am and 2 pm for just \$1.78 per ticket. Party enthusiasts of all ages can also get special \$1.78 food deals from Ginger Kale and Gelu Italian Ice including lemonade, frozen treats, french fries, and cookies. And since no birthday is complete without it, come enjoy free birthday cake, face painting, and arts and crafts at Kinder Station while supplies last!



A **Houston** native, **George H. Hermann** was born on August 6, 1843. George acquired great wealth through several businesses and brought about the establishment of **Hermann** Park and **Hermann** Square, which is located adjacent to Houston's 1939-era City Hall. **Hermann** Hospital, across the street from the park, is the result of a bequest in his will.





## AT - HOME RECIPES



### August 2021

Carolyn Kosclskey

*If you look at the climate "normals" for Houston, the span from July 27 to August 20 is the historically warmest time of year when the average high is 95 degrees, and the average low 75 degrees. This period, a little more than three weeks, is when Houston often sees the hottest weather of the year. [www.spacecityweather.com](http://www.spacecityweather.com)*

If it's hot where you are don't feel alone! We're in the "dog days of summer," which has nothing to do with canines and everything to do with the nighttime skies above. The days between July 3 and August 11 are some of the hottest in the Northern Hemisphere, the term dating back to the ancient Greeks and Romans in reference to the star Sirius, or Dog Star, that rose just before the sun in late July signaling the onset of the hottest weather of the year. In ancient Egypt 5,000 years earlier the rising of Sirius just before the sun marked the return of the annual overflowing of the Nile River irrigating and fertilizing the surrounding lands.

Our crops in this area thrive in the long days and heat of summer, albeit with frequent watering. Much of what is producing in our gardens now and what you see in local markets are warm weather herbs (especially basil), corn, cucumbers, eggplants, okra, peppers of all types, squash, blueberries, cherries, peaches and plums. This is a great time for "eating a rainbow" with fresh vegetables and fruits at every meal, and also a great time to preserve our harvest for after the growing season.

### CUCUMBER SOUP

<https://www.loveandlemons.com/cold-cucumber-soup/>

Fresh herbs, Greek yogurt, and lemon juice make this gluten-free cold soup bright and refreshing for a light meal on a hot August day.

#### Ingredients

6 cucumbers, thinly sliced, reserve a few slices for garnish

1½ cups plain whole milk Greek yogurt

¾ cup fresh basil

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil, more for drizzling

3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

2 tablespoons fresh dill

1 garlic clove

¾ teaspoon sea salt

½ teaspoon honey

Freshly ground black pepper

Fresh mint, dill, or chives, for garnish

#### Instructions



In a blender, combine the cucumbers, yogurt, basil, olive oil, lemon juice, dill, garlic, salt, honey, and several grinds of pepper and blend until smooth. Chill for at least 4 hours. Serve in bowls and garnish with the reserved cucumber slices, fresh herbs, drizzles of olive oil, and freshly ground black pepper along with a crusty baguette or croutons. Serves 8.

## **PEACH BASIL VINEGAR**

You will need about 8 medium size peaches (1 ½ to 2 peaches equal 1 cup diced) plus 2 pint jars or 4 half pint jars with lids/rings. Wash and rinse half-pint canning jars; pre-sterilize and keep hot until ready to fill. Prepare lids and ring bands according to manufacturer's directions. You will also need a food grade thermometer.

4 cups fresh peaches, diced  
4 cups apple cider vinegar, divided  
1 cup basil leaves, loosely packed  
Zest of 1 lemon

Wash fresh peaches and blot dry then medium dice. Combine peaches with 1 cup vinegar in a glass bowl. Lightly bruise with spoon then add remaining vinegar. Lightly crush basil and add to vinegar along with lemon zest. Add to a glass container to store, then cover container with plastic wrap and secure. Let mixture steep in a cool, dark place for 4 weeks, stirring every 2 to 3 days. Strain vinegar through several layers of cheesecloth. Heat mixture on stovetop to 180°F. Ladle hot vinegar into hot jars, leaving 1/4-inch headspace. Clean tops of jars with a damp towel then center lids and add rings. Process in a boiling water bath for 10 minutes. Tighten rings and allow to cool on tea towel or wood cutting board until lids “pop.” Makes about 2 pints.

