

Herbs Make Scents

THE HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA
VOLUME XLVII, NUMBER 1



SOUTH TEXAS UNIT
JANUARY 2024

Co-Editors Linda Alderman (ewalderman@comcast.net) & Janice Freeman (janicehfreeman@comcast.net)

January 2023 Calendar

Jan 9, Tues. 10:00 am – 12 noon

Note: Change of location

Day Meeting: “Back To Our Roots, Our Founding Mothers,” will be presented by **Beth Murphy, HSA Rosemary Circle Honoree and Certificate of Achievement 2012**. Join us at the **Lott Hall**, 6201 Hermann Park Dr, Houston, TX 77030. Bring your own lunch. For more information, see page 3. **Free and open to the public.**

Jan 13, Sat. 9:00am – 12 noon

Garden Workday Kolter Elementary at 9710 Runnymede Dr., Houston, TX 77096.

Jan 17, Wed. 6:30 pm

Evening Meeting: “Fabulous Figs” will be presented by **Destin Noak, The Texas Garden Guy**. Join us at the **Cherie Flores Garden Pavilion**, 1500 Hermann Dr, Houston, TX 77030. Doors open at 6:30 pm, program at 7:00 pm. **Free and open to the public.**

Jan 20, Sat. 10:00 am

Westbury Garden Workday at 12581 Dunlap Street, Houston, TX 77035

Jan 21, Sun. 2:00 pm

Herb Day Committee Zoom Meeting

February 2023 Calendar

Feb 10, Sat. 9:00 am – 12 noon

Garden Workday Kolter Elementary at 9710 Runnymede Dr., Houston, TX 77096.

Feb 13, Tues. 10:00 am

Day Meeting: An herbal food presentation (TBA) by **Benée Curtis, HSA Rosemary Circle Honoree, 2011 Certificate of Appreciation** at the **Cherie Flores Garden Pavilion**, 1500 Hermann Dr. Houston, TX 77030. Bring your own lunch. **Free and open to the public**

Feb 17, Sat. 10:00 am

Westbury Garden Workday at 12581 Dunlap Street, Houston, TX 77035

Feb 21, Wed. 6:30 pm

Evening Meeting: “The Many Herbs of Vietnamese Cuisine” will be presented by **Christine Ha**, the blind cook who won “MasterChef” Season 3. Join us at the **Cherie Flores Garden Pavilion**, 1500 Hermann Dr., Houston TX. Doors open at 6:15 pm, with

Newsletter deadline: the 25th of every month is strictly enforced. (February Editor is Linda Alderman)



Snowdrop

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

06 – Donna Wheeler

07 – Joyce Wilkerfeld

12 – Linda Van Heeckeren



Happy new year to you and your family from our South Texas Unit's herbal community!

My husband and I spent the end of 2023 purchasing and moving into our first home. As I type this article I'm looking out the windows through our already blooming azalea bushes, past the pecan tree litter and into the vast space of possibilities for our new yard. Native plants, a bountiful herb garden, a wildscape; the options are endless! Knowing the time, of half unpacked boxes and misplaced items that have yet to find their home will come to an end, I'm particularly excited for the opportunity to fill and cultivate the inside and outside of our new home. What an exciting time to start this journey as a new year is upon us all.

At the beginning of each year, the Native Herb Conservation Committee, which falls under the Botany & Horticulture Chair of the HSA Board of Directors and works closely with the GreenBridges project and Promising Plants, comes to a consensus on two native herbs to award the title: Notable Native Herb of the Year. This year the two that were picked are *Opuntia ficus-indica* and *Agave americana L.*, also known as prickly pear and agave. These two plants were picked due to their unique properties and opportunities for exploration and use. I received word of this news via email from our national organization, but found that more information can be gleaned online:

<https://www.herbsociety.org/explore/notable-native-herbsprofiles.html>

This link will take you to a downloadable page where you can find pages of detailed research including location and cultural origins, history, recipes and photos. I'm excited to keep agave and prickly pear in mind as the year unfolds and find a way to work them into my yard and kitchen.

Lastly, as we close 2023, I want to send a special thank you to member Angela Roth and her husband Chris, who opened her beautiful home to host our STU Holiday Party last month. The bountiful potluck, white elephant game and fellowship were enjoyed by all in attendance. Again, happy New Year and I hope to see familiar and hopefully new faces at many of our upcoming 2024 programs.