## **PINEAPPLE SAGE VINEGAR**

Pineapple sage vinegar: Fill a jar about 1/3 way with fresh pineapple sage red flowers. Cover with apple cider vinegar and cap with a plastic lid. (Vinegar will corrode metal lids over time.) Tuck away on a shelf or cabinet, shaking occasionally. The vinegar should start turning color within a week or so. Infuse for about 2 or 3 weeks, then strain. Store the strained vinegar in your fridge for 3 to 4 months.

## **UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA PEPPER JELLY**

[https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can\\_07/golden\\_pepper\\_jelly.html](https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can_07/golden_pepper_jelly.html)

5 cups chopped bell peppers (about 4 large fleshy peppers)  
½ cup chopped jalapeño peppers (about 5 large peppers)  
1 ½ cups white distilled vinegar (5%)  
5 cups sugar  
1 pouch (3 ounces) liquid pectin

**Caution: Wear plastic or rubber gloves and do not touch your face while handling or cutting hot peppers. If you do not wear gloves, wash hands thoroughly with soap and water before touching your face or eyes.**

## **Procedure**



1. Wash and rinse half-pint canning jars; pre-sterilize and keep hot until ready to fill. Prepare lids and ring bands according to manufacturer's directions.

### To Prepare Pepper Juice

2. Wash all peppers thoroughly; remove stems and seeds from the peppers. Do not remove the membrane from the hot peppers, since the remaining capsaicin for pepper heat is located there.
3. Place sweet and hot peppers in a blender or food processor. Add enough vinegar to purée the peppers, then purée.
4. Combine the pepper-vinegar purée and remaining vinegar into an 8- or 10-quart saucepan. Heat to a boil; then boil 10 minutes to extract flavors and color.
5. Remove from heat and strain through cheesecloth into a bowl.

### To Make Jelly

6. Measure 2 ¼ cups of the strained pepper-vinegar juice into the 8- to 10-quart saucepan. Stir in sugar until dissolved and return mixture to a boil. Add the pectin, return to a full rolling boil and boil hard for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Remove from heat; skim off foam quickly.
  7. Pour hot jelly immediately into hot, pre-sterilized half-pint jars, leaving 1/4-inch headspace. Wipe rims of jars with a dampened clean paper towel. Apply and adjust prepared lids.
  8. Process filled jars in a boiling water canner according to the recommendation in pectin directions (usually 10 minutes).
  9. Let processed jars cool, undisturbed, 12 to 24 hours and check for vacuum seals.
- Makes 5 half-pint jars.

## PEACH ROSEMARY COBBLER

A peach and rosemary cobbler with a sweet biscuit topping. Preheat oven to 400°F and use butter to grease an 8-inch square baking dish, or 1 ½ quart baking dish.

### Ingredients for filling

- ¼ cup honey
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- ¾ teaspoon grated lemon peel
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 4 cups fresh peaches, peeled and sliced

In a large bowl mix first six ingredients, then add peaches and toss to combine. Transfer mixture to baking dish and set aside.

### Ingredients for topping

- 1 ½ cups all purpose flour
- ½ cup packed brown sugar
- 1 ½ teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon fresh rosemary leaves, minced
- ½ teaspoon cold butter, cubed
- ¼ cup, plus 2 tablespoons cold water





½ teaspoon vanilla extract  
¼ teaspoon almond extract

In a bowl whisk flour, brown sugar, baking powder, cinnamon, rosemary and salt. Cut in butter until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Mix water and extracts and add to flour mixture, stirring just until combined. Drop dough by heaping tablespoonfuls over peach mixture. Bake uncovered 20-25 minutes or longer until filling is bubbly and topping is golden brown. Serve warm.

**Labor Day is on Monday, September 6 and is the last of the big 4 summer holidays, the end of summer and the beginning of schools. "Remembered family recipes" for this holiday will be featured with various members invited to tell how they celebrated this fun holiday from years past.**

## Member Outreach (Concerns and Celebrations)

This is a new position I suggested and was approved at the annual meeting. I am scheduling a **work day at my house for those interested in garden photography and making cards from the photos** of members' gardens. We will sell these at the Herb Fair and send to members in case of illness, ongoing illness, loss of a loved one, or cause for celebration (birthday, birth...). If you know of members who would benefit from receiving one of our beautiful handmade cards, please let me know and I will follow up. My email address is [ddwheeler16@hotmail.com](mailto:ddwheeler16@hotmail.com).

**Donna Wheeler**  
Herb Fair Chair and Outreach Volunteer



Hermann Park Conservancy is happy to announce the return of the *Garden & Nature Series!*

Each class will take place at the Family Garden in the McGovern Centennial Gardens and focus on a variety of subjects related to gardening, nature, and the benefits of the great outdoors. The hands-on sessions will be led by local specialists in their field and are perfect for both beginners and experts to learn more about the natural world around them.