Dena Gaydos, Unit Chair





Learning from the Past HSA Journals and Members

On Tues. Jan. 9, 2024 at 10AM Beth Murphy will present the Program “Back to Our Roots ---Our Founding Mothers” at Lott Hall, 6201 Hermann Park Drive. Based on her research and review of early **Herbarist** Journals, beginning in 1935, Beth will present some early herb research on the production of ‘economic’ herbs during our country’s war times. Beth has recently received access to a collection of the oldest **Herbarist** Journals, published by The Herb Society of America, which contain rich and interesting research information. Members and Guests welcome.

Parking: In case there is a large volume of traffic for the Houston Zoo on that morning, attendees will need to look carefully for an open street entry near Lott Hall, and there may be another parking attendant on the parking lot surface nearer Lott Hall. A member should be on duty to help direct your parking.

Announcing Our January Evening Program



“FABULOUS FIGS”

Presented by:

DESTIN NOAK

The Texas Garden Guy

January 17 at 7 pm

The Cherie Flores Garden Pavilion
in Hermann Park



Corrections to the December 2023 Newsletter:

Benée Curtis was omitted from the listed of Rosemary Circle Honorees in the article, “The Herb Society of America, Inc. History of Rosemary Circle”.

Linda Alderman was omitted from the list of chairs for Herb Fair in the article, “Herb Fair Wrap Up”.



Back to our Roots

Julie Fordes

Westbury Workday - Saturday, Jan. 20 @ 10 am

Westbury Workday - Saturday, Feb. 17 @ 10 am

•BACK TO OUR ROOTS•



We have a new sign-up sheet for watering and tending the garden. Here is the link:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0D49ADAE2DA02-stuwestbury#/>

I hope that you will sign up for a slot soon. You will be able to see all the wonderful edible and medicinal plants we put in last month, including self heal and horseradish!

I love this picture and want to share it ... even though Houston has nice weather in the winter, we can still dream of what is on the horizon for our gardens. Think about what you would like to see in our Westbury bed and share your idea. Enjoy the holidays and we will see each other at the garden.



Artwork by Lisa Aisato



Kolter Elementary Garden



The skies were threatening last week, but we got a compost area built!!

Loads of cilantro are growing!!

Next Open Grassroom days are January 20th and February 10th from 9 am – 12 noon

The HERB SOCIETY of AMERICA

Coriander / Cilantro *Coriandrum sativum*

- Coriander and cilantro are the same plant. The seeds from this plant are referred to as coriander and the leaves are referred to as cilantro or Chinese parsley.
- Coriander sativum is native to the eastern Mediterranean region.
- Both the seeds and leaves have had culinary uses since medieval times. All parts of the plant are edible.
- Coriander seeds have a pleasant, spicy aroma when mature and dry and a flavor that is described as citrusy, nutty and spicy when crushed.
- Coriander is used in cuisines world-wide, including in spice blends like curry powder, garam masala and berbere
- The leaves and tender stems of cilantro are used in curries, sauces, salsas, soups and salads. Cooking deepens the characteristic sharp flavor.
- To harvest the leaves, cut stems near the ground level, about one-third of the plant at a time.
- To harvest the seeds, let them ripen on the plants. Clip the brown, round seed heads and place inside a paper bag. The seed heads will dry and open, allowing the edible seed to fall out.

Cilantro grows best in the cooler temperatures of the spring and fall. Or through the winter in zones 8 – 10. As temperatures heat up, the plant sends up a flower stalk and sets seed. (This process is called bolting.)

• Grow in full sun and well-drained soil except in the South and Southwest where some shade is well tolerated.



The STU Welcomes
New Member
Cecilie O'Gara





*Save
The
Date*

**38TH ANNUAL
HERB DAY**

SATURDAY, APRIL 27TH, 2024



**The Herb Society of America
South Texas Unit**

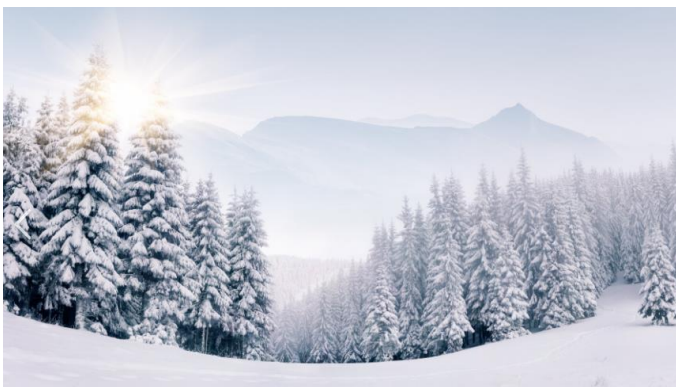
38th Annual Herb Day

Virginia Camerlo
Herb Day Chair

It's time to look ahead to South Texas Unit's 38th Annual Herb Day! In keeping with tradition, this special public event will be held on Saturday, April 27th and feature speakers, demonstration tables, plant sales, herbal gifts, ways and means tables, vendors and an included luncheon. Sales directly fund the Madalene Hill Scholarship which is awarded to qualifying students studying in the fields of agribusiness, agricultural sciences, or horticulture; or ecology or environmental science with a focus on botany. Registration will open in late February/early March.