*Garden & Nature Series* classes are completely free to the public but capacity is limited. Learn about each session below and be sure to register early to reserve your spot! **Click the links below for more information.**

### [Propagation Techniques and Barriers to Germination](#)

Wednesday, August 25 – 6 pm to 7:30 pm

### [Observing and Recording Wildlife in Your Neighborhood](#)

Wednesday, September 22 – 6 pm to 7:30 pm

### [Sage Advice: Salvia in Texas](#)

Wednesday, October 27 – 6 pm to 7:30 pm



## ***Clearing a Path with Herbal Smoke Bundles***

Karen Cottingham



***Image credits: the wondersmith and katiemaenaturals***

Whether it's to create a more peaceful, pleasant environment, to facilitate prayer, to "clear negative energies," or to alter one's consciousness, people have been smoldering herbs since before recorded history. Herbal smoke has been used to connect with the spirit world, to cleanse animals of parasites, to prevent the spread of infectious diseases, to deliver powerful therapies, and to protect from evil.



## *Herbs Make Scents*

August 2021

Aromatic, swirling, shape-shifting, and evanescent, herbal smoke is mesmerizing and calming. As a tool of purification, it permeates the space - interior as well as exterior, within and without. Smoke creeps into the smallest nooks and crannies while it travels through the lungs into the brain.

When we burn herbs, the aromatic smoke released contains many of the beneficial compounds of the plant itself. A recent archeological excavation in Turkey revealed an earth-oven from the Ottoman Empire that contained charred henbane seeds, a strong narcotic. Various pharmacologically-active substances were delivered by the inhalation of smoke from burning herbs, from hallucinogens to bronchodilators for asthma.

The burning of herbs was also an early form of antiseptis. *Havan samagri*, a combination of dozens of herbs, woods, fruit and seeds traditionally burned in the Vedic Hindu tradition, was recently shown to kill 94% of air-borne bacteria after only one hour. Following the exposure to the medicinal smoke, the air remained "purified" for an additional 24 hours.

There are no comparable studies evaluating any potential antiseptic properties of Western herbs, but many people believe that herbal smoke is cleansing and purifying. And it certainly is, if not from a scientific point of view, then experientially and symbolically. Not only is herbal smoldering a most basic aromatherapy practice, with a direct connection with the limbic and hormonal systems, but the visual experience of burning - witnessing the transformation of matter by fire - is a profound metaphor for transition and purification.



***Transformation from substance to smoke is a powerful metaphor for change  
Image Credit: Alternative Imagination***

***Herbs Make Scents August 2021***





## *Herbs Make Scents*

**August 2021**

The power of herbal smoke to improve mood, to cleanse spaces, and to establish a ritual has attracted many followers for whom the practice is not actually part of their own ancestry. The term “smudging” refers to a specific Indigenous American tradition, in which sacred herbs, particularly White Sage, Cedar, Palo Santo, and Sweetgrass, are burned as invocation and to facilitate prayer. In recent decades, this term has been inappropriately adopted for Western spiritual practices quite unrelated to the sacred traditions. While unintentional, this appropriation of another culture’s religious practices is disrespectful and harmful. The sudden surge in demand for White Sage and Palo Santo has also resulted in such careless commercialization and over-harvesting that these sacred plants are now endangered.

Most people, therefore, avoid the term “smudging,” and choose to burn herbs from their own tradition or with personal significance rather than those sacred to others. We can all enjoy herbal cleansing rituals while remaining respectful and responsible.

Many indigenous groups also believe that aromatic plant bundles should not be sold but instead should be traded, gifted, or homemade. We wholeheartedly agree, and to celebrate the first in-person gathering of our Unit, we are bringing herbs and flowers from our own gardens and all the necessary materials for everyone to make their own herbal bundle. In the lovely words of Juliet Blankespoor, the founder of The Chestnut School of Herbal Medicine, “Every time you burn a stick, the warmth of your friendships will be rekindled.”

We look forward to seeing all members on **August 18**, at The Cherie Flores Garden Center in Hermann Park, 1500 Hermann Drive, Houston, TX 77004. The program begins at 7pm. Beverages will be provided, but please **bring your own snacks and masks**.



***Herbs Make Scents August 2021***

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.

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[www.herbsociety-stu.org](http://www.herbsociety-stu.org)



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.