All members are encouraged to participate in Herb Day. Please contact Virginia Camerlo, Herb Day Chair (camerloclan@gmail.com) if you would like to assist with herbal refreshments, member grown plants, herbal gifts (bespoke handmade items, culinary blends, tea blends, etc.). New ideas are always welcome!

The next Herb Day Committee meeting will be at the home of Virginia Camerlo on Sunday, January 21 at 2 pm. A Zoom option will be available to those who would like to participate remotely.





Herb Cuttings, Seeds & Divisions for 2024 Herb Day

To be successful growing our own herbs from cuttings or seeds, it's important to do it at the right time. Divisions can be made in fall and spring or in summer with extra care. I suggest researching what you would like to try potting up for Herb Day or Herb Fair before starting. For example: ginger potted now will need to be protected from freezing weather. If you don't have space in your home or garage to do that, wait until early spring when your plants are sprouting back out from winter dieback. (Be sure to keep roots watered after a hard freeze even if the area looks dead!)

Quote about rooting bay tree cuttings from www.gardenerspath.com

"I wish I could tell you that the process is quick and easy, but I won't lie. Propagating bay trees takes time and patience, no matter what method you choose, and it's likely most of your cuttings will fail. You'll probably have better luck rooting cuttings than you might if you try [growing bay from seed](#). **To begin, you will take stem cuttings in mid to late summer.** You want to select semi-hardwood branches, with wood that is still green and pliable. Avoid woody branches or thin new stems." See website for further details.

I suggest asking Henry Flowers (one of our Herb Day speakers) for a wholesale source for ginger. His power point presentation shows 10 different varieties of ginger along with turmeric. I believe gardeners at Herb Day would love to grow many types of ginger as they are a beautiful semi tropical herb suitable for our Zone 9. And we usually don't have any ginger plants at our events other than my potted false cardamon gingers.

I am willing to dig and pot up gallon size vetiver with help from other members. Please save any gallon size pots you have for me. It is a labor-intensive project as vetiver is very hard to get out of the ground when large. I gave a friend vetiver many years ago & he is willing to help us. David is strong as an ox, but it took about 30 minutes for him to dig a 3 - 4' diameter clump out of his sandy soil. See photo! Then we sawed the clump in 4 large sections to replant one section in the space in front of him. I took the rest home to saw into smaller sections to sell at Herb Fair. Vetiver is a beautiful perennial herb, growing to about 6' tall and 4' wide for your herb garden. If you would like to join the vetiver crew in mid-March for a digging expedition, let me know!

By Susan Wood



**Photos left to right:
Vetiver from Susan's
garden, and David
Harlston digging
vetiver in March.**



Membership Tips: STU 2024 Resolution

Carolyn Kosclskey, Membership Chair

It's a new year and a great time to make a resolution for recording volunteer hours. [If you're a new member or current member who needs a refresher, it would be helpful to first go to the STU website www.herbsociety-stu.org under the second tab *About Us* and read the Membership Tips section in the July 2022 and December 2022 *Herbs Make Scents* newsletters for what counts as hours and recording them.] According to most members, the challenging part of volunteer hours is not just completing them, but figuring out what counts and then writing that number down at the time rather than later. Volunteer hours are collected each year by the Herb Society of America from all units for the period of July 1 through June 30. The 2022-2023 total reported and submitted by STU was 5937.5. Although this was a high number, it only represented about 80% of the membership reporting their hours. So, starting this month find a place on your physical calendar or digital calendar and make a "STU 2024 Resolution" of recording your hours as soon after they're completed as possible. Look back through your 2023 calendar or planner for the time period July 1 through December 31 and total your volunteer hours only using the "guesstimate" method if necessary, but come up with a number. Record that number on your January 2024 calendar or planner in bold font because you're going to need that number next July. In summary, your "STU 2024 Resolution" requires you to know what counts as hours and to record your hours in a timely manner. To borrow the iconic eighties Nike tagline, "Just do it!" If you have any questions related to volunteer hours, please email me at stxu.membership@gmail.com.

LOOKING FORWARD TO FEBRUARY

With **CHRISTINE HA**, the blind cook who won "MasterChef" season 3 with Gordon Ramsey



Christine will be discussing
"The Many Herbs of Vietnamese Cuisine"
February 21, 2024 7:00 pm
Free and Open to the Public

Christine Ha's first restaurant in Houston, *The Blind Goat*, was named a semi-finalist for 2020 Best New Restaurant in America by the James Beard Foundation. She was also named a James Beard finalist for Best Chef, Texas, in 2022 and a semi-finalist for Outstanding Chef in 2023 for her former restaurant, *Xin Chao*. Ha's third concept, *Stuffed Belly*, opened in 2023.



AT-HOME RECIPES

January 2024

By Carolyn Kosclskey

Happy New Year! -- a month for rest and quiet reflection, for staying close to hearth and home and counting blessings. It's a time to welcome in the winter months as we prepare to rest our bodies, nurture our souls, and make gentle plans for the year ahead. A new month, a new year...and every day from now on will be a little bit longer and a little bit lighter than the day before.

JANUARY HOLIDAYS

1 - New Year's Day

6 - **Epiphany Day** is a Christian holiday that marks the day that the Three Kings visited Jesus, and is celebrated in Western Roman Catholic and Protestant churches. It is known as the 12th Day of Christmas, as it falls twelve days after Christmas. Some churches celebrate it on the Sunday after January 6

7 - **Orthodox Christmas**. Churches in Russia, Serbia, and other Eastern European countries celebrate Christmas the first day of the new year as per the Julian calendar established by Julius Caesar in 46 B.C., and New Year's a week later on January 14.

15 - **Martin Luther King Day**, celebrating the life and accomplishment of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on the third Monday of January. The day became a federally recognized holiday in 1983, although not recognized by all states until 2000.

NEW YEAR'S RECIPES FOR GOOD FORTUNE AND PROSPERITY

GOOD LUCK BLACK-EYED PEAS

Eating good luck peas is a particularly Southern tradition, generally a practice relegated to our part of the world. Eating black-eyed peas on New Year's Day is a Southern tradition said to bring good luck. The black-eyed peas are for luck, or prosperity, the peas represent coins. The peas swell when cooking, which means an increase in your fortune. Eating humble food shows that you are a humble person worthy of good fortune. Peas bring peace. The idea dates back to the Civil War, and even back to the ancient Babylonians.

Around this time of year fresh black-eyed peas may be found in the produce section, the runner up being frozen black-eyed peas. Traditionally dishes like this were made with fatback, salt pork or ham hocks. Country ham slices may also be used because they are readily available and give a nice, rich, salty flavor to the beans. Look for center cut slices and cut those up. You can also use bacon. If you are making a big "mess o' peas," you could go for a ham hock, but for this amount a ham hock is just too big.



Use half chicken broth for flavor, but cut it with water because the reduced liquid is too salty with all broth. You can use all homemade salt-free stock or all water if you prefer. You can add more or less garlic as you like. Add a nice amount of hot sauce at the beginning of the cooking to season up the “potlikker,” but don’t go overboard—use can always add more. Do not add any salt during, before or cooking, the ham will take care of that.

This is a great dish for New Year’s Day, because all you have to do is throw everything in a pot and let it simmer away. Serve it with some greens and a slice of cornbread, and you are bound to have a good year.

Black-Eyed Peas for New Year’s Day

- 1 pound dried black-eyed peas
- 3 – 4 ounces country ham, cut into pieces
- 3 cloves garlic
- 2 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 2 cups water
- A few grinds of black pepper
- 1 really good dash of hot sauce, plus more to serve

Pick over the black-eyed peas to get rid of any green or bruised ones. Put the peas, ham and garlic in a pot, add the broth and water, then stir in the hot sauce and pepper. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to low, cover the pot and simmer for about 45 minutes. Remove the cover and cook a further hour, until the liquid is reduced and the peas are very tender. Stir occasionally to prevent the peas from sticking to the pot, but if you stir too much, they’ll get mushy. You may remove the ham and garlic before serving or leave them in. Serve warm.

NEW YEAR’S GREENS

A wonderful Southern tradition is eating black-eyed peas and greens on New Year’s Day for luck and prosperity. The peas represent coins and the greens a symbol of paper money. Using a cast-iron skillet, this bacon-fried version of greens is a quick method, if you don’t get around to cooking until it’s almost time for dinner, and make an excellent accompaniment to a bowl of slow-cooked black-eyed peas. A Dutch oven may be used also. A big bunch of greens wilts down to a small amount--this makes about 2 cups, enough for a small side.

New Year’s Greens

- 1 large bunch collard or mustard greens, or a mix
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 6 strips bacon
- 1 garlic clove
- pinch of red pepper flakes
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt



For the collards cut the leaves away from the hard center stems. Stack the leaves up in bunches of about 6, then roll each bunch into a cigar and cut into thin ribbons. Place the ribbons in a colander, shuffling them around to make sure they are well separated. Rinse thoroughly and shake as much water of as possible. Lay the greens out on a tea towel, and then roll them up in the towel to blot off as much water as you can. A little damp is fine, but dripping wet will cause the bacon grease to splatter.

Put the vegetable oil and bacon strips into a large, deep cast iron skillet or Dutch oven, and cook over medium heat until the bacon is very crispy and the fat has rendered out. When the bacon is crispy, remove it to paper towels to drain. Drop the garlic clove and the red pepper flakes into the pan and cook until the garlic starts to turn brown and is fragrant, about 20 seconds. Remove the garlic clove.

Carefully add the greens to the pan, standing back because the moisture on the greens will spit. Stir to coat in the bacon fat and cook, stirring frequently for about 5 minutes until the greens are wilted. Add the sugar, baking soda and salt and stir well. Chop the bacon into rough pieces, add them to the greens and stir. Lower the heat, cover the pan and cook the greens for about 8 minutes, stirring frequently, until they are tender, watching carefully so they do not burn. The greens will be dark and soft, with a few crispy edges here and there. Serve immediately, sprinkled with a little hot pepper vinegar.

Recipes inspired from <https://therunawayspoon.com>

Dietary Guidelines for Americans:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK469839/#:~:text=5%20Overarching%20Guidelines&text=Focus%20on%20variety%2C%20nutrient%20density,healthy%20eating%20patterns%20for%20all>

Top Food Trends for 2024: <https://health.usnews.com/search?q=food%20trends%202024>

The February At-Home Recipe section will feature recipes that would be appropriate for celebrating Valentine's Day or Lincoln's or Washington's birthdays. Members having a February birthday are invited to submit a recipe, along with recipes from other members and readers.

Member Outreach

If you know of a member that is ill, suffered a loss or could use some words of encouragement, OR has received good news and congratulations are in order, please contact **Donna Wheeler** at ddwheeler16@hotmail.com. Donna is our Member Outreach Contact and will send a garden card when requested.



The HERB SOCIETY *of* AMERICA



Mary Reeves honored as Golden Sage in 2024

Mary Reeves was an outstanding member of The South Texas Unit, joining in 1974. Our loss was Pioneer Unit's gain when she and husband Charles moved to Round Top and became founding members of that unit. Congratulations to Mary for becoming The Herb Society of America's newest 50-year member Golden Sage!!

Mary arranged an exciting private tour of the White House for STU members attending the dedication of our National Herb Garden, June 12, 1980. A group of us had just enjoyed the three-day annual meeting in Spring Lake, NJ. Our hotel was just steps away from the Atlantic Ocean boardwalk in this seaside resort. In those days we toured public and private gardens each day rather than sitting in hotel rooms for educational presentations. One of the highlights was at our annual banquet when the lights were dimmed before elegantly attired waiters entered the dining room with our desert of flaming baked Alaska.

After the annual meeting, those wishing to add an optional trip to the dedication of our National Herb Garden at the National Arboretum boarded buses for the short trip to Washington D.C. There was an official ceremony with the Vice President's wife, Mrs. Walter Mondale, cutting the ribbon to open our new garden. The Marine Corps band entertained us while we toured the herb garden and a lavish buffet al fresco capped off the celebration.

The next day Mary had arranged the tour of the White House with her cousin, Hamilton Jordan, who was President Carter's Chief of Staff. We bypassed crowds of people waiting in line and entered a side door to see areas not on the general tour. As VIP's and horticulturists, we even got to see the famous rose garden! Corlas Huitt (now Pearsall) and I stepped off the path to closer admire a beautiful rose bush. Imagine my surprise when several dark suited men with ear wires jumped out of nowhere to advise us to stay on the path. We were right outside President Jimmy Carter's office while he was inside!

Susan Wood

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

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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.

